Seneca's *Essays* Volume I

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THE DIALOGUES OF
LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA
BOOK I
TO LUCILIUS ON **PROVIDENCE+**

Why, though there is a Providence, some Misfortunes befall Good Men.

You have asked me, Lucilius, why, if a Providence rules the world, it still happens that many evils befall good men. This would be more fittingly answered in a coherent work designed to prove that a Providence does preside over the universe, and that God concerns himself with us. But since it is your wish that a part be severed from the whole, and that I refute a single objection while the main question is left untouched, I shall do so; the task is not difficult, - I shall be pleading the cause of the gods.

For the present purpose it is unnecessary to show that this mighty structure of the world does not endure without some one to guard it, and that the assembling and the separate flight of the stars above are not due to the workings of chance; that while bodies which owe their motion to accident often fall into disorder and quickly collide, this swift revolution of the heavens, being ruled by eternal law, goes
<Ess1-3>

ON PROVIDENCE, i. 2-4

on unhindered, producing so many things on land and sea, so many brilliant lights in the sky all shining in fixed array; that this regularity does not belong to matter moving at random, and that whatever combinations result from chance do not adjust themselves with that artistry whereby the earth, the heaviest in weight, abides immovable and beholds the flight of the sky as it whirls around it, and the seas, flooding a the valleys, soften the land, and feel no increase from the rivers, and whereby huge growths spring up from the tiniest seeds. Even the phenomena which seem irregular and undetermined - I mean showers and clouds, the stroke of crashing thunderbolts and the fires that belch from the riven peaks of mountains, tremors of the quaking ground, and the other disturbances which the turbulent element in nature sets in motion about the earth, these, no matter how suddenly they occur, do not happen without a reason; nay, they also are the result of special eauses, and so, in like manner, are those things which seem miraculous by reason of the incongruous situations in which they are beheld, such as warm waters in the midst of the sea-waves,and the expanses of new islands that spring up in the wide ocean. Moreover, if any one observes how the shore is laid bare as the sea withdraws into itself, and how within a short time the same stretch is covered over again, he will suppose that it is some blind fluctuation which causes the waves now to shrink and flow inwards, now to burst forth and in mighty sweep seek their former resting-place, whereas in fact they increase by degrees, and true to the hour and the day they approach in propor- <
<Ess1-5>

ON PROVIDENCE, i. 4-ii. 1

tionately larger or smaller volume according as they are attracted by the star we call the moon, at whose bidding the ocean surges. But let such matters be kept for their fitting time, - all the more so, indeed, because you do not lack faith in Providence, but complain of it. I shall reconcile you with the gods, who are ever best to those who are best. For Nature never permits good to be injured by good; between good men and the gods there exists a friendship brought about by virtue.

Friendship, do I say? Nay, rather there is a tie of relationship and a likeness, since, in truth, a good man differs from God in the element of time only; he is God's pupil, his imitator, and true offspring, whom his all-glorious parent, being no mild taskmaster of virtues, rears, as strict fathers do, with much severity. And so, when you see that men who are good and acceptable to the gods labour and sweat and have a difficult road to climb, that the wicked, on the other hand, make merry and abound in pleasures, reflect that our children please us by their modesty, but slave-boys by their forwardness; that we hold in check the former by sterner discipline, while we encourage the latter to be bold. Be assured that the same is true of God. He does not make a spoiled pet of a good man; he tests him, hardens him, and fits him for his own service. You ask, "Why do many adversities come to good men?" No evil can befall a good man; opposites do not mingle. Just as the countless rivers, the vast fall of rain from the sky, and the huge volume of mineral springs do not change the taste of the sea, do not even modify it, so the assaults of adversity do not weaken the spirit of a brave man. It always
<Ess1-7>

ON PROVIDENCE, ii. 1-6

maintains its poise, and it gives its own colour to everything that happens; for it is mightier than all external things. And yet I do not mean to say that the brave man is insensible to these, but that he overcomes them, and being in all else unmoved and calm rises to meet whatever assails him. All his adversities he counts mere training. Who, moreover, if he is a man and intent upon the right, is not eager for reasonable toil and ready for duties accompanied by danger? To what energetic man is not idleness a punishment? Wrestlers, who make strength of body their chief concern, we see pitting themselves against none but the strongest, and they require of those who are preparing them for the arena that they use against them all their strength; they submit to blows and hurts, and if they do not find their match in single opponents, they engage with several at a time. Without an adversary, prowess shrivels. We see how great and how efficient it really is, only when it shows by endurance what it is capable of. Be assured that good men ought to act likewise; they should not

shrink from hardships and difficulties, nor complain against fate; they should take in good part whatever happens, and should turn it to good. Not what you endure, but how you endure, is important.

Do you not see how fathers show their love in one way, and mothers in another? The father orders his children to be aroused from sleep in order that they may start early upon their pursuits, - even on holidays he does not permit them to be idle, and he draws from them sweat and sometimes tears. But the mother fondles them in her lap, wishes to keep them out of the sun, wishes them never to be unhappy, never to cry, never to toil. Toward good
<Ess1-9>

ON PROVIDENCE, ii. 6-10

men God has the mind of a father, he cherishes for them a manly love, and he says, "Let them be harassed by toil, by suffering, by losses, in order that they may gather true strength." Bodies grown fat through sloth are weak, and not only labour, but even movement and their very weight cause them to break down. Unimpaired prosperity cannot withstand a single blow; but he who has struggled constantly with his ills becomes hardened through suffering; and yields to no misfortune; nay, even if he falls, he still fights upon his knees. Do you wonder if that God, who most dearly loves the good, who wishes them to become supremely good and virtuous, allots to them a fortune that will make them struggle? For my part, I do not wonder if sometimes the gods are moved by the desire to behold great men wrestle with some calamity. We men at times are stirred with pleasure if a youth of steady courage meets with his spear an onrushing wild beast, if unterrified he sustains the charge of a lion. And the more honourable the youth who does this, the more pleasing this spectacle becomes. But these are not the things to draw down the gaze of the gods upon us - they are childish, the pas-times of man's frivolity. But lo! here is a spectacle worthy of the regard of God as he contemplates his work; lo! here a contest worthy of God, - a brave man matched against ill-fortune, and doubly so if his also was the challenge. I do not know, I say, what nobler sight the Lord of Heaven could find on earth, should he wish to turn his attention there, than the spectacle of Cato, after his cause had already been shattered more than once, nevertheless standing erect amid the ruins of the commonwealth. "Although," said he,
<Ess1-11>

ON PROVIDENCE, ii. 10-iii. 1

"all the world has fallen under one man's sway, although Caesar's legions guard the land, his fleets the sea, and Caesar's troops beset the city gates, yet Cato has a way of escape; with one single hand he will open a wide path to freedom. This sword, unstained and blameless even in civil war, shall at last do good and noble service: the freedom which it could not give to his country it shall give to Cato! Essay, my soul, the task long planned; deliver yourself from human affairs. Already Petreius and Juba have met and lie fallen, each slain by the other's hand./a Their compact with Fate was brave and noble, but for my greatness such would be unfit. For Cato it were as ignoble to beg death from any man as to beg life." I am sure that the gods looked on with exceeding joy while that hero, most ruthless in avenging himself, took thought for the safety of others and arranged the escape of his departing followers; while even on his last night he pursued his studies; while he drove the sword into his sacred breast; while he scattered his vitals, and drew forth by his hand that holiest spirit, too noble to be defiled by the steel./b I should like to believe that this is why the wound was not well-aimed and efficacious - it was not enough for the immortal gods to look but once on Cato. His virtue was held in check and called back that it might display itself in a harder role; for to seek death needs not so great a soul as to reseek it. Surely the gods looked with pleasure upon their pupil as he made his escape by so glorious and memorable an end! Death consecrates those whose end even those who fear must praise. But as the discussion progresses, I shall show how
<Ess1-13>

ON PROVIDENCE, iii. 1-2

the things that seem to be evils are not really so. This much I now say that those things which you call hardships, which you call adversities and accursed, are, in the first place, for the good of the persons themselves to whom they come; in the second place, that they are for the good of the

whole human family, for which the gods have a greater concern than for single persons; again, I say that good men are willing that these things should happen and, if they are unwilling, that they deserve misfortune. I shall add, further, that these things happen thus by destiny, and that they rightly befall good men by the same law which makes them good. I shall induce you, in fine, never to commiserate a good man. For he can be called miserable, but he cannot be so.
Of all the propositions which I have advanced, the most difficult seems to be the one stated first, - that those things which we all shudder and tremble at are for the good of the persons themselves to whom they come. "Is it," you ask, "for their own good that men are driven into exile, reduced to want, that they bear to the grave wife or children, that they suffer public disgrace, and are broken in health?" If you are surprised that these things are for any man's good, you must also be surprised that by means of surgery and cautery, and also by fasting and thirst, the sick are sometimes made well. But if you will reflect that for the sake of being cured the sick sometimes have their bones scraped and removed, and their veins pulled out, and that sometimes members are amputated which could not be left without causing destruction to the whole body, you will allow yourself to be convinced of this as well, that ills are sometimes for the good of those to whom
<Ess1-15>

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they come; just as much so, my word for it, as that things which are lauded and sought after are sometimes to the hurt of those who delight in them, being very much like over-eating, drunkenness, and the other indulgences which kill by giving pleasure. Among the many fine sayings of one friend Demetrius there is this one, which I have just heard; it still rings in my ears. "No man," said he, " seems to me more unhappy than one who has never met with adversity." For such a man has never had an opportunity to test himself. Though all things have flowed to him according to his prayer, though even before his prayer, nevertheless the gods have passed an adverse judgement upon him. He was deemed unworthy ever to gain the victory over Fortune, who draws back from all cowards, as if she said, "Why should I choose that fellow as my adversary? He will straightway drop his weapons; against him I have no need of all my power - he will be routed by a paltry threat; he cannot bear even the sight of my face. Let me look around for another with whom to join in combat. I am ashamed to meet a man who is ready to be beaten."
{**fortune_favours_bold+**} A gladiator counts it a disgrace to be matched with an inferior, and knows that to win without danger is to win without glory. The same is true of Fortune. She seeks out the bravest men to match with her; some she passes by in disdain. Those that are most stubborn and unbending she assails, men against whom she may exert all her strength. Mucius she tries by fire, Fabricius by poverty, Rutilius by exile, Regulus by torture, Socrates by poison, Cato by death. It is only evil fortune that discovers a great exemplar.
<Ess1-17>

ON PROVIDENCE, iii. 5-7

Is Mucius unfortunate because he grasps the flames of the enemy with his right hand and forces himself to pay the penalty of his mistake? because with his charred hand he routs the king whom with his armed hand he could not rout? Tell me, then, would he be happier if he were warming his hand in his mistress's bosom?

Is Fabricius unfortunate because, whenever he has leisure from affairs of state, he tills his fields? because he wages war not less on riches than on Pyrrhus? because the roots and herbs on which he dines beside his hearth are those that he himself, an old man and honoured by a triumph, grubbed up in cleaning off his land? Tell me, then, would he be happier if he loaded his belly with fish from a distant shore and with birds from foreign parts? if he aroused the sluggishness of his loathing stomach with shell-fish from the eastern and the western sea? if he had game of the first order, which had been captured at the cost of many a hunter's life, served with fruit piled high around?

Is Rutilius unfortunate because those who condemned him will have to plead their cause through all the ages? because he was more content to endure that his country should be robbed of him than that he should be robbed of exile? because he was the only one who refused anything to the dictator Sulla, and when recalled from exile all but drew back and fled farther away? "Let those," says he, "whom your I 'happy' era/a has caught at Rome, behold it. Let them see the forum streaming with blood, and the heads of senators placed above the pool of Servilius - for there the victims of Sulla's proscriptions are stripped - and bands of assassins
<Ess1-19>

ON PROVIDENCE, III. 7-10

roaming at large throughout the city, and many thousands of Roman citizens butchered in one spot after, nay, by reason of, a promise of security, - let those who cannot go into exile behold these things!" Is Lucius Sulla happy because his way is cleared by the sword when he descends to the forum? because he suffers the heads of consulars to be shown him and has the treasurer pay the price of their assassination out of the public funds? And these all are the deeds of that man - that man who proposed the Cornelian Law!/a Let us come now to **Regulus+**: what injury did Fortune do to him because she made him a pattern of loyalty, a pattern of endurance? Nails pierce his skin, and wherever he rests his wearied body he lies upon a wound; his eyes are stark in eternal sleeplessness. But the greater his torture is, the greater shall be his glory. Would you like to know how little he regrets that he rated virtue at such a price? Make him whole again and send him back to the senate; he will express the same opinion. Do you, then, think Maecenas a happier man, who, distressed by love and grieving over the daily repulses of his wayward wife, courted slumber by means of harmonious music, echoing faintly from a distance? Although he drugs himself with wine, and diverts his worried mind with the sound of rippling waters, and beguiles it with a thousand pleasures, yet he, upon his bed of down, will no more close his eyes than that other upon his cross. But while the one, consoled by the thought that he is suffering hardship for the sake of right, turns his eyes from his suffering to its cause, the other, jaded with pleasures and struggling with too much good fortune,
<Ess1-21>

ON PROVIDENCE, iii. 11-14

is harassed less by what he suffers than by the reason for his suffering. Surely the human race has not come so completely under the sway of vice as to cause a doubt whether, if Fate should give the choice, more men would rather be born a Regulus than a Maecenas; or if there should be one bold enough to say that he would rather have been born a Maecenas than a Regulus, the fellow, although he may not admit it, would rather have been born a Terentia/a! Do you consider that Socrates was ill- used because he drank down that drought/b which the state had brewed as if it were an elixir of immortal life, and up to the point of death discoursed on death? Was he ill-treated because his blood grew cold, and, as the chill spread, gradually the beating of his pulses stopped? How much more should we envy him than those who are served in cups of precious stone, whose wine a catamite - a tool for anything, an unsexed or sexless creature - dilutes with snow held above in a golden vessel! They will measure out afresh all their drink in vomit, with wry faces tasting in its stead their own bile; but he will quaff the poison gladly and with good cheer. Touching Cato, enough has been said, and it will be granted by the consensus of mankind that that great man reached the pinnacle of happiness, he whom Nature chose to be the one with whom her dread power should clash. "The enmity of the powerful," said she, "is a hardship; then let him match himself at one and the same time against Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus. It is a hardship to be outstripped by an inferior in the candidacy for office; then let him be defeated by Vatinius./c It is
<Ess1-23>

ON PROVIDENCE, iii. 14-iv. 4

a hardship to engage in civil war; then let him fight the whole world over for a just cause, ever with ill success but with equal stubbornness. It is a hardship to lay hand upon oneself then let him do it. And what shall I gain thereby that all may know that these things of which I have deemed Cato worthy are not real ills."

Success comes to the common man, and even to commonplace ability; but to triumph over the calamities and terrors of mortal life is the part of a great man only. Truly, to be always happy and to pass through life without a mental pang is to be ignorant of one half of nature. You are a great man; but how do I know it if Fortune gives you no opportunity of showing your worth? You have entered as a contestant at the Olympic games, but none other besides you; you gain the crown, the victory you do not gain. You have my congratulations - not as a brave man, but as if you had obtained the consulship or praetorship; you have enhanced your prestige. In like manner, also, I may say to a good man, if no harder circumstance has given him the opportunity whereby alone he might show the strength of his mind, "I judge you unfortunate because you have never been

unfortunate; you have passed through life without an antagonist; no one will know what you can do, - not even yourself." For if a man is to know himself, he must be tested; no one finds out what be can do except by trying. {**knowing_self+**} and so some men have presented themselves voluntarily to laggard misfortune, and have sought an opportunity to blazon forth their worth when it was but to pass into obscurity. Great men, I say, rejoice oft-times in adversity, as do brave soldiers in
<Ess1-25>

ON PROVIDENCE, iv. 4-6

warfare. I once heard Triumphus, a gladiator in the time of Tiberius Caesar, complaining of the scarcity of shows. "How fair an age," he said, "has passed away!"

True worth is eager for danger and thinks rather of its goal than of what it may have to suffer, since even what it will have to suffer is a part of its glory. {**Hotspur+**} Warriors glory in their wounds and rejoice to display the blood spilled with luckier **fortune+**. Those who return from the battle unhurt may have fought as well, but the man who returns with a wound wins the greater regard. God, I say, is showing favour to those whom he wills shall achieve the highest possible virtue whenever he gives them the means of doing a courageous and brave deed, and to this end they must encounter some difficulty in life. You learn to know a pilot in a storm, a soldier in the battle-line. How can I know with what spirit you will face poverty, if you wallow in wealth? How can I know with what firmness you will face disgrace, ill fame, and public hatred, if you attain to old age amidst rounds of applause, - if a popularity attends you that is irresistible, and flows to you from a certain leaning of men's minds? How do I know with what equanimity you would bear the loss of children, if you see around you all that you have fathered? I have heard you offering consolation to others. If you had been offering it to yourself, if you had been telling yourself not to grieve, then I might have seen your true character. Do not, I beg of you, shrink in fear from those things which the immortal gods apply like spurs, as it were, to, our souls. Disaster is Virtue's opportunity. Justly may those be termed unhappy who are dulled by
<Ess1-27>

ON PROVIDENCE, iv. 6-9

an excess of good fortune, who rest, as it were, in dead calm upon a quiet sea; whatever happens will come to them as a change.

Cruel fortune bears hardest upon the inexperienced; to the tender neck the yoke is heavy. The raw recruit turns pale at the thought of a wound, but the veteran looks undaunted upon his own gore, knowing that blood has often been the price of his victory.

In like manner God hardens, reviews, and disciplines those whom he approves, whom he loves. {**whom_the_lord_loveth+**} Those, however, whom he seems to favour, whom he seems to spare, he is really keeping soft against ills to come. For you are wrong if you suppose that any one is exempt from ill. Even the man who has prospered long will have his share some day; whoever seems to have been released has only been reprieved. Why is it that God afflicts the best men with ill health, or sorrow, or some other misfortune? For the same reason that in the army the bravest men are assigned to the hazardous tasks; it is the picked soldier that a general sends to surprise the enemy by a night attack, or to reconnoitre the road, or to dislodge a garrison. Not a man of these will say as he goes, "My commander has done me an ill turn," but instead, "He has paid me a compliment." In like manner, all those who are called to suffer what would make cowards and poltroons weep may say, "God has deemed us worthy instruments of his purpose to discover how much human nature can endure."

Flee luxury, flee enfeebling good fortune, from which men's minds grow sodden, and if nothing intervenes to remind them of the common lot, they sink, as it were, into the stupor of unending drunkenness. The man who has always had glazed
<Ess1-29>

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windows to shield him from a drought, whose feet have been kept warm by hot applications renewed from time to time, whose dining- halls have been tempered by hot air passing beneath the

floor and circulating round the walls, - this man will run great risk if he is brushed by a gentle breeze. While all excesses are hurtful, the most dangerous is unlimited good fortune. It excites the brain, it evokes vain fancies in the mind, and clouds in deep fog the boundary between falsehood and truth. Would it not be better, summoning virtue's help, to endure everlasting ill fortune than to be bursting with unlimitedand immoderate blessings? Death from starvation comes very gently, but from gorging men explode. And so, in the case of good men the gods follow the same rule that teachers follow with their pupils; they require most effort from those of whom they have the surest hopes. Do you imagine that the Lacedaemonians hate their children when they test their mettle by lashing them in public? Their own fathers call upon them to endure bravely the blows of the whip, and ask them, though mangled and half-dead, to keep offering their wounded bodies to further wounds. Why, then, is it strange if God tries noble spirits with severity? No proof of virtue is ever mild. If we are lashed and torn by Fortune, let us bear it; it is not cruelty but a struggle, and the oftener we engage in it, the stronger we shall be. The staunchest member of the body is the one that is kept in constant use. We should offer ourselves to Fortune in order that, struggling with her, we may be hardened by her. Gradually she will make us a match for herself. Familiarity with exposure to danger will give contempt for danger. So the
<Ess1-31>

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bodies of sailors are hardy from buffeting the sea, the hands of farmers are callous, the soldier's muscles have the strength to hurl weapons, and the legs of a runner are nimble. In each, his staunchest member is the one that he has exercised. By enduring ills the mind attains contempt for the endurance of them; you will know what this can accomplish in our own case, if you will observe how much the peoples that are destitute and, by reason of their want, more sturdy, secure by toil. Consider all the tribes whom Roman civilization does not reach - I mean the Germans and all the nomad tribes that assail us along the Danube. They are oppressed by eternal winter and a gloomy sky, the barren soil grudges them support, they keep off the rain with thatch or leaves, they range over ice-bound marshes, and hunt wild beasts for food. Are they unhappy, do you think? There is no unhappiness for those whom habit has brought back to nature./a For what they begin from necessity becomes gradually a pleasure. They have no homes and no resting-places except those which weariness allots for the day; their food is mean and must be got by the hand; terrible harshness of climate, bodies unclothed, - such for countless tribes is the life which seems to you so calamitous! Why, then, do you wonder that good men are shaken in order that they may grow strong? No tree becomes rooted and sturdy unless many a wind assails it. For by its very tossing it tightens its grip and plants its roots more securely; the fragile trees are those that have grown in a sunny valley. It is, therefore, to the advantage even if good men, to the end that they may be unafraid, to live constantly amidst alarms
<Ess1-33>

ON PROVIDENCF,, iv. 16-v. 4

and to bear with patience the happenings which are ills to him only who ill supports them.

Consider, too, that it is for the common good to have the best men become soldiers, {**rank+**} so to speak, and do service. It is God's purpose, and the wise man's as well, to show that those things which the ordinary man desires and those which he dreads are really neither goods nor evils./a It will appear, however, that there are goods, if these are bestowed only on good men, and that there are evils, if these are inflicted only on the evil. Blindness will be a curse if no one loses his eyes but the man who deserves to have them torn out; therefore let an Appius and a Metellus be deprived of the light. Riches are not a good; therefore let even the panderer Elius possess them in order that men, though they hallow wealth in temples, may see it also in a brothel. In no better way can God discredit what we covet than by bestowing those things on the basest men while withholding them from the best. "But," you say, "it is unjust that a good man be broken in health or transfixed or fettered, while the wicked are pampered and stalk at large with whole skins." What then? Is it not unjust that brave men should take up arms, and stay all night in camp, and stand with bandaged wounds before the rampart, while perverts and professional profligates rest secure within the city? What then? Is it not unjust that the noblest maidens/b should be aroused from sleep to perform sacrifices at night, while others stained with sin enjoy soundest slumber? Toil summons the best men. The senate is often kept in session the whole day long, though all the while every worthless fellow is either amusing himself at the recreation- <Ess1-35>

ON PROVIDENCE, v. 4-7

ground, or lurking in an eating-house, or wasting his time in some gathering. The same is true in this great commonwealth of the world. Good men labour, spend, and are spent, and withal willingly. Fortune does not drag them - they follow her, and match her pace. If they had known how, they would have outstripped her. Here is another spirited utterance which, I remember, I heard that most valiant man, Demetrius, make: "Immortal gods," he said, "I have this one complaint to make against you, that you did not earlier make known your will to me; for I should have reached the sooner that condition in which, after being summoned, I now am. Do you wish to take my children? - it was for you that I fathered them. Do you wish to take some member of my body? - take it; no great thing am I offering you; very soon I shall leave the whole. Do you wish to take my life? - why not? I shall make no protest against your taking back what once you gave. With my free consent you shall have whatever you may ask of me. What, then, is my trouble? I should have preferred to offer than to relinquish. What was the need to take by force? You might have had it as a gift. Yet even now you will not take it by force, because nothing can be wrenched away from a man unless he withholds it."

I am under no compulsion, I suffer nothing against my will, and I am not God's slave but his follower, and the more so, indeed, because I know that everything proceeds according to law that is fixed and enacted for all time. Fate guides us, and it was settled at the first hour of birth what length of time remains for each. Cause is linked with cause, and all public and private issues are directed

<Ess1-37>

ON PROVIDENCE, v. 7-9

by a long sequence of events. Therefore everything should be endured with fortitude, since things do not, as we suppose, simply happen - they all come. Long ago it was determined what would make you rejoice, what would make you weep, and although the lives of individuals seem to be marked by great dissimilarity, yet is the end one - we receive what is perishable and shall ourselves perish. Why, therefore, do we chafe? why complain? For this were we born. Let Nature deal with matter, which is her own, as she pleases; let us be cheerful and brave in the face of everything, reflecting that it is nothing of our own that perishes.

What then, is the part of a good man? To offer himself to Fate. It is a great consolation that it is together with the universe we are swept along; whatever it is that has ordained us so to live, so to die, by the same necessity {**Lucy_poem+**} it binds also the gods. One unchangeable course bears along the affairs of men and gods alike. Although the great creator and ruler of the universe himself wrote the decrees of Fate, yet he follows them. {**Prom_Unbound+**} He obeys for ever, he decreed but once. "Why, however," do you ask, "was God so unjust in his allotment of destiny as to assign to good men poverty, wounds, and painful death?" It is impossible for the moulder to alter matter; to this law it has submitted. Certain qualities cannot be separated from certain others; they cling together, are indivisible. Natures that are listless, that are prone to sleep, or to a kind of wakefulness that closely resembles sleep, are composed of sluggish elements. It takes sterner stuff to make a man who deserves to be mentioned with consideration. His course will not be the level way;

<Ess1-39>

ON PROVIDENCE, v. 9-vi. 1

uphill and downhill must he go, be tossed about, and guide his bark through stormy waters; he must keep his course in spite of fortune. Much that is hard, much that is rough will befall him, but he himself will soften the one, and make the other smooth. Fire tests gold, misfortune brave men. See to what a height virtue must climb! you will find that it has no safe road to tread:

The way is steep at first, and the coursers strain
To climb it, fresh in the early morn. They gain
The crest of heaven at noon; from here I gaze
Adown on land and sea with dread amaze,
And of my heart will beat in panic fear.
The roadway ends in sharp descent - keep here

A sure control; 'twill happen even so
That Tethys, stretching out her waves below,
Will often, while she welcomes, be affright
To see me speeding downward from the height./a
{**Ovid_Phaeton**+}

Having heard the words, that noble youth replied, I like the road, I shall mount; even though I fall, it will be worth while to travel through such sights." But the other did not cease from trying to strike his bold heart with fear:

And though you may not miss the beaten track,
Nor, led to wander, leave the zodiac,
Yet through the Bull's fierce horns, the Centaur's bow
And raging Lion's jaws you still must go./b

In reply to this he said, "Harness the chariot you offered; the very things that you think affright me urge me on. I long to stand aloft where even the Sun-god quakes with fear." The groveller and the coward will follow the safe path: virtue seeks the heights.

"But why," you ask, does God sometimes allow evil to befall good men? Assuredly he does not. <Ess1-41>

ON PROVIDENCE, vi. 1-4

Evil of every sort he keeps far from them - sin and crime, evil counsel and schemes for greed, blind lust and avarice intent upon another's goods. The good man himself he protects and delivers: does any one require of God that he should also guard the good man's luggage? Nay, the good man himself relieves God of this concern; he despises externals. Democritus, considering 1111111riches to be a burden to the virtuous mind, renounced them. Why, then, do you wonder if God suffers that to be the good man's lot which the good man himself sometimes chooses should be his lot? Good men lose their sons; why not, since sometimes they even slay them?/a They are sent into exile; why not, since sometimes they voluntarily leave their native land, never to return? They are slain; why not, since sometimes they voluntarily lay hand upon themselves?/b Why do they suffer certain hardships? It is that they may teach others to endure them they were born to be a pattern. Think, then, of God as saying: "What possible reason have you to complain of me, you who have chosen righteousness? Others I have surrounded with unreal goods, and have mocked their empty minds, as it were, with a long, deceptive dream. I have bedecked them with gold, and silver, and ivory, but within there is nothing good. The creatures whom you regard as fortunate, if you could see them, not as they appear to the eye, but as they are in their hearts, are wretched, filthy, base - like their own house-walls, adorned only on the outside. Sound and genuine such good fortune is not; it is a veneer, and that a thin one. So long, therefore, as they can stand firm and make the show that they desire, they glitter and deceive;
<Ess1-43>

ON PROVIDENCE, vi. 4 7

when, however, something occurs to overthrow and uncover them, then you see what deep-set and genuine ugliness their borrowed splendour hid. But to you I have given the true and enduring goods, which are greater and better the more any one turns them over and views them from every side. I have permitted you to scorn all that dismays and to disdain desires. Outwardly you do not shine; your goods are directed inward. Even so the cosmos, rejoicing in the spectacle of itself, scorns everything outside. {**Yeats_to_a_friend**+} Within I have bestowed upon you every good; your good fortune is not to need good fortune.

'Yet,' you say, 'many sorrows, things dreadful and hard to bear, do befall us.' Yes, because I could not withdraw you from their path, I have armed your minds to withstand them all; endure with fortitude. In this you may outstrip God; he is exempt from enduring evil, while you are superior to it. Scorn poverty; no one lives as poor as he was born. Scorn pain; it will either be relieved or relieve you. Scorn death, which either ends you or transfers you. Scorn Fortune; I have given her no weapon with which she may strike your soul. Above all, I have taken pains that nothing should keep you here against your will; the way out lies open. If you do not choose to

fight, you may run away. Therefore of all things that I have deemed necessary for you, I have made nothing easier than dying. I have set life on a downward slope: if it is prolonged, only observe and you will see what a short and easy path leads to liberty. I have not imposed upon you at your exit the wearisome delay you had at entrance. Otherwise, if death came to a man as slowly as his birth, Fortune would have kept her
<Ess1-45>

ON PROVIDENCE, vi. 8-9

great dominion over you. Let every season, every place, teach you how easy it is to renounce Nature and fling her gift back in her face. In the very presence of the altars and the solemn rites of sacrifice, while you pray for life, learn well concerning death. The fatted bodies of bulls fall from a paltry wound, and creatures of mighty strength are felled by one stroke of a man's hand; a tiny blade will sever the sutures of the neck, and when that joint, which binds together head and neck, is cut, the body's mighty mass crumples in a heap. No deep retreat conceals the soul, you need no knife at all to root it out, no deeply driven wound to find the vital parts; death lies near at hand. For these mortal strokes I have set no definite spot; anywhere vou wish, the way is open. Even that which we call dying, the moment when the breath forsakes the body, is so brief that its fleetness cannot come within the ken. Whether the throat is strangled by a knot, or water stops the breathing, or the hard ground crushes in the skull of one falling headlong to its surface, or flame inhaled cuts off the course of respiration, be it what it may, the end is swift. Do you not blush for shame? You dread so long what comes so quickly!
<Ess1-47>

BOOK II
TO SERENUS ON THE **FIRMNESS**+ {CONSTANTIA}
OF THE WISE MAN

The Wise Man can receive neither Injury nor Insult.

I might say with good reason, Serenus, that there is as great a difference between the Stoics and the other schools of philosophy as there is between males and females, since while each set contributes equally to human society, the one class is born to obey, the other to command. Other philosophers, using gentle and persuasive measures, are like the intimate family physician, who, commonly, tries to cure his patients, not by the best and the quickest method, but as he is allowed. The Stoics, having adopted the heroic course, are not so much concerned in making it attractive to us who enter upon it, as in having it rescue us as soon as possible and guide us to that lofty summit which rises so far beyond the reach of any missile as to tower high above all fortune. " But," you say, "the path by which we are called to go is steep and rugged." What of it? Can the heights be reached by a level path? But the way is not so sheer as some suppose. The first part only has rocks and cliffs, and appears impassable, just as many places, when viewed from afar, seem often to
<Ess1-49>

ON FIRMNESS, 1. 2-ii. 2

be an unbroken steep since the distance deceives the eye; then, as you draw nearer, these same places, which by a trick of the eyes had merged into one, open up gradually, and what seemed from a distance precipitous is now reduced to a gentle slope.

Recently, when there happened to be some mention of Marcus Cato, you, with your impatience of injustice, grew indignant because Cato's own age had failed to understand him, because it had rated him lower than any Vatinius though he towered above any Pompey and Caesar; and it seemed to you shameful that when he was about to speak against some law in the forum, his toga was torn from his shoulders, and that, after he had been hustled by a lawless mob all the way from the rostrum to the Arch of Fabius, he had to endure vile language, and spittle, and all the other insults of a maddened crowd. And then I made answer that on behalf of the state you had good reason to be stirred - the state which Publius Clodius on the one hand, Vatinius and all the greatest rascals on the other, were putting up for sale, and, carried away by blind cupidity, did not realize

that, while they were selling, they too were being sold. For Cato himself I bade you have no concern, for no wise man can receive either injury or insult. I said, too, that in Cato the immortal gods had given to us a truer exemplar of the wise man than earlier ages had in Ulysses and Hercules. For we Stoics have declared that these were wise men, because they were unconquered by struggles, were despisers of pleasure, and victors over all terrors. Cato did not grapple with wild beasts - the pursuit of these is for the huntsman and the
<Ess1-51>

ON FIRMNESS, ii. 2-iii. 1

peasant; he did not hunt down monsters with fire and sword, nor did he chance to live in the times when it was possible to believe that the heavens rested on one man's shoulders. In an age when the old credulity had long been thrown aside, and knowledge had by time attained its highest development, he came into conflict with **ambition+**, a monster of many shapes, with the boundless greed for power which the division of the whole world among three men\a could not satisfy. He stood alone against the vices of a degenerate state that was sinking to destruction beneath its very weight, and he stayed the fall of the republic to the utmost that one man's hand could do to draw it back, until at last he was himself withdrawn and shared the downfall which he had so long averted, and the two whom heaven willed should never part were blotted out together. For Cato did not survive freedom, nor freedom Cato. Think you that what the people did to such a man could have been an injury, even if they tore from him either his praetorship or his toga? even if they bespattered his sacred head with filth from their mouths? The wise man is safe, and no injury or insult can touch him. I imagine that I see you flaring up in a temper and about to boil over; you are getting ready to exclaim: "This is the sort of thing that detracts from the weight of the teachings of you Stoics. You make great promises, promises which are not even to be desired, still less believed; then after all your big words, while you deny that a wise man is poor, you do not deny that he usually possesses neither slave nor house nor food; while you deny that a wise man is mad, you do not deny that he does lose
<Ess1-53>

ON FIRMNESS, iii. 1.-4

his reason, that he babbles crazy words, that he will venture to do whatever his violent disorder impels him to do; while you deny that a wise man is ever a slave, you do not likewise go on to deny that he will be sold, that he will do what he is ordered to do, and render to his master the services of a slave. So, for all your lofty assumption, you reach the same level as the other schools -only the names of things are changed. And so I suspect that something of this sort lurks behind this maxim also, "A wise man will receive neither injury nor insult" - a maxim which at first sight, appears noble and splendid. But it makes a great difference whether you place the wise man beyond feeling injured or beyond being injured. For if you say that he will bear injury calmly, he has no peculiar advantage; he is fortunate in possessing a common quality, one which is acquired from the very repetition of injuries - namely, endurance. If you say that he will not receive injury, that is, that no one will attempt to injure him, then, abandoning all other business, I am for becoming a Stoic."\a I assuredly did not intend to deck up the wise man with the fanciful honour of words, but to place him in the position where no injury may reach him. "What then?" you say; "will there be no one to assail him, no one to attempt it?" Nothing in the world is so sacred that it will not find some one to profane it, but holy things are none the less exalted, even if those do exist who strike at a greatness that is set far beyond them, and which they will never damage. The invulnerable thing is not that which is not struck, but that which is not hurt; by this mark I will show you the wise man. Is there any doubt that the strength that cannot be overcome is a truer
<Ess1-55>

ON FIRMNESS, iii. 4-iv. 1

sort than that which is unassailed, seeing that untested powers are dubious, whereas the stability that repels all assaults is rightly deemed most genuine? So you must know that the wise man, if no injury hurts him, will be of a higher type than if none is offered to him, and the brave man, I should say, is he whom war cannot subdue, whom the onset of a hostile force cannot terrify, not he who

battens at ease among the idle populace. Consequently I will assert this - that the wise man is not subject to any injury. It does not matter, therefore, how many darts are hurled against him, since none can pierce him. As the hardness of certain stones is impervious to steel, and adamant cannot be cut or hewed or ground, but in turn blunts whatever comes into contact with it; certain substances cannot be consumed by fire, but, though encompassed by flame, retain their hardness and their shape; as certain cliffs, projecting into the deep, break the force of the sea, and, though lashed for countless ages, show no traces of its wrath, just so the spirit of the wise man is impregnable and has gathered such a measure of strength as to be no less safe from injury than those things which I have mentioned.

"What then?" you say; "will there be no one who will attempt to do the wise man injury?" Yes, the attempt will be made, but the injury willnot reach him. For the distance which separates him from contact with his inferiors is so great that no baneful force can extend its power all the way to him. Even when the mighty, exalted by authority and powerful in the support of their servitors, strive to injure him, all their assaults on wisdom will fall as short of their mark as do the missiles shot on high by

<Ess1-57>

ON FIRMNESS, iv. 1-v. 2

bowstring or catapult, which though they leap beyond our vision, yet curve downwards this side of heaven. Tell me, do you suppose that when that stupid king\a darkened the day with the shower of his darts, any arrow fell upon the sun, or that he was able to reach Neptune when he lowered his chains into the deep? As heavenly things escape the hands of man and divinity suffers no harm from those who demolish temples and melt down images, so every wanton, insolent, or haughty act directed against the wise man is essayed in vain. "But it would be better," you say, "if no one cared to do such things." You are praying for what is a hard matter - that human beings should do no wrong. And that such acts be not done is profitable to thosc who are prone to do them, not to him who cannot be affected by them even if they are done. No, I am inclined to think that the power of wisdom is better shown by a display of calmness in the midst of provocation, just as the greatest proof that a general is mighty in his arms and men is his quiet unconcern in the country of the enemy. Let us make a distinction, Serenus, if you like, between injury and insult. The former is by its nature more serious; the latter, a slighter matter -serious only to the thin- skinned - for men are not harmed, but angered by it. Yet such is the weakness and vanity of some men's minds, there are those who think that nothing is more bitter. And so you will find the slave who would rather be struck with the lash than the fist, who considers stripes and death more endurable than insulting words. To such a pitch of absurdity have we come that we are harrowed not merely by pain but by the idea of pain, like

<Ess1-59>

ON FIRMNESS, v. 2-5

children who are terror-stricken by darkness and the ugliness of masks and a distorted countenance; who are provoked even to tears by names that are unpleasant to their ears, by gesticulation of the fingers,\a and other things which in their ignorance they shrink from in a kind of blundering panic. Injury has as its aim to visit evil upon a person. But wisdom leaves no room for evil, for the only evil it knows is baseness, which cannot enter where virtue and uprightness already abide. Consequently, if there can be no injury without evil, no evil without baseness, and if, moreover, baseness cannot reach a man already possessed by uprightness, then injury does not reach the wise man. For if injury is the experiencing of some evil, if, moreover, the wise man can experience no evil, no injury affects a wise man. All injury is damaging to him who encounters it, and no man can receive injury without some loss either in respect to his position or his person or things external to us. But the wise man can lose nothing. He has everything invested in himself, he trusts nothing to fortune, his own goods are secure, since he is content with virtue, which needs no gift from chance, and which, therefore, can neither be increased nor diminished. For that which has come to the full has no room for further growth, and Fortune can snatch away only what she herself has given. But virtue she does not give; therefore she cannot take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, unmoved, unshaken, so steeled against the blows of chance that she cannot be bent, much less broken. Facing the instruments of torture she holds her gaze unflinching, her expression

changes not at all, whether a hard or a happy lot is shown her. Therefore the wise man will lose
<Ess1-61>

ON FIRMNESS, v. 5-vi. 2

nothing which he will be able to regard as loss; for the only possession he has is virtue, and of this he can never be robbed. {**Jesus+**} Of all else he has merely the use on sufferance. Who, however, is moved by the loss of that which is not his own? But if injury can do no harm to anything that a wise man owns, since if his virtue is safe his possessions are safe, then no injury can happen to the wise man.

When Demetrius, the one who had the appellation of Poliorcetes, had captured Megara, he questioned Stilbo, a philosopher, to find out whether he had lost anything, and his answer was, "Nothing; I have all that is mine with me." Yet his estate had been given up to plunder, his daughters had been outraged by the enemy, his native city had passed under foreign sway, and the man himself was being questioned by a king on his throne, ensconced amid the arms of his victorious army. But he wrested the victory from the conqueror, and bore witness that, though his city had been captured, he himself was not only unconquered but unharmed. For he had with him his true possessions, upon which no hand can be laid, while the property that was being scattered and pillaged and plundered he counted not his own, but the adventitious things that follow the beck of Fortune. Therefore he had esteemed them as not really his own; for all that flows to us from without is a slippery and insecure possession. Consider now, can any thief or traducer or violent neighbour, or any rich man who wields the power conferred by a childless old age, do injury to this man, from whom war and the enemy and that exponent of the illustrious art of wrecking cities could snatch away nothing? Amid swords flashing
<Ess1-63>

ON FIRMNESS, vi. 2-5

on every side and the uproar of soldiers bent on pillage, amid flames and blood and the havoc of the smitten city, amid the crash of temples falling upon their gods, one man alone had peace. It is not for you, therefore, to call reckless this boast of mine\a; and if you do not give me credence, I shall adduce a voucher for it. For you can hardly believe that so much steadfastness, that such greatness of soul falls to the lot of any man. But here is one\b who comes into our midst and says: "There is no reason why you should doubt that a mortal man can raise himself above his human lot, that he can view with unconcern pains and losses, sores and wounds, and nature's great commotions as she rages all around him, can bear hardship calmly and prosperity soberly, neither yielding to the one nor trusting to the other; that he can remain wholly unchanged amid the diversities of fortune and count nothing but himself his own, and of this self, even, only its better part. See, here am I to prove to you this - that, though beneath the hand of that destroyer of so many cities fortifications shaken by the battering-ram may totter, and high towers undermined by tunnels and secret saps may sink in sudden downfall, and earthworks rise to match the loftiest citadel, yet no war-engines can be devised that will shake the firm-fixed soul. I crept just now from the ruins of my house, and while the conflagration blazed on every side, I fled from the flames through blood; what fate befalls my daughters, whether a worse one than their country's own, I know not. Alone and old, and seeing the enemy in possession of everything around me, I, nevertheless, declare that my holdings are all intact
<Ess1-65>

ON FIRMNESS, vi. 6-vii. 1

and unharmed. I still possess them; whatever I have had as my own, I have. There is no reason for you to suppose me vanquished and yourself the victor; your fortune has vanquished my fortune. Where those things are that pass and change their owners, I know not; so far as my possessions are concerned they are with me, and ever will be with me. The losers are yonder rich men who have lost their estates - the libertines who have lost their loves - the prostitutes whom they cherished at a great expenditure of shame - politicians who have lost the senate-house, the forum, and the places appointed for the public exercise of their failings; the **usurers+** have lost their records on which their **avarice+**, rejoicing without warrant, based its dream of wealth. But I have still my all,

untouched and undiminished. Do you, accordingly, put your question to those who weep and wail, who, in defence of their money, present their naked bodies to the point of the sword, who, when their pockets are loaded, flee from the enemy." Know, therefore, Serenus, that this perfect man, full of virtues human and divine, can lose nothing. His goods are girt about by strong and insurmountable defences. Not Babylon's walls, which an Alexander entered, are to be compared with these, not the ramparts of Carthage or Numantia, both captured by one man's hand,\a not the Capitol or citadel of Rome - upon them the enemy has left his marks. The walls which guard the wise man are safe from both flame and assault, they provide no means of entrance, -are lofty, impregnable, godlike. There is no reason for you to say, Serenus, as your habit is, that this wise man of ours is nowhere to be found. He is not a fiction of us Stoics, a sort of
<Ess1-67>

ON FIRMNESS, vii. 1-4

phantom glory of human nature, nor is he a mere conception, the mighty semblance of a thing unreal, but we have shown him in the flesh just as we delineate him, and shall show him - though perchance not often, and after a long lapse of years only one. For greatness which transcends the limit of the ordinary and common type is produced but rarely. But this self-same Marcus Cato, the mention of whom started this discussion,\a I almost think surpasses even our exemplar. Again, that which injures must be more powerful than that which is injured; but wickedness is not stronger than righteousness; therefore it is impossible for the wise man to be injured. Only the bad attempt to injure the good; the good are at peace with each other, the bad are no less harmful to the good than they are to each other. But if only the weaker man can be injured, and if the bad man is weaker than the good man, and the good have to fear no injury except from one who is no match for them, then injury cannot befall the wise man. For by this time you do not need to be reminded of the fact that there is no good man except the wise man. "But," some one says, "if Socrates was condemned unjustly, he received an injury." At this point it is needful for us to understand that it is possible for some one to do me an injury and for me not to receive the injury. For example, if a man should steal something from my country-house and leave it in my town-house, he would have committed a theft, but I should have lost nothing. It is possible for one to become a wrong-doer, although he may not have done a wrong. If a man lies with his wife as if she were another

<Ess1-69>

ON FIRMNESS, vii. 4-viii. 1

man's wife, he will be an adulterer, though sbe will not be an adulteress. {**Jesus+**} Some one gave me poison, but the poison lost its efficacy by being mixed with food; the man, by giving the poison, became guilty of a crime, even if he did me no injury. A man is no less a murderer because his blow was foiled, intercepted by the victim's dress. All crimes, so far as guilt is concerned, are completed even before the accomplishment of the deed. Certain acts are of such a character, and are linked together in such a relation, that while the first can take place without the second, the second cannot take place without the first. I shall endeavour to make clear what I mean. I can move my feet without running, but I cannot run without moving my feet. It is possible for me, though being in the water, not to swim; but if I swim, it is impossible for me not to be in the water. To the same category belongs the matter under (discussion. If I have received an injury, it must necessarily have been done. If an injury was done, I have not necessarily received it; for many things can happen to avert the injury. Just as, for example, some chance may strike down the hand while it takes aim and turn the speeding missile aside, so it is possible that some circumstance may ward off injuries of any sort and intercept them in mid-course, with the result that they may have been done, yet not received.

Moreover, justice can suffer no injustice, because opposites do not meet. But no injury can be done without injustice; therefore no injury can be done to the wise man. And you need not be surprised; if no one can do him an injury, no one can do him a service either. The wise man, on the one hand, lacks nothing that he can receive as a gift; the evil
<Ess1-71>

ON FIRMNESS, viii. 1-3

man, on the other, can bestow nothing good enough for the wise man to have. For a man must have before he can give; the evil man, however, has nothing that the wise man would be glad to have transferred to himself. It is impossible, therefore, for any one either to injure or to benefit the wise man, since that which is divine does not need to be helped, and cannot be hurt; and the wise man is next-door neighbour to the gods and like a god in all save his mortality. As he struggles and presses on towards those things that are lofty, well-ordered, undaunted, that flow on with even and harmonious current, that are untroubled, kindly, adapted to the public good, beneficial both to himself and to others, the wise man will covet nothing low, will never repine. The man who, relying on reason, marches through mortal vicissitudes with the spirit of a god, has no vulnerable spot where he can receive an injury. From man only do you think I mean? No, not even from Fortune, who, whenever she has encountered virtue, has always left the field outmatched. If that supreme event, beyond which outraged laws and the most cruel masters have nothing with which to threaten us, and in which Fortune uses up all her power, is met with calm and unruffled mind, and if it is realized that death is not an evil and therefore not an injury either, we shall much more easily bear all other things - losses and pains, disgrace, changes of abode, *bereavements, and separations. These things cannot overwhelm the wise man, even though they all encompass him at once; still less does he grieve when they assault him singly. And if he bears composedly the injuries of Fortune, how much
<Ess1-73>

ON FIRMNESS, viii. 3-ix. 3

the more will he bear those of powerful men, whom he knows to be merely the instruments of Fortune!

All such things, therefore, he endures in the same way that he submits to the rigours of winter and to inclement weather, to fevers and disease, and the other accidents of chance; nor does he form so high an estimate of any man as to think that he has done anything with the good judgement that is found only in the wise man./a All others are actuated, not by judgement, but by delusions and deceptions and ill-formed impulses of the mind, which the wise men <sic> sets down to the account of chance; but every power of Fortune rages round about us and strikes what counts for naught!

Consider, further, that the most extensive opportunity for injury is found in those things through which some danger is contrived for us, as, for example, the suborning of an accuser, or the bringing of a false accusation, or the stirring up of the hatred of the powerful against us, and all the other forms of robbery that exist among civilians. Another common type of injury arises when a man has his profits or a long-chased prize torn from his grasp, as when a legacy which he has made great effort to secure is turned aside, or the goodwill of a lucrative house is withdrawn. All this the wise man escapes, for he knows nothing of directing his life either towards hope or towards fear. Add, further, that no man receives an injury without some mental disturbance, yea more, he is perturbed even by the thought of it; but the man who has been saved from error, who is self- controlled and has deep and calm repose, is free from such perturbation. For if an
<Ess1-75>

ON FIRMNESS, ix. 3-x. 1

injury reaches him, it does stir and incite him; yet, if he is a wise man, he is free from that anger which is aroused by the mere appearance of injury, and in no other way could he be free from the anger than by being free also from the injury, knowing that an injury can never be done to him. For this reason he is so resolute and cheerful, for this reason he is elate with constant joy. So far, moreover, is he from shrinking from the buffetings of circumstances or of men, that he counts even injury profitable, for through it he finds a means of putting himself to the proof and makes trial of his virtue. Let us, I beseech you, be silent\a in the presence of this proposition, and with impartial minds and ears give heed while the wise man is made exempt from injury! Nor because of it is aught diminished from your wantonness, or from your greediest lusts, or from your blind presumption and pride! You may keep your vices - it is the wise man for whom this liberty is being sought. Our aim is not that you may be prevented from doing injury, but that the wise man may cast all injuries far from him, and by his endurance and his greatness of soul protect himself from

them. Just so in the sacred games many have won the victory by wearing out the hands of their assailants through stubborn endurance. Do you, then, reckon the wise man in this class of men - the men who by long and faithful training have attained the strength to endure and tire out any assault of the enemy. Having touched upon the first part of the discussion, let us now pass to the second, in which by arguments - some of them our own, most of them, however, common to our school - we shall disprove the possibility of insult. It is a slighter offence than
<Ess1-77>

ON FIRMNESS, x. i-4

injury, something to be complained of rather than avenged, something which even the laws have not deemed worthy of punishment. This feeling is stirred by a sense of humiliation as the spirit shrinks before an uncomplimentary word or act. "So- andso did not give me an audience today, though he gave it to others"; "he haughtily repulsed or openly laughed at my conversation"; "he did not give me the seat of honour, but placed me at the foot of the table." These and similar reproaches - what shall I call them but the complainings of a squeamish temper? And it is generally the pampered and prosperous who indulge in them; for if a man is pressed by worse ills, he has not time to notice such things. By reason of too much leisure natures which are naturally weak and effeminate and, from the dearth of real injury, have grown spoiled, are disturbed by these slights, the greater number of which are due to some fault in the one who so interprets them. Therefore any man who is troubled by an insult shows himself lacking in both insight and belief in himself; for he decides without hesitation that he has been slighted, and the accompanying sting is the inevitable result of a certain abjectness of spirit, a spirit which depreciates itself and bows down to another. But no one can slight the wise man, for he knows his own greatness and assures himself that no one is accorded so much power over him, and all these feelings, which I prefer to call rather annoyances than distresses of the mind, he does not have to overcome - nay, he does not even have them. Quite different are the things that do buffet the wise man, even though they do not overthrow him, such as bodily pain and infirmity, or the loss of friends
<Ess1-79>

ON FIRMNESS, x. 4-xi. 2

and children, and the ruin that befalls his country amid the flames of war. I do not deny that the wise man feels these things; for we do not claim for him the hardness of stone or of steel. There is no virtue that fails to realize that it does endure. What, then, is the case? The wise man does receive some wounds, but those that he recieves he binds up, arrests, and heals; these lesser things he does not even feel, nor does he employ against them his accustomed virtue of bearing hardship, but he either fails to notice them, or counts them worthy of a smile.

Moreover, since, in large measure, insults come from the proud and arrogant and from those who bear prosperity ill, the wise man possesses that which enables him to scorn their puffed- up attitude - the noblest of all the virtues, magnanimity. This passes over everything of that sort as of no more consequence than the delusive shapes of dreams and the apparitions of the night, which have nothing in them that is substantial and real. At the same time he remembers this, - that all others are so much his own inferiors that they would not presume to despise what is so far above them. The word "contumely" is derived from the word "contempt," for no one outrages another by so grave a wrong unless he has contempt for him; but no man can be contemptuous of one who is greater and better than himself, even if his action is of a kind to which the contemptuous are prone. For children will strike their parents in the face, and the infant tumbles and tears his mother's hair and slobbers upon her, or exposes to the gaze of the family parts that were better covered over, and a child does not shrink from foul language. Yet we do not count any of these things an insult,
<Ess1-81>

ON FIRMNESS. xi. 2-xii. 2

And why? because he who does them is incapable of being contemptuous. For the same reason the waggery of slaves, insulting to their masters, amuses us, and their boldness at the expense of guests has license only because they begin with their master himself; and the more contemptible and even ridiculous any slave is, the more freedom of tongue he has. For this purpose some people buy

young slaves because they are pert, and they whet their impudence and keep them under an instructor in order that they may be practised in pouring forth streams of abuse; and yet we call this smartness, not insult. But what madness it is at one time to be amused, at another to be affronted, by the same things, and to call something, if spoken by a friend, a slander; if spoken by a slave, a playful taunt!

The same attitude that we have toward young slaves, the wise man has toward all men whose childhood endures even beyond middle age and the period of grey hairs. Or has age brought any profit at all to men of this sort, who have the faults of a childish mind with its defects augmented, who differ from children only in the size and shape of their bodies, but are not less wayward and unsteady, who are undiscriminating in their passion for pleasure, timorous, and peaceable, not from inclination, but from fear? Therefore no one may say that they differ in any way from children. For while children are greedy for knuckle-bones, nuts, and coppers, these are greedy for gold and silver, and cities; while children play among themselves at being magistrates, and in make-believe have their bordered toga, lictors' rods and tribunal, thine play in earnest at the same things in the Campus Martius and the
<Ess1-83>

ON FIRMNESS, xii. 2-xiii. 2

forum and the senate; while children rear their toy houses on the sea-shore with heaps of sand, these, as though engaged in a mighty enterprise, are busied in piling up stones and walls and roofs, and convert what was intended as a protection to the body into a menace.\a Therefore children and those who are farther advanced in life are alike deceived, but the latter in different and more serious things. And so the wise man not improperly considers insult from such men as a farce, and sometimes, just as if they were children, he will admonish them and inflict suffering and punishment, not because he has received an injury, but because they have committed one, and in order that they may desist from so doing. For thus also we break in animals by using the lash, and we do not get angry at them when they will not submit to a rider, but we curb them in order that by pain we may overcome their obstinacy. Now, therefore, you will know the answer to the question with which we are confronted: "Why, if the wise man cannot receive either injury or insult, does he punish those who have offered them?" For he is not avenging himself, but correcting them. But why is it that you refuse to believe that the wise man is granted such firmness of mind, when you may observe that others have the same, although for a different reason? What physician gets angry with a lunatic? Who takes in ill part the abuse of a man stricken with fever and yet denied cold water? The wise man's feeling towards all men is that of the physician towards his patients: he does not scorn to touch their privy parts if they need treatment, or to view the body's refuse and discharges, or to endure violent words from those who rage in delirium. <Ess1-85>

ON FIRMNESS, xiii. 2-4

The wise man knows that all who strut about in togas and in purple, as if they were well and strong, are, for all their bright colour, quite unsound, and in his eyes they differ in no way from the sick who are bereft of self-control. And so he is not even irritated if in their sick condition they venture to be somewhat impertinent to their physician, and in the same spirit in which he sets no value on the honours they have, he sets no value on the lack of honour they show. Just as he will not be flattered if a beggar shows him respect, nor count it an insult if a man from the dregs of the people, on being greeted, fails to return his greeting, so, too, he will not even look up if many rich men look up at him. For he knows that they differ not a whit from beggars {**equality**+} -yea, that they are even more wretched; since the beggar wants little, the rich man much. And, on the other hand, he will not be disturbed if the King of the Medes or King Attalus of Asia, ignoring his greeting, passes him by in silence and with a look of disdain. He knows that the position of such a man is no more to be envied than that of the slave in a large household whose duty it is to keep under constraint the sick and the insane. The men who traffic in wretched human chattels, buying and selling near the temple of Castor, whose shops are packed with a throng of the meanest slaves - if some one of these does not call me by name, shall I take umbrage? No, I think not. For of what good is a man who has under him none but the bad? Therefore, just as the wise man disregards this one's courtesy or discourtesy, so will he likewise disregard the king's: "You, O king, have under

you Parthians and Medes and Bactrians, but you hold them in cheek by fear; they never allow
<Ess1-87>

ON FIRMNESS, xiii. 4-xiv. 2

you to relax your bow; they are your bitterest enemies, open to bribes, and eager for a new master." Consequently the wise man will not be moved by any man's insult. For men may all differ one from another, yet the wise man regards them as all alike because they are all equally foolish; since if he should once so far condescend as to be moved either by insult or injury, he could never be unconcerned. Unconcern, however, is the peculiar blessing of the wise man, and he will never allow himself to pay to the one who offered him an insult the compliment of admitting that it was offered. For, necessarily, whoever is troubled by another's scorn, is pleased by his admiration.

Some men are mad enough to suppose that even a woman can offer them an insult. What matters it how they regard her, how many lackeys she has for her litter, how heavily weighted her ears, how roomy her sedan? She is just the same unthinking creature - wild, and unrestrained in her passions - unless she has gained knowledge and had much instruction. Some are affronted if a hairdresser jostles them, and some call the rudeness of a houseporter, an usher's arrogance, or a valet's loftiness an insult. O what laughter should such things draw! With what satisfaction should a man's mind be filled when he contrasts his own repose with the unrest into which others blunder! "What then?" you say, "will the wise man not approach a door that is guarded by a surly keeper?" Assuredly, if some necessary business summons him he will make the venture, and placate the keeper, be he what he may, as one quiets a dog by tossing him food, and he will not deem it improper to pay something in order that
<Ess1-89>

ON FIRMNESS, xiv. 2 - xv. 2

he may pass the threshold, remembering that even on some bridges one has to pay to cross. And so to the fellow, be he what he may, who plies this source of revenue at receptions, he will pay his fee; he knows that money will buy whatever is for sale. The man has a small mind who is pleased with himself because he spoke his mind to a porter, because he broke his staff on him, made his way to his master and demanded the fellow's hide. Whoever enters a contest becomes the antagonist of another, and, for the sake of victory, is on the same level. "But," you ask, "if a wise man receives a blow, what shall he do?" What Cato did when he was struck in the face. He did not flare up, he did not avenge the wrong, he did not even forgive it, but he said that no wrong had been done. He showed finer spirit in not acknowledging it than if he had pardoned it. {**Prospero+**} But we shall not linger long upon this point. For who is not aware that none of the things reputed to be goods or ills appear to the wise man as they do to men at large? He does not regard what men consider base or wretched; he does not walk with the crowd, but as the planets make their way against the whirl of heaven,\a so he proceeds contrary to the opinion of the world. Therefore leave off saying: "Will the wise man, then, receive no injury if he is given a lashing, if he has an eye gouged out? Will he receive no insult if he is hooted through the forum by the vile words of a foul-mouthed crowd? If at a king's banquet he is ordered to take a place beneath the table and to eat with the slaves assigned to the most disreputable service? If he is foreed to bear whatever else can be thought of that will offend his native self-respect?"

No matter how great these things may come to be,
<Ess1-91>

ON FIRMNESS, xv. 2-5

whether in number or in size, their nature will remain the same. If small things do not move him, neither will the greater ones; if a few do not move him, neither will more. But from the measure of your own weakness you form your idea of an heroic spirit, and, having pictured how much you think that you can endure, you set the limit of the wise man's endurance a little farther on. But his virtue has placed him in another region of the universe; he has nothing in common with you. Therefore search out the hard things and whatever is grievous to bear - things from which the ear and the eye must shrink. The whole mass of them will not crush him and as he withstands them

singly, so will he withstand them united. He who says that one thing is tolerable for the wise man, another intolerable, and restricts the greatness of his soul to definite bounds, does him wrong; Fortune conquers us, unless we wholly conquer her. Do not suppose that such austerity is Stoic only. Epicurus, whom you claim as the advocate of your policy of inaction,\a who, as you think, enjoins the course that is soft and indolent and conducive to pleasure, has said, "Rarely does Fortune block the path of the wise man."\b How near he came to uttering a **manly+** sentiment! Will you speak more heroically and clear Fortune from his path altogether? This house of the wise man is cramped, without adornment, without bustle, without pomp, is guarded by no doormen who, with venal fastidiousness, discriminate between the visitors; but over its threshold, empty and devoid of keepers, Fortune does not pass. She knows that she has no place there, where nothing is her own.
<Ess1-93>

ON FIRMNESS, xvi. 1-4

But if even Epicurus, who most of all indulged the flesh, is up in arms against injury, how can such an attitude on our part seem incredible or to be beyond the bounds of human nature? He says that injuries are tolerable for the wise man; we say that injuries do not exist for him. Nor, indeed, is there any reason why you should claim that this wars against nature. We do not deny that it is an unpleasant thing to be beaten and hit, to lose some bodily member, but we deny that all such things are injuries. We do not divest them of the sensation of pain, but of the name of injury, which is not allowable so long as virtue is unharmed. Which of the two speaks more truly we will consider: as to contempt, at any rate, for injury both think alike. Do you ask, then, what is the difference between the two? The same difference that distinguishes two gladiators, both very brave, one of whom stops his wound and stands his ground, the other, turning to the shouting crowd, makes a sign that he has no wound, and permits no interference. There is no need for you to suppose that our difference is great; as to the point, and it is the only one that concerns you, both schools urge you to scorn injuries and, what I may call the shadows and suggestions of injuries, insults. And one does not need to be a wise man to despise these, but merely a man of sense - one who can say to himself: "Do I, or do I not, deserve that these things befall me? If I do deserve them, there is no insult - it is justice; if I do not deserve them, he who does the injustice is the one to blush." And this insult, so called, what is it? Some jest at the baldness of my head, the weakness of my eyes, the thinness of my legs, my build. But why is it an insult to be told what is self- evident?
<Ess1-95>

ON FIRMNESS, xvi. 4-xvii. 3

Something is said in the presence of only one person and we laugh; if several are present, we become indignant, and we do not allow others the liberty of saying the very things that we are in the habit of saying about ourselves. Jests, if restrained, amuse us; if unrestrained, they make us angry. Chrysippus says that a certain man grew indignant because someone had called him "a sea-wether."\a We saw Fidus Cornelius, the son-in-law of Ovidius Naso, shed tears in the senate, when Corbulo called him a plucked ostrich. In the face of other charges, damaging to his character and standing, the composure of his countenance was unruffled, but at one thus absurd out burst his tears! Such is the weakness of the mind when reason flees. Why are we offended if any one imitates our talk or walk, or mimimics some defect of body or speech? Just as if these would become more notorious by another's imitating them than by our doing them! Some dislike to hear old age spoken of and grey hairs and other things which men pray to come to. The curse of poverty galls some, but a man makes it a reproach to himself if he tries to hide it. And so sneerers and those who point their wit with insult are robbed of an excuse if you anticipate it with a move on your part. No one becomes a laughing-stock who laughs at himself. It is common knowledge that Vatinius, a man born to be a butt for ridicule and hate, was a graceful and witty jester. He uttered many a jest at the expense of his own feet and his scarred jowls.\b So he escaped the wit of his enemies - they outnumbered his afflictions - and, above all, Cicero's. If the man who, through constant abuse, had forgotten how to blush, was able, by reason of his brazen face, to do this, why
<Ess1-97>

ON FIRMNESS, xvii. 3-xviii. 2

should any one be unable to do so, who, thanks to the **liberal**+ studies and the training of philosophy, has attained to some growth? Besides, it is a sort of revenge to rob the man who has sought to inflict an insult of the pleasure of having done so. "Oh dear me!" he will say, "I suppose he didn't understand." Thus the success of an insult depends upon the sensitiveness and the indignation of the victim. The offender, too, will one day meet his match; some one will be found who will avenge you also.

Gaius Caesar, who amid the multitude of his other vices had a bent for insult, was moved by the strange desire to brand every one with some stigma, while he himself was a most fruitful source of ridicule; such was the ugliness of his pale face bespeaking his madness, such the wildness of his eyes lurking beneath the brow of an old hag, such the hideousness of his bald bead with its sprinkling of beggarly hairs. And he had, besides, a neck overgrown with bristles, spindle shanks, and enormous feet. It would be an endless task were I to attempt to mention the separate acts by which he cast insult upon his parents and grandparents and upon men of every class; I shall, therefore, mention only those which brought him to his destruction.

Among his especial friends there was a certain Asiaticus Valerius, a proud-spirited man who was hardly to be expected to bear with equanimity another's insults. At a banquet, that is at a public gathering, using his loudest voice, Gaius taunted this man with the way his wife behaved in sexual intercourse. Ye gods! what a tale for the ears of a husband! what a fact for an emperor to know! and what indecency that an emperor should go so far as to
<Ess1-99>

ON FIRMNESS, xviii. 2 - 5

report his adultery and his dissatisfaction in it to the woman's very husband -to say nothing of his being a consular, to say nothing of his being a friend! On the other hand, Chaerea, a tribune of the soldiers, had a way of talking that ill-accorded with Ms prowess; his voice was feeble and, unless you knew his deeds, was apt to stir distrust. When he asked for the watchword, Gaius would give him sometimes "Venus," sometimes "Priapus," seeking to taunt the man of arms, in one way or another, with wantonness. {**effeminacy**+} He himself, all the while, was in shining apparel, shod with sandals,\a and decked with gold. And so Chaerea was driven to use the sword in order to avoid having to ask for the watchword any more! Among the conspirators he was the first to lift his hand; it was he who with one blow severed the emperor's neck. After that from all sides blades showered upon him, avenging public and private wrongs, but the first hero was Chaerea, who least appeared one. Yet this same Gaius would interpret everything as an insult, as is the way of those who, being most eager to offer an affront, are least able to endure one. He became angry at Herennius Macer because he addressed him as Gaius, while a centurion of the first maniple\b got into trouble because he said "Caligula." For in the camp, where he was born and had been the pet of the troops, this was the name by which he was commonly called, nor was there ever any other by which he was so well known to the soldiers. But now, having attained to boots, he considered "Little Boots"\c a reproach and disgrace. This, then, will be our comfort: even if by reason of tolerance we omit revenge, some one will arise to bring the impertinent, arrogant, and injurious man to punish
<Ess1-101>

ON FIRMNESS, xviii. 5-xxx. 3

ment; for his offences are never exhausted upon one individual or in one insult. Let us turn now to the examples of those whose endurance we commend -for instance to that of Socrates, who took in good part the published and acted gibes directed against him in comedies,\a and laughed as heartily as when his wife Xanthippe drenched him with foul water. Antisthenes was taunted with having a barbarian, a Thracian woman, for his mother; his retort was that even the mother of the gods was from Mount Ida.\b

Strife and wrangling we must not come near. We should flee far from these things, and all the provocations thereto of unthinking people - which only the unthinking can give - should be ignored, and the honours and the injuries of the common herd be valued both alike. We must neither grieve over the one, nor rejoice over the other. Otherwise, from the fear of insults or from weariness of them, we shall fall short in the doing of many needful things, and, suffering from a womanish distaste for hearing anything not to our mind, we shall refuse to face both public and

private duties, sometimes even when they are for our wellbeing. At times, also, enraged against powerful men, we shall reveal our feelings with unrestrained liberty. {**Prospero+**} But not to put up with anything is not liberty; we deceive ourselves. **Liberty+** is having a mind that rises superior to injury, that makes itself the only source from which its pleasures spring, that separates itself from all external things in order that man may not have to live his life in disquietude, fearing everybody's laughter, everybody's tongue. For if any man can offer insult, who is there who cannot? But the truly wise man and the aspirant to wisdom
<Ess1-103>

ON FIRMNFSS, xix. 3-4

will use different remedies. For those who are not perfected and still conduct themselves in accordance with public opinion must bear in mind that they have to dwell in the midst of injury and insult; all misfortune will fall more lightly on those who expect it. The more honourable a man is by birth, reputation, and patrimony, the more heroically he should bear himself, remembering that the tallest ranks stand in the front battle- line. Let him bear insults, shameful words, civil disgrace, and all other degradation as he would the enemy's war-cry, and the darts and stones from afar that rattle around a soldier's helmet but cause no wound. Let him endure injuries, in sooth, as he would wounds though some blows pierce his armour, others his breast, never overthrown, nor even moved from his ground. Even if you are hard pressed and beset with fierce violence, yet it is a disgrace to retreat; maintain the post that Nature has assigned yoou. Do you ask what this may be? The post of a hero. {**noblesse_oblige+**} The wise man's succour is of another sort, the opposite of this; for while you are in the heat of action, he has won the victory. Do not war against your own good; keep alive this hope in your breasts until you arrive at truth, and gladly give ear to the better doctrine and help it on by your belief and prayer. That there should be something unconquerable, some man against whom Fortune has no power, works for the good of the commonwealth of mankind.
<Ess1-105>

BOOK III
TO NOVATUS ON **ANGER+**
BOOK I

You have importuned me, Novatus, to write on the subject of how anger may be allayed, and it seems to me that you had good reason to fear in an especial degree this, the most hideous and frenzied of all the emotions. For the other emotions have in them some element of peace and calm, while this one is wholly violent and has its being in an onrush of resentment, raging with a most inhuman lust for weapons, blood, and punishment, giving no thought to itself if only it can hurt another, hurling itself upon the very point of the dagger, and eager for revenge though it may drag down the avenger along with it. Certain wise men, therefore, have claimed that anger is temporary madness. {**Lear+**} For it is equally devoid of self- control, forgetful of decency, unmindful of ties, persistent and diligent in whatever it begins, closed to reason and counsel, excited by trifling causes, unfit to discern the right and true - the very counterpart of a ruin that is shattered in pieces where it overwhelms. But you have only to behold the aspect of those possessed by anger to know that they are insane. For as the marks of a madman are unmistakable - a bold and threatening mien, a gloomy
<Ess1-107>

ON ANGER, I. i. 3-7

brow, a fierce expression, a hurried step, restless hands, an altered colour, a quick and more violent breathing - so likewise are the marks of the angry man; his eyes blaze and sparkle, his whole face is crimson with the blood that surges from the lowest depths of the heart, his lips quiver, his teeth are clenched, his hair bristles and stands on end, his breathing is forced and harsh, his joints crack from writhing, he groans and bellows, bursts out into speech with scarcely intelligible words, strikes his hands together continually, and stamps the ground with his feet; his whole body is excited and "performs great angry threats"/a; it is an ugly and horrible picture of distorted and swollen frenzy -you cannot tell whether this vice is more execrable or more hideous. Other vices

may be concealed and cherished in secret; anger shows itself openly and appears in the countenance, and the greater it is, the more visibly it boils forth. Do you not see how animals of every sort, as soon as they bestir themselves for mischief, show premonitory signs, and how their whole body, forsaking its natural state of repose, accentuates their ferocity? Wild boars foam at the mouth and sharpen their tusks by friction, bulls toss their horns in the air and scatter the sand by pawing, lions roar, snakes puff up their necks when they are angry, and mad dogs have a sullen look. No animal is so hateful and so deadly by nature as not to show a fresh access of fierceness as soon as it is assailed by anger. And yet I am aware that the other emotions as well are not easily concealed; that lust and fear and boldness all show their marks and can be recognized beforehand. For no violent agitation can take hold of the mind without affecting in
<Ess1-109>

ON ANGER, 1. 1. 7-ii.3

some way the countenance. Where, then, lies the difference? In this - the other emotion
ns show, anger stands out.

Moreover, if you choose to view its results and the harm of it, no plague has cost the human race more dear. You will see bloodshed and poisoning, the vile countercharges of criminals,/a the downfall of cities and whole nations given to destruction, princely persons sold at public auction, houses put to the torch, and conflagration that halts not within the city-walls, but makes great stretches of the country glow with hostile flame./b Behold the most glorious cities whose foundations can scarcely be traced - anger cast them down. Behold solitudes stretching lonely for many miles without a single dweller - anger laid them waste. Behold all the leaders who have been handed down to posterity as instances of an evil fate - anger stabbed this one in his bed, struck down this one amid the sanctities of the feast,/c tore this one to pieces in the very home of the law and in full view of the crowded forum,/d forced this one to have his blood spilled by the murderous act of his son, another to have his royal throat cut by the hand of a slave, another to have his limbs stretched upon the cross. And hitherto I have mentioned the sufferings of individual persons only; what if, leaving aside these who sinely felt the force of anger's flame, you should choose to view the gatherings cut down by the sword, the populace butchered by soldiery let loose upon them, and whole peoples condemned to death in common ruin
<Ess1-111>

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as if either forsaking our protection, or despising our authority. Tell me, why do we see the people grow angry with gladiators, and so unjustly as to deem it an offence that they are not glad to die? They consider themselves affronted, and from mere spectators transform themselves into enemies, in looks, in gesture, and in violence. Whatever this may be, it is not anger, but mock anger, like that of children who, if they fall down, want the earth to be thrashed, and who often do not even know why they are angry - they are merely angry, without any reason and without being injured, though not without some semblance of injury and not without some desire of exacting punishment. And so they are deceived by imaginary blows and are pacified by the pretended tears of those who beg forgiveness, and mock resentment is removed by a mock revenge. "We often get angry," some one rejoins, "not at those who have hurt us, but at those who intend to hurt us; you may, therefore, be sure that anger is not born of injury."/a It is true that we do get angry at those who intend to hurt us, but by the very intention they do hurt us; the man who intends to do injury has already done it. "But," our friend replies, "that you may know that anger is not the desire to exact punishment, the weakest men are often angry at the most powerful, and if they have no hope" of inflicting punishment, they have not the desire. In the first place, I spoke of the desire to exact punishment, not of the power to do so; moreover, men do desire even what they cannot attain. In the second place, no one is so lowly that he cannot hope to punish even the loftiest of men; we all have power to do harm. Aristotle's
<Ess1-113>

ON ANGER, I. iii. 3-7

definition/a differs little from mine; for he says that anger is the desire to repay suffering. To trace the difference between his definition and mine would take too long. In criticism of both it may be said that wild beasts become angry though they are neither stirred by injury nor bent on the

punishment or the suffering of another; for even if they accomplish these ends, they do not seek them. But our reply must be that wild beasts and all animals, except man, are not subject to anger; for while it is the
foe of reason, it is, nevertheless, born only where reason dwells. Wild beasts have impulses, madness, fierceness, aggressiveness; but they no more have anger than they have luxuriousness. Yet in regard to certain pleasures they are less self-restrained than man. You are not to believe the words of the poet:

The boar his wrath forgets, the hind her trust in flight,
Nor bears will now essay the sturdy kine to fight./b

Their being aroused and spurred to action he calls their "wrath"; but they know no more how to be wroth than to pardon. Dumb animals lack the emotions of man, but they have certain impulses similar to these emotions. Otherwise, if they were capable of love and hate, they would also be capable of friendship and enmity, discord and harmony; and some traces of these qualities do appear in them also, but the qualities of good and bad are peculiar to the human breast. Wisdom, foresight, diligence, and reflection have been granted to no creature but man, and not only his virtues but also his faults have been withheld from the animals. {**Yahoo+**} As their outward form is wholly different from that of man, so is their inner
<Ess1-115>

ON ANGER, I. iii. 7-iv. 3

nature; its guiding and directing principle is cast in a different mould. They have a voice, it is true, but it is unintelligible, uncontrolled, and incapable of speech; they have a tongue, but it is shackled and not free to make many different movements. So likewise in them the ruling principle itself is lacking in fineness and precision. Consequently, while it forms impressions and notions of the things that arouse it to action, they are clouded and indistinct. It follows, accordingly, that while they have violent outbreaks and mental disturbances, they do not have fear and anxiety, sorrow and anger, but certain states similar to them. These, therefore, quickly pass and change to the exact reverse, and animals, after showing the sharpest frenzy and fear, will begin to feed, and their frantic bellowing and plunging is immediately followed by repose and sleep.

What anger is has now been sufficiently explained. The difference between it and irascibility is evident; it is like the difference between a drunken man and a drunkard, between a frightened man and a coward. An angry man may not be an irascible man; an irascible man may, at times, not be an angry man. The other categories which the Greeks, using a multiplicity of terms, establish for the different kinds of anger I shall pass over, since we have no distinctive words for them; and yet we call men bitter and harsh, and, just as often, choleric, rabid, brawlsome, captious, and fierce - all of which designate different aspects of anger. Here, too, you may place the peevish man, whose state is a mild sort of irascibility. Now there are certain kinds of anger which subside in noise; some are as persistent as they are common; some are fierce in deed but inclined to be frugal of
<Ess1-117>

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words some are vented in bitterness of speech and curses; certain kinds do not go beyond a word of complaint and a show of coolness, others are deep-seated and weighty and brood in a man There are a thousand different shapes of the multiform evil.

Hitherto we have inquired what anger is, whether it belongs to any other creature than man, how it differs from irascibility, and in how many aspects it appears; let us now inquire whether anger is in accordance with nature; whether it is expedient and ought, therefore, in some measure to be kept."/a Whether, it is in accordance with nature will become clear if we turn our eyes to man. What is more gentle than he while he is in a right state of mind? But what is more cruel than anger? What is more loving to others than man? What more hostile than anger? Man is born for mutual help; anger for mutual destruction. The one desires union, the other disunion; the one to help, the other to harm; one would succour even strangers, the other attack its best beloved; the one is ready even to expend himself for the good of others, the other to plunge into peril only if it can drag others along. Who, therefore, has less knowledge of the ways of Nature than the man who would ascribe to her best and most finished work this cruel and deadly vice? Anger, as I have said, is bent on punishment, and that such a desire should find a harbour in man's most peaceful breast accords least of all with his nature. For human life is founded on kindness and concord, and is

bound into an alliance for common help, not by terror, but by mutual love.

"What then; " you say; "is not correction sometimes necessary?" Of course it is; but with
<Ess1-119>

ON ANGER, I. vi. 1-3

discretion, not with anger. For it will not hurt, but will heal under the guise of hurting. As we apply the flame to certain spearshafts/a when they are crooked in order to straighten them, and compress them by driving in wedges, not to crush them, but to take out their kinks, so through pain applied to body and mind we reform the natures of men that are distorted by vice. Manifestly, a physician, in the case of slight disorders, tries at first not to make much change in his patient's daily habits; he lays down a regimen for food, drink, and exercise, and tries to improve his health only through a change in the ordering of his life. His next concern is to see that the amount is conducive to health. If the first amount and regimen fail to bring relief, he orders a reduction and lops off some things. If still there is no response, he prohibits food and disburdens the body by fasting. If these milder measures are unavailing he opens a vein, and then, if the limbs by continuing to be attached to the body are doing it harm and spreading the disease, he lays violent hands on them. No treatment seems harsh if its result is salutary. Similarly, it becomes a guardian of the law, the ruler of the state, to heal human nature by the use of words, and these of the milder sort, as long as he can, to the end that he may persuade a man to do what he ought to do, and win over his heart to a desire for the honourable and the just, and implant in his mind hatred of vice and esteem of virtue. Let him pass next to harsher language, in which he will still aim at admonition and reproof. Lastly, let him resort to punishment, yet still making it light and not irrevocable. Extreme punishment let him appoint only to extreme crime, so that no
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ON ANGER, I. vi. 4-vii. 1

man will lose his life unless it is to the benefit even of the loser to lose it. In only one particular will he differ from the physician. For while the one supplies to the patients to whom he has been unable to give the boon of life an easy exit from it, the other forcibly expels the condemned from life, covered with disgrace and public ignominy, not because he takes pleasure in the punishment of any one - for the wise man is far from such inhuman ferocity - but that they may prove a warning to all, and, since they were unwilling to be useful while alive, that in death at any rate they may be of service to the state. Man's nature, then, does not crave vengeance; neither, therefore, does anger accord with man's nature, because anger craves vengeance. And I may adduce here the argument of Plato - for what harm is there in using the arguments of others, so far as they are our own? "The good man," he says, "does no injury."/a Punishment injures; therefore punishment is not consistent with good, nor, for the same reason, is anger, since punishment is consistent with anger. If the good man rejoices not in punishment, neither will he rejoice in that mood which takes pleasure in punishment; therefore anger is contrary to nature.

Although anger be contrary to nature, may it not be right to adopt it, because it has often been useful? It rouses and incites the spirit, and without it bravery performs no splendid deed in war - unless it supplies the flame, unless it acts as a goad to spur on brave men and send them into danger. Therefore some think that the best course is to control anger, not to banish it, and by removing its excesses to confine it within beneficial bounds, keeping, however, that
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ON ANGER, I. vii. 1-viii. 1

part without which, action will be inert and the mind's force and energy broken. In the first place, it is easier to exclude harmful passions than to rule them, and to deny them admittance than, after they have been admitted, to control them; for when they have established themselves in possession, they are stronger than their ruler and do not permit themselves to be restrained or reduced. In the second place, Reason herself, to whom the reins of power have been entrusted, remains mistress only so long as she is kept apart from the passions: if once she mingles with them and is contaminated, she becomes unable to hold back those whom she might have cleared from her path. {**Anger_vs_reason**+} For when once the mind has been aroused and shaken, it becomes

the slave of the disturbing agent. There are certain things which at the start are under our control, but later hurry us away by their violence and leave us no retreat. As a victim hurled from the precipice has no control of his body, and, once cast off, can neither stop nor stay, but, speeding on irrevocably, is cut off from all reconsideration and repentance and cannot now avoid arriving at the goal toward which he might once have avoided starting, so with the mind - if it plunges into anger, love, or the other passions, it has no power to check its impetus; its very weight and the downward tendency of vice needs must hurry it on, and drive it to the bottom.

The best course is to reject at once the first incitement to anger, to resist even its small beginnings, and to take pains to avoid falling into anger. For if it begins to lead us astray, the return to the safe path is difficult, since, if once we admit the emotion and by our own free will grant it any authority, reason
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ON ANGER, 1. viii. 1-6

becomes of no avail; after that it will do, not whatever you let it, but whatever it chooses. The enemy, I repeat, must be stopped at the very frontier; for if he has passed it, and advanced within the city gates, he will not respect any bounds set by his captives. For the mind is not a member apart, nor does it view the passions merely objectively, thus forbidding them to advance farther than they ought, but it is itself transformed into the passion and is, therefore, unable to recover its former useful and saving power when this has once been betrayed and weakened. For, as I said before, these two do not dwell separate and distinct, but passion and reason are only the transformation of the mind toward the better or the worse. How, then, will the reason, after it has surrendered to anger, rise again, assailed and crushed as it is by vice? Or how shall it free itself from the motley combination in which a blending of all the worse qualities makes them supreme? "But," says some one, "there are those who control themselves even in anger." You mean, then, that they do none of the things that anger dictates, or only some of them? If they do none, it is evident that anger is not essential to the transactions oflife, and yet you were advocating it on the ground that it is something stronger than reason. I ask, in fine, is anger more powerful or weaker than reason? If it is more powerful, how will reason be able to set limitations upon it, since, ordinarily, it is only the less powerful thing that submits? If it is weaker, then reason without it is sufficient in itself for the accomplishment of our tasks, and requires no help from a thing less powerful. Yet you say, "There are those who, even though angry, remain true to themselves
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and are self-controlled." But when are they so? Only when anger gradually vanishes and departs of its own accord, not when it is at white heat; then it is the more powerful of the two. "What then?" you say; "do not men sometimes even in the midst of anger allow those whom they hate to get out safe and sound and refrain from doing them injury? " They do; but when? When passion has beaten back passion, and either fear or greed has obtained its end. Then there is peace, not wrought through the good offices of reason, but through a treacherous and evil agreement between the passions. Again, anger embodies nothing useful, nor does it kindle the mind to warlike deeds; for virtue, being self- sufficient, never needs the help of vice. Whenever there is need of violent effort, the mind does not become angry, but it gathers itself together and is aroused or relaxed according to its estimate of the need; just as when engines of war hurl forth their arrows, it is the operator who controls the tension with which they are hurled. "Anger," says Aristotle/a "is necessary, and no battle can be won without it - unless it fills the mind and fires the soul; it must serve, however, not as a leader, but as the common soldier. "But this is not true. For if it listens to reason and follows where reason leads, it is no longer anger, of which the chief characteristic is wilfulness. If, however, it resists and is not submissive when ordered, but is carried away by its own caprice and fury, it will be an instrument of the mind as useless as is the soldier who disregards the signal for retreat. If, therefore, anger suffers any limitation to be imposed upon it, it must be called by some other name - it has ceased to be anger;
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ON ANGER, 1. ix. 3-x. 3

for I understand this to be unbridled and ungovernable. If it suffers no limitation, it is a baneful thing and is not to be counted as a helpful agent. Thus either anger is not anger or it is useless. For the man who exacts punishment, not because he desires punishment for its own sake, but because it is right to inflict it, ought not to be counted as an angry man. The useful soldier will be one who knows how to obey orders; the passions are as bad subordinates they are leaders.

Consequently, reason will never call to its help blind and violent impulses over which it will itself have no control, which it can never crush save by setting against them equally powerful and similar impulses, as fear against anger, anger against sloth, greed against fear. May virtue be spared the calamity of having reason ever flee for help to vice! It is impossible for the mind to find here a sure repose; shattered and storm-tossed it must ever be if it depends upon its worst qualities to save it, if it cannot be brave without being angry, if it cannot be industrious without being greedy, if it cannot be quiet without being afraid - such is the tyranny under which that man must live who surrenders to the bondage of any passion. Is it not a shame to degrade the virtues into dependence upon the vices? Again, reason ceases to have power if it has no power apart from passion, and so gets to be on the same level with passion and like unto it. For what difference is there, if passion without reason is a thing as unguided as reason without passion is ineffective? Both are on the same level, if one cannot exist without the other. Yet who would maintain that passion is on a level with reason? "Passion," some one
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ON ANGER, 1. x. 4-xi. 3

says, "is useful, provided that it be moderate. "No, only by its nature can it be useful. If, however, it will not submit to authority and reason, the only result of its moderation will be that the less there is of it, the less harm it will do. Consequently moderate passion is nothing else than a moderate evil. "But against the enemy," it is said, "anger is necessary." Nowhere is it less so; for there the attack ought not to be disorderly, but regulated and under control. What else is it, in fact, but their anger - its own worst foe - that reduces to impotency the barbarians, who are so much stronger of body than we, and so much better able to endure hardship? So, too, in the case of gladiators skill is their protection, anger their undoing. Of what use, further, is anger, when the same end may be accomplished by reason? Think you the hunter has anger toward wild beasts? Yet when they come, he takes them, and when they flee, he follows, and reason does it all without anger. The Cimbrians and the Teutons/a "who poured over the Alps in countless thousands -what wiped them out so completely that even the news of the great disaster was carried to their homes, not by a messenger, but only by rumour, except that they substituted anger for valour? Anger, although it will sometimes overthrow and lay low whatever gets in its way, yet more often brings destruction on itself. Who are more courageous than the Germans? Who are bolder in a charge? Who have more love of the arms to which they are born and bred, which to the exclusion of all else become their only care? Who are more hardened to endurance of every kind, since they are, in large measure, provided with no protection for their bodies,
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ON ANGER, I. xi. 4-7

with no shelter against the continual rigour of the climate? Yet these are they whom the Spaniards and the Gauls and men of Asia and Syria, uninured to war, cut down before they could even glimpse a Roman legion, the victims of nothing else than anger. But mark you, once give discipline to those bodies, give reason to those minds that are strangers still to pampered ways, excess, and wealth, and we Romans t mention nothing further - shall assuredly be foreeel to return to the ancient Roman ways. How else did Fabius restore the broken forces of the state but by knowing how to loiter, to put off, and to wait/a - things of which angry men know nothing? The state, which was standing then in the utmost extremity, had surely perished if Fabius had ventured to do all that anger prompted. But he took into consideration the well-being of the state, and, estimating its strength, of which now nothing could be lost without the loss of all, he buried all thought of resentment and revenge and was concerned only with expediency and the fitting opportunity; he conquered anger before he conquered Hannibal. And what of Scipio? Did he not leave behind him Hannibal and the Carthaginian army and all those with whom he had reason to be angry, and dally so long/b in transferring the war to Africa that he gave to evil-minded people the impression that

he was a sensualist and a sluggard? What, too, of the other Scipio?/c Did he not sit before Numantia, idling much and long, and bear unmoved the reproach to himself and to his country that it took longer to conquer Numantia than to conquer Carthage? But by blockading and investing/d the enemy he forced them to such straits that they perished by
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ON ANGER, 1. xi. 8-xll. 4

their own swords. Anger,therefore,is not expedient even in battle or in war; for it is prone to rashness, and while it seeks to bring about danger, does not guard against it. The truest form of wisdom is to make a wide and long inspection, to put self in subjection, and then to move forward slowly and in a set direction.

"What then?" you ask; "will the good man not be angry if his father is murdered, his mother outraged before his eyes? "No, he will not be angry, but he will avenge them, will protect them.

Why, moreover, are you afraid that filial affection, even without anger, may not prove a sufficiently strong incentive for him? Or you might as well say: "What then? if a good man should see his father or his son under the knife, will he not weep, will he not faint?" But this is the way we see women act whenever they are upset by the slightest suggestion of danger. The good man will perform his duties undisturbed and unafraid; and he will in such a way do all that is worthy of a good man as to do nothing that is unworthy of a man. My father is being murdered - I will defend him; he is slain - I will avenge him, not because I grieve, but because it is my duty. "Good men are made angry by the injuries of those they love." When you say this, Theophrastus, you seek to make more heroic doctrine unpopular - you turn from the judge to the bystanders. Because each individual grows angry when such a mishap comes to those he loves, you think that men will judge that what they do is the right thing to be done; for as a rule every man decides that that is a justifiable passion which he acknowledges as his own. But they act in the same way if they
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ON ANGER, I. xii. 4-xiii. 1

are not well supplied with hot water, if a glass goblet is broken, if a shoe gets splashed with mud. Such anger comes, not from affection, but from a weakness - the kind we see in children, who will shed no more tears over lost parents than over lost toys. To feel anger on behalf of loved ones is the mark of a weak mind, not of a loyal one. For a man to stand forth as the defender of parents, children, friends, and fellow-citizens, led merely by his sense of duty, acting voluntarily, using judgement, using foresight, moved neither by impulse nor by fury - this is noble and becoming. Now no passion is more eager for revenge than anger, and for that very reason is unfit to take it; being unduly ardent and frenzied, as most lusts are, it blocks its own progress to the goal toward which it hastens, Therefore it has never been of advantage either in peace or in war; for it makes peace seem like war, and amid the clash of arms it forgets that the War-god shows no favour and, failing to control itself, it passes into the control of another. Again, it does not follow that the vices are to be adopted for use from the fact that they have sometimes been to some extent profitable. For a fever may bring relief in certain kinds of sickness, and yet it does not follow from this that it is not better to be altogether free from fever. A method of cure that makes good health dependent upon disease must be regarded with detestation. In like manner anger, like poison, a fall, or a shipwreck, even if it has sometimes proved an unexpected good, ought not for that reason to be adjudged wholesome; for ofttimes poisons have saved life./a Again, if any quality is worth having, the more of it there is, the better and the more desirable it becomes.
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ON ANGER, I. xix. 1-xiv. 1

If justice is a good, no one will say that it becomes a greater good after something has been withdrawn from it; if bravery is a good, no one will desire it to be in any measure reduced. Consequently, also, the greater anger is, the better it is; for who would oppose the augmentation of any good? And yet, it is not profitable that anger should be increased; therefore, that anger should exist either. That is not a good which by increase becomes an evil "Anger is profitable," it is said,

"because it makes men more warlike." By that reasoning, so is drunkenness too; for it makes men forward and bold, and many have been better at the sword because they were. the worse for drink. By the same reasoning you must also say that lunacy and madness are essential to strength, since frenzy often makes men more, powerful. But tell me, does not fear, in the opposite way, sometimes make a man bold, and does not the terror of death arouse even errant cowards to fight? But anger, drunkenness, fear, and the like, are base and fleeting incitements and do not give arms to virtue, which never needs the help of vice; they do, however, assist somewhat the mind that is otherwise slack and cowardly. No man is ever made braver through anger, except the one who would never have been brave without anger. It comes, then, not as a help to virtue, but as a substitute for it. And is it not -true that if anger were a good, it would come naturally to those who are the most perfect? But the fact is, children, old men, and the sick are most prone to anger, and weakness of any sort is by nature captious.

"It is impossible", says Theophrastus, "for a good man not to be angry with bad men." Accord-
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ON ANGER, I. xiv. 1-xv. 2

ing to this, the better a man is, the more irascible he will be; on the contrary, be sure that none is more peaceable, more free from passion, and less given to hate. Indeed, what reason has he for hating wrong-doers, since it is error that drives them to such mistakes? {**Prospero+**} But no man of sense will hate the erring; otherwise he will hate himself. Let him reflect how many times he offends against morality, how many of his acts stand in need of pardon; then he will be angry with himself also. For no just judge will pronounce one sort of judgement in his own case and a different one in the case of others. No one will be found, I say, who is able to acquit himself, and any man who calls himself innocent is thinking more of witnesses than conscience. How much more human to manifest toward wrong-doers a kind and fatherly spirit, not hunting them down but calling them back! If a man has lost his way and is roaming across our fields, it is better to put him upon the right path than to drive him out.

And so the man who does wrong ought to be set right both by admonition and by force, by measures both gentle and harsh, and we should try to make him a better man for his own sake, as well as for the sake of others, stinting, not our reproof, but our anger. For what physician will show anger toward a patient? "But," you say, "they are incapable of being reformed, there is nothing pliable in them, nothing that gives room for fair hope." Then let them be removed from human society if they are bound to make worse all that they touch, and let them, in the only way this is possible, cease to be evil - but let this be done without hatred. For what reason have I for
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ON ANGER, I xv. 2-xvi. 2

hating a man to whom I am offering the greatest service when I save him from himself? Does a man hate the members of his own body when he uses the knife upon them? There is no anger there, but the pitying desire to heal. Mad dogs we knock on the head; the fierce and savage ox we slay; sickly sheep we put to the knife to keep them from infecting the flock; unnatural progeny we destroy; we drown even children who at birth are weakly and abnormal. Yet it is not anger but reason that separates the harmful from the sound. For the one who administers punishment nothing is so unfitting as anger, since punishment is all the better able to work reform if it is bestowed with judgement. This is the reason Socrates says to his slave: "I would beat you if I were not angry." The slave's reproof he postponed to a more rational moment; at the time it was himself he reproved. Will there be any one, pray, who has passion under control, when even Socrates did not dare to trust himself to anger? Consequently, there is no need that correction be given in anger in order to restrain the erring and the wicked. For since anger is a mental sin, it is not right to correct wrong-doing by doing wrong. "What then? you exclaim; "shall I not be angry with a robber? Shall I not be angry with a poisoner? "No; for I am not angry with myself when I let my own blood. To every form of punishment will I resort, but only as a remedy. If you are lingering as yet in the first stage of error and are lapsing, not seriously, but often, I shall try to correct you by chiding, first in private, then in public. If you have already advanced so far that words can no longer bring you to your senses, then you shall be
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ON ANGER, I. xvi. 2-5

held in check by public disgrace. Should it be necessary to brand you in more drastic fashion, with a punishment you can feel, you shall be sent into exile, banished to an unknown region. Should your wickedness have become deep-rooted, demanding harsher remedies to niect your case, to chains and the state-prison we shall have resort. If with mind incurable you link crime to crime and are actuated no longer by the excuses which will never fail the evil man, but wrong-doing itself becomes to you pretext enough for doing wrong; if you have drained the cup of wickedness and its poison has so mingled with your vitals that it cannot issue forth without them; if, poor wretch! you have long desired to die, then we shall do you good service - we shall take from you that madness by which, while you harass others, you yourself are harassed, and to you who have long wallowed in the suffering of yourself and others we shall gladly give the only boon still left for you, death! Why should I be angry with a man to whom I am giving the greatest help? Sometimes the truest form of pity is to kill. If with the training of an expert physician I had entered a hospital or a rich man's household, I should not have prescribed the same treatment to all, though their diseases differed. Diverse, too, are the ills I see in countless minds, and I am called to cure the body politic; for each man's malady the proper treatment should be sought; let this one be restored by his own self- respect, this one by a sojourn abroad, this one by pain, this one by poverty, this one by the sword! Accordingly, even if as a magistrate I must put on my robe awry/a and summon the assembly by the trumpet/b I shall
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ON ANGER, I. xvi. 5-7

advance to the high tribunal, not in rage nor in enmity, but with the visage of the law, and as I pronounce those solemn words my voice will not be fierce, but rather grave and gentle, and not with anger, but with sternness, I shall order the law to be enforeed. And when I command a criminal to be beheaded, or sew up a parricide in the sack,/a or send a soldier to his doom, or stand a traitor or a public enemy upon the Tarpeian Rock, I shall have no trace of anger, but shall look and feel as I might if I were killing a snake or any poisonous creature. "We have to be angry," you say, "in order to punish." What! Think you the law is angry with men it does not know, whom it has never seen, who it hopes will never be? The spirit of the law, therefore, we should make our own - the law which shows not anger but determination. For if it is right for a good man to be angry at the crimes of wicked men, it will also be right for him to be envious of their prosperity. And what, indeed, seems more unjust than that certain reprobates should prosper and become the pets of fortune - men for whom there could be found no fortune bad enough? But the good man will no more view their blessings with envy than he views their crimes with anger. A good judge condemns wrongful deeds, but he does not hate them. "What then?" you say; "when the wise man shall have something of this sort to deal with, will not his mind be affected by it, will it not be moved from its usual calm?" I admit that it will; it will experience some slight and superficial emotion. For as Zeno says: "Even the wise man's mind will keep its scar long after th ewound has healed." He will
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a i.e., to be drowned
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ON ANGER, I. xvi. 7-xvii. 5

experience, therefore, certain suggestions and shadows of passion, but from passion itself he will be free.

Aristotle says a that certain passions, if one makes a proper use of them, serve as arms. And this would be true if, like the implements of war, they could be put on and laid aside at the pleasure of the user. But these "arms" which Aristotle would grant to virtue fight under their own orders; they await no man's gesture and are not possessed, but possess. Nature has given to us an adequate equipment in reason; we need no other implements. This is the weapon she has bestowed; it is strong, enduring, obedient, not double-edged or capable of being turned against its owner. Reason is all-sufficient in itself, serving not merely for counsel, but for action as well. What, really, is

more foolish than that reason should seek protection from anger - that which is steadfast from that which is wavering, that which is trustworthy from that which is untrustworthy, that which is well from that which is sick? Even in matters of action, in which alone the help of anger seems necessary, is it not true that reason, if left to itself, has far more power? For reason, having decided upon the necessity of some action, persists in her purpose, since she herself can discover no better thing to put in her place; therefore her determinations, once made, stand. But anger is often forced back by pity; for it has no enduring strength, but is a delusive inflation, violent at the outset. It is like the winds that rise from off the earth; generated from streams and marshes they have vehemence, but do not last. So anger begins with a mighty rush, then breaks down from untimely exhaustion, and though all its thoughts had been concerned with
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ON ANGER, 1. xvii. 5-xviii. 2

cruelty and unheard-of forms of torture, yet when the time is ripe for purnishment it has already become crippled and weak. Passion quickly falls, reason is balanced. But even if anger persists, it will often happen that having taken the blood of two or three victims it will cease to slay, although there there more who deserve to die. Its first blows are fierce; so serpents when they first crawl from their lair are charged with venom, but their fangs are harmless after they have been drained by repeated biting. Consequently, not all who have sinned alike are pushed alike, and often he who has committed the smaller sin receives the greater punishment, because he was subjected to anger when it was fresh. And anger is altogether unbalanced; it now rushes farther than it should, now halts sooner than it ought. For it indulges its own impulses, is capricious in judgement, refuses to listen to evidence, grants no opportunity for defence, maintains whatever position it has seized, and is never willing to surrender its judgement even if it is wrong.

Reason grants a hearing to both sides, then seeks to postpone action, even its own, in order that it may gain time to sift out the truth; but anger is precipitate. Reason wishes the decision that it gives to be just; anger wishes to have the decision which it has giv n seem the just decision. Reason considers nothing except the question at issue; anger is moved by trifling things that he outside the case. An overconfident demeanour, a voice too loud, boldness of speech, foppishness in dress, a pretentious show of patronage, popularity with the public - these inflame anger. Many times it will condemn the accused because it hates his lawyer; even if the truth is
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ON ANGER, I. xviii. 2

piled up before its very eyes, it loves error and clings to it; it refuses to be convinced, and having entered upon wrong it counts persistence to be more honourable than penitence.

There was Gnaeus Piso, whom I can remember; a man free from many vices, but misguided, in that he mistook inflexibility a for firmness. Once when he was angry he ordered the execution of a soldier who had returned from leave of absence without his comrade, on the ground that if the man did not produce his companion, he had killed him; and when the soldier asked for a little time to institute a search, the request was refused. The condemned man was led outside the rampart, and as he was in the act of presenting his neck, there suddenly appeared the very comrade who was supposed to have been murdered. Hereupon the centurion in charge of the execution bade the guardsman sheathe his sword, and led the condemned man back to Piso in order to free Piso from blame; for Fortune had freed the soldier. A huge crowd amid great rejoicing in the camp escorted the two comrades locked in each other's arms. Piso mounted the tribunal in a rage, and ordered both soldiers to be led to execution, the one who had done no murder and the one who had escaped it! Could anything have been more unjust than this? Two were dying because one had been proved innocent. But Piso added also a third; for he ordered the centurion who had brought back the condemned man to be executed as well. On account of the innocence of one man three were appointed to die in the selfsame place. O how clever is anger in devising excuses for its madness! "You," it says, "I order to be executed because you were condemned; you,
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ON ANGER, I. xviii. 6-xix. 4

because you were the cause of your comrade's condemnation; you, because you did not obey your commander when, you were ordered to kill." It thought out three charges because it had grounds for none.

Anger, I say, has this great fault - it refuses to be ruled.
It is enraged against truth itself if this is shown to be contrary to its desire. With outcry and uproar and gestures that shake the whole body it pursues those whom it has marked out, heaping upon them abuse and curses. Not thus does reason act. But if need should so require, it silently and quietly wipes out whole families root and branch, and households that are baneful to the state it destroys together with wives and children; it tears down their very houses, levelling them to the ground, and exterminates the very names of the foes of liberty. All this it will do, but with no gnashing of the teeth, no wild tossing of the head, doing nothing that would be unseemly for a judge, whose countenance should at no time be more calm and unmoved than when he is delivering a weighty sentence. "What is the need," asks Hieronymus,/a "of biting your own lips before you start to give a man a thrashing?" What if he had seen a proconsul leap down from the tribunal, snatch the fasces from the lictor, and tear his own clothes because some victim's clothes were still untorn! What is to be gained by overturning the table, by hurling cups upon the floor, by dashing oneself against pillars, tearing the hair, and smiting the thigh and the breast? How mighty is the anger, think you, which turns back upon itself because it cannot be vented upon another as speedily as it

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a See Index
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ON ANGER, I. xix. 4-8

desires! And so such men are seized by the bystanders and begged to become at peace with themselves.

None of these things will he do, who, being free from anger, imposes upon each one the punishment that he merits. He will often let a man go free even after detecting his guilt. If regret for the act warrants fair hope, if he discerns that the Sin does not issue from the inmost soul of the man, but, so to speak, is only skin-deep, he will grant him impunity, seeing that it will injure neither the recipient nor the giver. Sometimes he will ban great crimes less ruthlessly than small ones, if these, in the one case, were committed not in cruelty but in a moment of weakness, and, in the other, were instinct with secret, hidden, and long-practised cunning. To two men guilty of the same offence he will mete out different punishment, if one sinned through carelessness, while the other intended to be wicked. Always in every case of punishment he will keep before him the knowledge that one form is designed to make the wicked better, the other to remove them; in either case he will look to the future, not to the past, For as Plato says:/a "A sensible person does not punish a man because he has sinned, but in order to keep him from sin; for while the past cannot be recalled, the future may be forestalled." And he will openly kill those whom he wishes to have serve as examples of the wickedness that is slow to yield, not so much that they themselves may be destroyed as that they may deter ethers from destruction. These are the things a man must weigh and consider, and you see how free he ought to be from all emotion when he proceeds to deal with a matter that requires the
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ON ANGER, I. xix. 8-xx. 4

utmost caution - the use of power over life and death. 'Tis ill trusting an angry man with a sword.

And you must not suppose this, either - that anger contributes anything to greatness of soul. That is not greatness, it is a swelling; nor when disease distends the body with a mass of watery corruption is the result growth, but a pestilent excess. All whom frenzy of soul exalts to powers that are more than human believe that they breathe forth something lofty and sublime; but it rests on nothing solid, and whatever rises without a firm foundation is liable to fall. Anger has nothing on which to stand; it springs from nothing that is stable and lasting, but is a puffed-up, empty thing, as far removed from greatness of soul as foolhardiness is from bravery, arrogance from confidence, sullenness from austerity, or cruelty from sternness. The difference between a lofty and a haughty soul, I say, is great. Anger aims at nothing splendid or beautiful. On the other hand, it

seems to me to show a feeble and harassed spirit, one conscious of its own weakness and oversensitive, just as the body is when it is sick and covered with sores and makes moan at the slightest touch. Thus anger is a most womanish and childish weakness. "But," you will say, "it is found in men also." True, for even men may have childish and womanish natures. "What then?" you cry; "do not the utterances of angry men sometimes seem to be the utterances of a great soul?" Yes, to those who do not know what true greatness is. Take the famous words: "Let them hate if only they fear,"/a which are so dread and shocking that you might know that they were written in the times of Sulla. I am not sure which wish was worse -that
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he should be hated or that he should be feared. "Let them hate," quoth he; then he bethinks him that there will come a time when men will curse him, plot against him, overpower him - so what did he add? O may the gods curse him for devising so hateful a cure for hate! "Let them hate" - and then what? "If only they obey?"

No! If only they approve? No! What then? "If only they fear!"

On such terms I should not have wished even to be loved. You think this the utterance of a great soul? You deceive yourself; for there is nothing great in it - it is monstrous.

You need put no trust in the words of the angry, for their noise is loud and threatening, but within, their heart is very cowardly. Nor need you count as true the saying found in that most eloquent writer, Titus Livius:/a "A man whose character was great rather than good." In character there can be no such separation; it will either be good or else not great, because greatness of soul, as I conceive it, is a thing unshakable, sound to the core, uniform and strong from top to bottom - something that cannot exist in evil natures. Evil men may be terrible, turbulent, and destructive, but greatness they will never have, for its support and stay is goodness. Yet by speech, by endeavour, and by all outward display they will give the impression of greatness; they will make utterances which vou may think bespeak the great soul, as in the case if Gaius Caesar./b He grew angry at heaven because its thunder interrupted some pantomimists, whom he was more anxious to imitate than to watch, and when its thunderbolts - surely they missed their mark - affrighted his own revels, he challenged Jove to
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fight, even to the death, shouting in the words of Homer:

Or uplift me, or I will thee./a

What madness! He thought that not even Jove could harm him, or that he could harm even Jove. I suppose that these words of his had no little weight in arousing the minds of conspirators; for to put up with a man who could not put up with Jove seemed the limit of endurance!

There is in anger, consequently, nothing great, nothing noble, even when it seems impassioned, contemptuous alike of gods and men. Else let him who thinks that anger reveals the great soul, think that luxury does the same; it desires to rest on ivory, to be arrayed in purple, to be roofed with gold, to remove lands, to confine the waters of the sea, to hurl rivers headlong,/b to hang gardens in the air. Let him think that avarice also betokens the great soul; it broods over heaps of gold and silver, it tills fields that are provinces in all but name, and holds under a single steward broader acres than were allotted once to consuls. Let him also think that lust betokens the great soul; it swims across straits, it unsexes lads by the score, and despising death braves the husband's sword. And let him think that ambition also betokens the great soul; it is not content with annual office; it would fill the calendar with only one name if that might be, and set up its memorials throughout all the world. Such qualities, it matters not to what height or length they reach, are all narrow, pitiable, grovelling. Virtue alone is lofty and sublime, and nothing is great that is not at the same time tranquil. <Ess1-165>

BOOK IV
NOVATUS ON ANGER

My first book, Novatus, had a more bountiful theme; for easy is the descent into the downward course of vice./a Now we must come to narrower matters; for the question is whether anger originates from choice or from impulse, that is, whether it is aroused of its own accord, or whether, like much else that goes on within us, it does not arise without our knowledge. But the discussion must be lowered to the consideration of these things in order that it may afterwards rise to the other, loftier, themes. For in our bodies, too, there comes first the system of bones, sinews, and joints, which form the framework of the whole and are vital parts, yet are by no means fair to look upon; next the parts on which all the comeliness of face and appearance depend, and after all these, when the body is now complete, there is added last that which above all else captivates the eye, the colour.

There can be no doubt that anger is aroused by the direct impression of an injury; but the question is whether it follows immediately upon the impression and springs up without assistance from the mind, or whether it is aroused only with the assent of the mind.
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ON ANGER, II. i. 4-ii. 3

Our opinion is that it ventures nothing by itself, but acts only with the approval of the mind. For to form the impression of having received an injury and to long to avenge it, and then to couple together the two propositions that one ought not to have been wronged and that one ought to be avenged - this is not a mere impulse of the mind acting without our volition. The one is a single mental process, the other a complex one composed of several elements; the mind has grasped something, has become indignant, has condemned the act, and now tries to avenge it. These processes are impossible unless the mind has given assent to the impressions that moved it.

"But," you ask, "what is the purpose of such an inquiry?" I answer, in order that we may know what anger is; for if it arises against our will, it will never succumb to reason. For all sensations that do not result from our own volition are uncontrolled and unavoidable, as, for example, shivering when we are dashed with cold water and recoilment from certain contacts; bad news makes the hair stand on end, vile language causes a blush to spread, and when one looks down from a precipice, dizziness follows. Because none of these things lies within our control, no reasoning can keep them from happening. But anger may be routed at our behest; for it is a weakness of the mind that is subject to the will, not one of those things that result from some condition of the general lot of man and therefore befall even the wisest, among which must be placed foremost that mental shock which affects us after we have formed the impression of a wrong committed. This steals upon us even from the sight of plays upon the stage
<Ess1-169>

ON ANGER, II. ii. 3-iii.1

and from reading of happenings of long ago. How often we seem to grow angry with Clodius for banishing Cicero, with Antony for killing him! Who is not aroused against the arms which Marius took up, against the proscription which Sulla used? Who is not incensed against Theodotus and Achillas, and the child himself/a who dared an unchildish crime? Singing sometimes stirs us, and quickened rhythm, and the well-known blare of the War-god's trumpets; our minds are perturbed by a shocking picture and by the melancholy sight of punishment even when it is entirely just; in the same way we smile when others smile, we are saddened by a throng of mourners, and are thrown into a ferment by the struggles of others. Such sensations, however, are no more anger than that is sorrow which furrows the brow at sight of a mimic shipwreck, {**sentiment**+} no more anger than that is fear which thrills our minds when we read how Hannibal after Cannae beset the walls of Rome, but they are all emotions of a mind that would prefer not to be so affected; they are not passions, but the beginnings that are preliminary to passions. So, too, the warrior in the midst of peace, wearing now his civilian dress, will prick up his ears at the blast of a trumpet, and army horses are made restive by the clatter of arms. It is said that Alexander, when Xenophantus/b

played the flute, reached for his weapons. None of these things which move the mind through the agency of chance should be called passions; the mind suffers them, so to speak, rather than causes them. Passion, consequently, does not consist in being moved by the impressions that are presented to the mind, but in surrendering to these and follow-
<Ess1-171>

ON ANGER, II. iii. 2-5

ing up such a chance prompting. For if any one supposes that pallor, falling tears, prurient itching or deep-drawn sigh, a sudden brightening of the eyes, and the like, are an evidence of passion and a manifestation of the mind, he is mistaken and fails to understand that these are disturbances of the body. And so very often even the bravest man turns pale while he fits on his arms, the knees of the boldest soldier often tremble a little when the battle-signal is given, the mighty commander has his heart in his throat before the battle-lines clash, and while the most eloquent orator is getting ready to speak, his extremities become rigid, Anger must not only be aroused but it must rush forth, for it is an active impulse; but an active impulse never comes without the consent of the will, for it is impossible for a man to aim at revenge and punishment without the cognizance of his mind. A man thinks himself injured, wishes to take vengeance, but dissuaded by some consideration immediately calms down. This I do not call anger, this prompting of the mind which is submissive to reason; anger is that which overleaps reason and sweeps it away. Therefore that primary disturbance of the mind which is excited by the impression of injury is no more anger than the impression of injury is itself anger; the active impulse consequent upon it, which has not only admitted the impression of injury but also approved it, is really anger - the tumult of a mind proceeding to revenge by choice and determination. There can never be any doubt that as fear involves flight, anger involves assault; consider, therefore, whether you believe that anything can either be assailed or avoided without the mind's assent.
<Ess1-173>

ON ANGER, II. iv. 1-v. 3

That you may know, further, how the passions begin, grow, and run riot, I may say that the first prompting is involuntary, a preparation for passion, as it were, and a sort of menace; the next is combined with an act of volition, although not an unruly one, which assumes that it is right for me to avenge myself because I have been injured, or that it is right for the other person to be punished because he has committed a crime; the third prompting is now beyond control, in that it wishes to take vengeance, not if it is right to do so, but whether or no, and has utterly vanquished reason. We can no more avoid by the use of reason that first shock which the mind experiences than we can avoid those effects mentioned before which the body experiences - the temptation to yawn when another yawns, and winking when fingers are suddenly pointed toward the eyes. Such impulses cannot be overcome by reason, although perchance practice and constant watchfulness will weaken them. Different is that prompting which is born of the judgement, is banished by the judgement. This point also must now be considered, whether those who are habitually cruel and rejoice in huxan blood are angry when they kill people from whom they have neither received injury nor think even themselves that they have received one; of such sort were Apollodorus a and Phalaris./a But this is not anger, it is brutality; for it does not harm because it has received an injury, but it is even ready to receive one provided that it can harm, and its purpose in desiring to beat and to mangle is not vengeance but pleasure. And why does it happen? The source of this evil is anger, and when anger from
<Ess1-175>

ON ANGER, II. V. 3-vi. 1

oft-repeated indulgence and surfeit has arrived at a disregard for mercy and has expelled from the mind every conception the human bond, it passes at last into cruelty. And so these men laugh and rejoice and experience great pleasure, and wear a countenance utterly unlike that of anger, making a pastime of ferocity. When Hannibal saw a trench flowing with human blood, he is said to have exclaimed, "O beauteous sight!" How much more beautiful would it have seemed to him if the blood had filled some river or lake! What wonder, O Hannibal, if you, born to bloodshed and from childhood familiar with slaughter, find especial delight in this spectacle? A fortune will attend you

that for twenty years will gratify your cruelty, and will everywhere supply to your eyes the welcome sight; you will see it at Trasumennus and at Cannae, and last of all at your own Carthage! Only recently Volesus, governor of Asia under the deified Augustus, beheaded three hundred persons in one day, and as he strutted among the corpses with the proud air of one who had done some glorious deed worth beholding, he cried out in Greek, "What a kingly act!" But what would he have done if he had been a king? No, this was not anger, but an evil still greater and incurable. "If," some one argues, "virtue is well disposed toward what is honourable, it is her duty to feel anger toward what is base." What if he should say that virtue must be both low and great? And yet this is what he does say - he would have her be both exalted and debased, since joy on account of a right action is splendid and glorious, while anger on account of another's sin is mean and narrow-minded.
<Ess1-177>

ON ANGER, II. vi. 2-vii. 2

And virtue will never be guilty of simulating vice in the act of redressing it; anger in itself she considers reprehensible, for it is in no way better, often even worse, than those shortcomings which provoke anger. The distinctive and natural property of virtue is to rejoice and be glad; it no more comports with her dignity to be angry than to be sad. But sorrow is the companion of anger, and all anger comes round to this as the result either of remorse or of defeat. Besides, if it is the part of a wise man to be angry at sin, the greater this is the more angry will he be, and he will be angry often; it follows that the wise man will not only become angry, but will be prone to anger. But if we believe that neither great anger nor frequent anger has a place in the mind of a wise man, is there any reason why we should not free him from this passion altogether? No limit, surely, can be set if the degree of his anger is to be determined by each man's deed. For either he will be unjust if he has equal anger toward unequal delinquencies, or he will be habitually angry if he blazes up every time crimes give him warrant.

And what is more unworthy of the wise man than that his passion should depend upon the wickedness of others? Shall great Socrates lose the power to carry back home the same look he had brought from home? But if the wise man is to be angered by base deeds, if he is to be perturbed and saddened by crimes, surely nothing is more woeful than the wise man's lot; his whole life will be passed in anger and in grief. For what moment will there be when he will not see something to disapprove of? Every time he leaves his house, he will have to walk among criminals and misers and spendthrifts and
<Ess1-179>

ON ANGER, II. vii. 2-viii. 3

profligates - men who are happy in being such. Nowhere will he turn his eyes without finding something to move them to indignation. He will give out if he forces himself to be angry every time occasion requires. All these thousands hurrying to the forum at break of day - how base their cases, and how much baser are their advocates! One assails his father's will, which it were more fitting that he respect; another arraigns his mother at the bar; another comes as an informer of the very crime in which he is more openly the culprit; the judge, too, is chosen who will condemn the same deeds that he himself has committed, {**Lear+**} and the crowd, misled by the fine voice of a pleader, shows favour to a wicked cause.

But why recount all the different types? Whenever you see the forum with its thronging multitude, and the polling-places filled with all the gathered concourse, and the great Circus where the largest part of the populace displays itself, you may be sure that just as many vices are gathered there as men. Among those whom you see in civilian garb there is no peace; for a slight reward any one of them can be led to compass the destruction of another; no one makes gain save by another's loss; the prosperous they hate, the un prosperous they despise; superiors they loathe, and to inferiors are loathsome; they are goaded on by opposite desires; they desire for the sake of some little pleasure or plunder to see the whole world lost. They live as though they were in a gladiatorial school - Those with whom they eat, they likewise fight. It is a community of wild beasts, only that beasts are gentle toward each other and refrain from tearing their own kind, while men
<Ess1-181>

ON ANGER, II. viii. ix. 3

glut themselves with rending one another. They differ from the dumb animals in this alone - that animals grow gentle toward those who feed them, while men in their madness prey upon the very persons by whom they are nurtured. {**Yahoo+**} Never will the wise man cease to be angry if once he begins. Every place is full of crime and vice; too many crimes are committed to be cured by any possible restraint. Men struggle in a mighty rivalry of wickedness. Every day the desire for wrong-doing is greater, the dread of it less; all regard for what is better and more just is banished, lust hurls itself wherever it likes, and crimes are now no longer covert. They stalk before our very eyes, and wickedness has come to such a public state, has gained such power over the hearts of all, that innocence is not rare - it is non- existent. For is it only the casual man or the few who break the law? On every hand, as if at a given signal, men rise to level all the barriers of right and wrong:

No guest from host is safe, nor daughter's sire
From daughter's spouse; e'en brothers' love is rare.
The husband doth his wife, she him, ensnare;
Ferocious stepdames brew their ghastly banes
The son too soon his father's years arraigns./a

And yet how few of all the crimes are these! The poet makes no mention of the battling camps that claim a common blood, of the parents and the children sundered by a soldier's oath, of the flames a Roman hand applied to Rome, of the hostile bands of horsemen that scour the land to find the hiding-places of citizens proscribed, of springs defiled by poison, of plague the hand of man has made, of the trench flung around beleaguered parents, of crowded prisons, of
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ON ANGER, II. ix. 3-x. 2

fires that burn whole cities to the ground, of baleful tyrannies and secret plots for regal power and for subversion of the state, of acts that now are glorified, but still are crimes so long as power endures to crush them, rape and lechery and the lust that spares not even human mouths. Add now to these, public acts of perjury between nations, broken treaties, and all the booty seized when resistance could not save it from the stronger, the double-dealings, the thefts and frauds and debts disowned - for such crimes all three forums/a supply not courts enough! If you expect the wise man to be as angry as the shamefulness of crimes compels, he must not be angry merely, but go mad. {**Saeva_indignatio+**}

This rather is what you should think - that no one should be angry at the mistakes of men. For tell me, should one be angry with those who move with stumbling footsteps in the dark? with those who do not heed commands because they are deaf? with children because forgetting the observance of their duties they watch the games and foolish sports of their playmates? Would you want to be angry with those who become weary because they are sick or growing old? Among the various ills to which humanity is prone there is this besides - the darkness {**caligo_mist+**} {**Prospero+**} that fills the mind, and not so much the necessity of going astray, as the love of straying. That you may not be angry with individuals, you must forgive mankind at large, you must grant indulgence to the human race. If you are angry with the young and the old because they sin, be angry with babes as well; they are destined to sin. But who is angry with children who are still too young to have the power of discrimination? Yet to be a human being is an even
<Ess1-185>

ON ANGER, II. x. 2-6

greater and truer excuse for error than to be a child. This is the lot to which we are born - we are creatures subject to as many ills of the mind as of the body, {**Orig_sin+**} and though our power of discernment is neither blunted nor dull, yet we make poor use of it and become examples of vice to each other. If any one follows in the footsteps of others who have taken the wrong road, should he not be excused because it was the public highway that led him astray? Upon the individual soldier the commander may unsheathe all his sternness, but he needs must forbear when the whole army

deserts. What, then, keeps the wise man from anger? The great mass of sinners. He understands both how unjust and how dangerous it is to grow angry at universal sin.

Whenever Heraclitus went forth from his house and saw all around him so many men who were living a wretched life - no, rather, were dying a wretched death - he would weep, and all the joyous and happy people he met stirred his pity; he was gentle- hearted, but too weak, and was himself one of those who had need of pity. Democritus, on the other hand, it is said, never appeared in public without laughing; so little did the serious pursuits of men seem serious to him. Where in all this is there room for anger? Everything gives cause for either laughter or tears.

The wise man will have no anger toward sinners. Do you ask why? Because he knows that no one is born wise but becomes so, knows that only the fewest in every age turn out wise, because he has fully grasped the conditions of human life, and no sensible man becomes angry with nature. Think you a sane man would marvel because apples do not hang from
<Ess1-187>

ON ANGER, II. x. 6-xi. 2

the brambles of the woodland? Would he marvel because thorns. And briars are not covered with some useful fruit? No one becomes angry with a fault for which nature stands sponsor. And so the wise man is kindly and just toward errors, he is not the foe, but the reformer of sinners, and as he issues forth each day his thought will be: "I shall meet many who are in bondage to wine, many who are lustful, many ungrateful, many grasping, many who are lashed by the frenzy of ambition." He will view all these things in as kindly a way as a physician views the sick. When the skipper finds that his ship has sprung her seams and in every part is letting in a copious flow of water, does he then become angry with the seamen and with the ship herself? No, he rushes rather to the rescue and shuts out a part of the flood, a part he bales out, and he closes up the visible openings, the hidden leaks that secretly let water into the hold he tries to overcome by ceaseless labour, and he does not relax his effort simply because as much water springs up as is pumped out. The succour against continuous and prolific evils must be tenacious, aimed not at their cessation but against their victory.

"Anger," it is said, "is expedient because it escapes contempt, because it terrifies the wicked." In the first place, if the power of anger is commensurate with its threats, for the very reason that it is terrible it is likewise hated; besides, it is more dangerous to be feared than to be scorned. If, however, anger is powerless, it is even more exposed to contempt and does not escape ridicule. For what is more silly than the futile blustering of anger? In the second place, because certain things are more
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ON ANGER, II. xi. 2-5

terrible, they are not for that reason preferable, and I would not have it said to the wise man: "The wild beast and the wise man have the same weapon; they are feared." What? Is not a fever feared, the gout, a malignant sore? And do they for that reason have any good in them? Or are they, on the contrary, all despised and loathsome and uLTIv. and for this and no other reason are feared? So anger is in ugly only repulsive and is by no means to be dreaded, yet most people fear it just as children fear a repulsive mask. And what of the fact that fear always recoils upon those who inspire it and that no one who is feared is himself unafraid? You may recall in this connexion the famous line of Laberius:

Full many he must fear whom many fear,/a

which when delivered in the theatre/ b in the height of civil war caught the ear of the whole people as if utterance had been given to the people's voice. Nature has so ordained it that whatever is mighty through the fear that others feel is not without its own. How even the lion's heart quakes at the slightest sound! The boldest of wild beasts is startled by a shadow or a voice or an unfamiliar smell. Whatever terrifies must also tremble. There is no reason, then, why any wise man should desire to be feared, nor should he think that anger is a mighty thing simply because it arouses dread, since even the most contemptible things, such as poisonous brews/c and noxious bones/d

and bites are likewise feared. Since a cord hung with feathers will stop the mightiest droves of wild beasts and guide them into traps, it is not strange that this from the very
<Ess1-191>

ON ANGER, II. xi. 5-xii. 4

result should be called a "scare "/a; for to the foolish foolish things are terrible. The speeding of the race chariot and the sight of its revolving wheels will drive back lions to their cage, and elephants are terrified by the squealing of a pig. And so we fear anger just as children fear the dark and wild beasts fear a gaudy feather. Anger in itself has nothing of the strong or the heroic, but shallow minds are affected by it. "Wickedness," it is said, "must be eliminated from the scheme of nature, if you would eliminate anger; neither, however, is possible." In the first place, one can avoid being cold although in the scheme of nature it is winter, and one can avoid being hot although the hot months are here. A man may either be protected against the inclemency of the season by a favourable place of residence, or he may by physical endurance subdue the sensation of both heat and cold. In the second place, reverse/b this statement: A man must banish virtue from his heart before he can admit wrath, since vices do not consort with virtues, and a man can no more be both angry and good at the same time than he can be sick and well. "But it is not possible," you say, "to banish anger altogether from the heart, nor does the nature of man permit it." Yet nothing is so hard and difficult that it cannot be conquered by the human intellect and be brought through persistent study into intimate acquaintance, and there are no passions so fierce and self-willed that they cannot be subjugated by discipline. Whatever command the mind gives to itself holds its ground. Some have reached the point of never smiling, some have cut themselves off from wine, others from sexual pleasure, others from every kind of drink; another, satisfied by short
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ON ANGER, II. xii. 4-xiii. 1

sleep, prolongs his waking hours unwearied; some have learned to run on very small and slanting ropes, to carry huge burdens that are scarcely within the compass of human strength, to dive to unmeasured depths and to endure the sea without any drawing of breath. There are a thousand other instances to show that persistence surmounts every obstacle and that nothing is really difficult which the mind enjoins itself to endure. The men I mentioned a little while ago had either no reward for their unflagging zeal or none worthy of it - for what glory does he attain who has trained himself to walk a tight rope, to carry a huge load upon his shoulders, to withhold his eyes from sleep, to penetrate to the bottom of the sea? - and yet by effort they attained the end for which they worked although the remuneration was not great. Shall we, then, not summon ourselves to endurance when so great a reward awaits us - the unbroken calm of the happy soul? How great a blessing to escape anger, the greatest of all ills, and along with it madness, ferocity, cruelty, rage, and the other passions that attend anger!

It is not for us to seek a defence for ourselves and an excuse for such indulgence by saying that it is either expedient or unavoidable; for what vice, pray, has ever lacked its defender? It is not for you to say that anger cannot be eradicated; the ills from which we suffer are curable, and since we are born to do right, nature herself helps us if we desire to be improved. Nor, as some think, is the path to the virtues steep and rough they are reached by a
<Ess1-195>

ON ANGER, II. xiii. 2-xiv. 2

level road. It is no idle tale that I come to tell you. The road to the happy life is an easy one; do but enter on it - with good auspices and the good help of the gods themselves! It is far harder to do what you are now doing. What is more reposeful than peace of mind, what more toilsome than anger? What is more disengaged than mercy, what more busy than cruelty? Chastity keeps holiday, while lust is always occupied. In short, the maintenance of all the virtues is easy, but it is costly to cultivate the vices. Anger must be dislodged - even those who say that it ought to be reduced admit this in part; let us be rid of it altogether, it can do us no good. Without it we shall more easily and more justly abolish crimes, punish the wicked, and set them upon the better path, The wise man will accomplish his whole duty without the assistance of anything evil, and he will associate with

himself nothing which needs to be controlled with anxious care.

Wrath is therefore never admissible; sometimes we must feign it if we have to arouse the sluggish minds of our hearers, just as we apply goads and brands to arouse horses that are slow in starting upon their course. Sometimes we must strike fear into the hearts of those with whom reason is of no avail; yet it is no more expedient to be angry than to be sad or to be afraid. "What then?" you say; "do not incidents occur which provoke anger? "Yes, but it is then most of all that we must grapple with it hand to hand. Nor is it difficult to subdue the spirit, since even athletes, concerned as they are with man's basest part, nevertheless endure blows and pain in order that they may drain the strength of their assailant and strike, not when anger, but

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ON ANGER, II. xiv. 3-xv.3

when advantage, prompts. Pyrrhus, the most famous trainer for gymnastic contests, made it a rule, it is said, to warn those whom he was training against getting angry; for anger confounds art and looks only for a chance to injure. Often, therefore, reason counsels patience, but anger revenge, and when we have been able to escape our first misfortunes, we are plunged into greater ones. Some have been cast into exile because they could not bear calmly one insulting word, and those who had refused to bear in silence a slight wrong have been crushed with the severest misfortunes, and, indignant at any diminution of the fullest liberty, have brought upon themselves the yoke of slavery. "That you may be convinced," says our opponent, that anger does have in it something noble, you will see that such nations as are free - for example, the Germans and Scythians - are those which are most prone to anger." The reason of this is that natures which are inherently brave and sturdy are prone to anger before they become softened by discipline. For certain qualities are innate only in better natures, just as rich ground, although it is neglected, produces a strong growth and a tall forest is the mark of fertile soil. And so natures that have innate vigour likewise produce wrath, and being hot and fiery they have no room for anything weak and feeble, but their energy is defective, as is the case with everything that springs up without cultivation through the bounty merely of nature herself; yes, and, unless such natures are quietly tamed, what was a disposition to bravery tends to become recklessness and temerity. And tell me, is it not with the more gentle tempers that the milder faults, such as pity

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ON ANGER, II. xv. 3-xvi. 2

and love and bashfulness, are found combined? Accordingly, I can often prove to you even by a man's own evils that his natural bent is good; but these evils are none the less vices even though they are indicative of a superior nature. Then, again, all those peoples which are, like lions and wolves, free by reason of their very wildness, even as they cannot submit to servitude, neither can they exercise dominion; for the ability they possess is not that of a human being but of something wild and ungovernable; and no man is able to rule unless he can also submit to be ruled. Consequently, the peoples who have held empire are commonly those who live in a rather mild climate. Those who lie toward the frozen north have savage tempers - tempers which, as the poet says, are

Most like their native skies./a

"Those animals," you say, "which are much given to anger are held to be the noblest." But it is wrong for one to hold up the creatures in whom impulse takes the place of reason as a pattern for a human being; {**Animal_rationis_capax+**} in man reason takes the place of impulse. But not even in the case of such animals is the same impulse equally profitable for all; anger serves the lion, fear the stag aggressiveness the hawk, cowardice the dove. But what if it is not even true that it is the best animals that are most prone to anger? Wild beasts which gain their food by rapine, I can believe, do so the better the angrier they are; but it is the endurance of the ox and the horse, obedient to the rein, that I would commend. For what reason, however, do you direct man to such miserable standards when you have the universe and God, whom man of all creatures alone com-

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ON ANGER, II. xvi. 3-xviii. 1

prehends in order that he alone may imitate him "Those who are prone to anger," you say, "are of all men considered the most ingenuous." Yes, in contrast with the tricky and the crafty they do seem ingenuous because they are undisguised. I, however, should call them, not ingenuous, but reckless; that is the term we apply to fools, to voluptuaries and spendthrifts, and to all who ill disguise their vices.

"The orator," you say, "at times does better when he is angry." Not so, but when he pretends to be angry. For the actor likewise stirs an audience by his declamation not when he is angry, but when he plays well the role of the angry man; consequently before a jury, in the popular assembly, and wherever we have to force our will upon the minds of other people, we must pretend now anger, now fear, now pity, in order that we may inspire others with the same, and often the feigning of an emotion produces an effect which would not be produced by genuine emotion. "The mind that is devoid anger," you say, "is inert." Very true, unless it is actuated by something more powerful than anger. A man should be neither a highwayman nor his victim, neither soft-hearted nor cruel; the one is too mild in spirit, the other too harsh. Let the wise man show moderation, and to situations that require strong measures let him apply, not anger, but force.

Having dealt with the questions that arise concerning anger, let us now pass to the consideration of its remedies. In my opinion, however, there are but two rules - not to fall into anger, and in anger to do no wrong. Just as in caring for the body certain rules are to be observed for guarding the health, others for restoring it, so we must use one means
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ON ANGER, II. xviii. 1-xix. 4

to repel anger, another to restrain it. Tn order that we may avoid anger, certain rules will be laid down which apply to the whole period of life; these will fall under two heads - the period of education and the later periods of life.

The period of education calls for the greatest, and what will also prove to be the most profitable, attention; for it is easy to train the mind while it is still tender, but it is a difficult matter to curb the vices that have grown up with us.

The fiery mind is by its nature most liable to wratII. For as there are the - four elements of fire, water, air, and earth, so there are the corresponding properties, the hot, the cold, the dry, and the moist./a Accordingly, the various differences of regions, of animals, of substances, and of characters are caused by the mingling of the elements; consequently, also, dispositions show a greater bent in some one direction, according as they abound in a larger supply of some one element. Hence it is that we call some regions moist, some dry, some hot, some cold. The same distinctions apply to animals and to men; it makes a great difference how much of the moist and the hot each man has in him; his character will be determined by that element in him of which he will have a dominant proportion. A fiery constitution of mind will produce wrathful men, - for fire is active and stubborn; a mixture of cold makes cowards, for cold is sluggish and shrunken.

Consequently, some of our school hold that anger is aroused in the breast by the boiling of the blood about the heart; the reason why this particular spot is assigned to anger is none other than the fact that the warmest part the whole body is the breast. In the case of those who have more of
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ON ANGER, II. xix. 4-xx. 2

the moist in them, anger grows up gradually because they have no heat ready at hand but obtain it by movement, and so the anger of children/a and women is more vehement than serious, and it is lighter at the start. In the dry periods of life/b anger is powerful and strong, but is without increase, showing little gain because cold succeeds heat,/c which is now on the decline. Old men are simply testy and querulous, as also are invalids and convalescents and all whose heat has been drained either by exhaustion or by loss of blood; the same is the condition of those who are gaunt from thirst and hunger and of those whose bodies are anaemic and ill-nourished and weak. Wine kindles anger because it increases the heat; some boil over when they are drunk, others when they are simply tipsy, each according to his nature. And the only reason why red-haired and ruddy people

are extremely hot-tempered is that they have by nature the colour which others are wont to assume in anger for their blood is active and restless.

But while nature makes certain persons prone to anger, there are likewise many accidental causes which are just as effective as nature. Some are brought into this condition by sickness or injury of the body, others by toil or unceasing vigils, by nights of anxiety, by yearnings and the affairs of love; whatever else impairs either body or mind, produces a diseased mental state prone to complaint. But these are all only beginnings and causes; habit counts for most, and if this is deep-seated, it fosters the fault. As for nature, it is difficult to alter it, and we may not change the elements that were combined once for all at our birth; but though this be so, it is profitable to know that fiery temperaments should
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ON ANGER, II. xx. 2-xxi. 3

be kept away from wine, which Plato/a thinks ought to be forbidden to children, protesting against adding fire to fire. Neither should such men gorge themselves with food; for their bodies will be distended and their spirits will become swollen along with the body. They should get exercise in toil, stopping short of exhaustion, to the end that their heat may be reduced, but not used up, and that their excessive fever may subside. Games also will be beneficial; for pleasure in moderation relaxes the mind and gives it balance. The more moist and the drier natures, and also the cold, are in no danger from anger, but they must beware of faults that are more base - fear, moroseness, discouragement, and suspicion. And so such natures have need of encouragement and indulgence and the summons to cheerfulness. And since certain remedies are to be employed against anger, others against sullenness, and the two faults are to be cured, not merely by different, but even by contrary, methods, we shall always attack the fault that has become the stronger.

It will be of the utmost profit, I say, to give children sound training from the very beginning; guidance, however, is difficult, because we ought to take pains neither to develop in them anger nor to blunt their native spirit. The matter requires careful watching; for both qualities -that which should be encouraged and that which should be checked - are fed by like things, and like things easily deceive even a close observer. By freedom the spirit grows, by servitude it is crushed; if it is commended and is led to expect good things of itself, it mounts up, but these same measures breed insolence and temper; therefore we must guide the
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ON ANGER, II. xxi. 3-7

child between the two extremes, using now the curb, now the spur.

He should be subjected to nothing that is humiliating, nothing that is servile; it should never be necessary for him to beg submissively, nor should begging ever prove profitable - rather let his own desert and his past conduct and good promise of it in the future be rewarded. In struggles with his playmates we should not permit him either to be beaten or to get angry; we should take pains to see that he is friendly toward those with whom it is his practice to engage in order that in the struggle he may form the habit of wishing not to hurt his opponent but merely to win. Whenever he gets the upper hand and does something praiseworthy, we should allow him to be encouraged but not elated, for joy leads to exultation, exultation to over- conceit and a too high opinion of oneself. We shall grant him some relaxation, though we shall not let him lapse into sloth and ease, and we shall keep him far from all taint of pampering; for there is nothing that makes the child hot-tempered so much as a soft and coddling bringing up. Therefore the more an only child is indulged, and the more liberty a ward is allowed, the more will his disposition be spoiled. He will not withstand rebuffs who has never been denied anything, whose tears have always been wiped away by an anxious mother, who has been allowed to have his own way with his tutor./a Do you not observe that with each advancing grade of fortune there goes the greater tendency to anger? It is especially apparent in the rich, in nobles, and in officials when all that was light and trivial in their mind soars aloft upon the breeze of good fortune. Prosperity fosters wrath when the crowd
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ON ANGER, II. xxi. 7-xxii. 1

of flatterers, gathered around, whispers to the proud ear: "What, should that man answer you back? Your estimate of yourself does not correspond with your importance; you demean yourself " - these and other adulations, which even the sensible and orginally well-poised mind resists with difficulty. Childhood, therefore, should be kept far from all contact with flattery; let a child hear the truth, sometimes even let him fear, let him be respectful always, let him rise before his elders. Let him gain no request by anger; when he is quiet let him be offered what was refused when he wept. Let him, moreover, have the sight but not the use of his parents' wealth. When he has done wrong, let him be reproved. It will work to the advantage of children to give them teachers and tutors of a quiet disposition. Every young thing attaches itself to what is nearest and grows to be like it; the character of their nurses and tutors is presently reproduced in that of the young men. There was a boy who had been brought up in the house of Plato, and when he had returned to his parents and saw his father in a blustering rage, his comment was: "I never saw this sort of thing at Plato's." I doubt not that he was quicker to copy his father than he was to copy Plato! Above all, let his food be simple, his clothing inexpensive, and his style of living like that of his companions. The boy will never be angry at some one being counted equal to himself, whom you have from the first treated as the equal of many.

But these rules apply to our children. In our case,/a, however, our lot at birth and our education give no excuse - the one for the vice, or the other, any longer, for instruction/b; it is their
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ON ANGER II. xxii. 2-xxiii. 2

consequences" that we must regulate. We ought, therefore, to make our fight against the primary causes. Now the cause of anger is an impression of injury, and to this we should not easily give credence. We ought not to be led to it quickly even by open and evident acts; for some things are false that have the appearance of truth. We should always allow some time; a day discloses the truth. Let us not give ready ear to traducers; this weakness of human nature let us recognize and mistrust - we are glad to believe what we are loth to hear, and we become angry before we can form a judgement about it. And what is to be said when we are actuated, not merely by charges, but by bare suspicions, and having put the worse interpretation on another's look or smile, become angry at innocent men? Therefore we should plead the cause of the absent person against ourselves, and anger should be held in abeyance; for punishment postponed can still be exacted, but once exacted it cannot be recalled.

Every one knows the story of the tyrannicide who having been arrested before he had finished his task was put to torture by Hippias/b in order that he might be forced to reveal his accomplices; whereupon he named the friends of the tyrant who were gathered around him, the very ones to whom, as he knew, the safety of the tyrant was especially dear. After Hippias had ordered them to be slain one by one, as they were named, he asked whether there was still any other. "No," said the man, "you alone remain; for I have left no one else who cares anything about you." The result of his anger was that the tyrant lent his might to the tyrant-slayer and slew his own protectors with his own sword.
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ON ANGER, II. xxiii. 2-xxiv. 2

How much more courageous was Alexander! After reading a letter from his mother warning him to beware of poison from his physician Philip, he took the draught and drank it without alarm.

In the case of his own friend he trusted himself more. He deserved to find him innocent, deserved to prove him so! I applaud this all the more in Alexander because no man was so prone to anger; but the rarer self-control is among kings, the more praiseworthy it becomes. The great Gaius Caesar also showed this, he who, victorious in civil war, used his victory most mercifully; having apprehended some packets of letters written to Gnaeus Pompeius by those who were believed to belong either to the opposing side or to the neutral party, he burned them. Although he was in the habit, within bounds, of indulging in anger, yet he preferred being unable to do so; he thought that the most gracious form of pardon was not to know what the offence of each person had been.

Credulity is a source of very great mischief. Often one should not even listen to report, since

under some circumstances it is better to be deceived than to be suspicious. Suspicion and surmise - provocations that are most deceptive ought to be banished from the mind. "That man did not give me a civil greeting; that one did not retum my kiss; that one broke off the conversation abruptly; that one did not invite me to dinner; that one seemed to avoid seeing me." Pretext for suspicion will not be lacking. But there is need of frankness and generosity in interpreting things. We should believe only what is thrust under our eyes and becomes unmistakable, and every time our suspicion
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ON ANGER, II. xxiv. 2-xxv. 4

proves to be groundless we should chide our credulity; for this self-reproof will develop the habit of being slow to believe.

Next, too, comes this - that we should not be exasperated by trifling and paltry incidents. A slave is too slow, or the water for the wine a is lukewarm, or the couch-cushion disarranged, or the table too carelessly set - it is madness to be incensed by such things. The man is ill or in a poor state of health who shrinks from a slight draught; something is wrong with a man's eyes if they are offended by white clothing; the man is enfeebled by soft living who gets a pain in his side from seeing somebody else at work! The story is that there was once a citizen of Sybaris, a certain Mindyrides, who, seeing a man digging and swinging his mattock on high, complained that it made him weary and ordered the man not to do such work in his sight; the same man complained that he felt worse because the rose-leaves upon which he had lain were crumpled! When pleasures have corrupted both mind and body, nothing seems to be tolerable, not because the suffering is hard, but because the sufferer is soft. For why is it that we are thrown into a rage by somebody's cough or sneeze, by negligence in chasing a fly away, by a dog's hanging around, or by the dropping of a key that has slipped from the hands of a careless servant? The poor wretch whose ears are hurt by the grating of a bench dragged across the floor will he be able to bear with equanimity the strife of public life and the abuse rained down upon him in the assembly or in the senate- house? Will he be able to endure the hunger and the thirst of a summer campaign who gets angry at his slave for being careless in mixing
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ON ANGER, II. xxv. 4-xxvi. 5

the snow/a? Nothing, therefore, is more conducive to anger than the intemperance and intolerance that comes from soft living; the mind ought to be schooled by hardship to feel none but a crushing blow.

Our anger is stirred either by those from whom we could not have received any injury at all, or by those from whom we might have received one. To the former class belong certain inanimate things, such as the manuscript which we often hurl from us because it is written in too small a script or tear up because it is full of mistakes, or the articles of clothing which we pull to pieces because we do not like them, But how foolish it is to get angry at these things which neither deserve our wrath nor feel it! "But of course," you say," it is those who made them who have given us the affront." But, in the first place, we often get angry before we make this distinction clear to our minds; in the second place, perhaps also the makers themselves will have reasonable excuses to offer: this one could not do better work than he did, and it was not out of disrespect for you that he was poor at his trade; another did not aim to affront you by what he did. In the end what can be madder than to accumulate spleen against men and then vent it upon things? But as it is the act of a madman to become angry at things without life, it is not less mad to be angry at dumb animals, which do us no injury because they cannot will to do so; for there can be no injury unless it arises from design. Therefore they can barm us just as the sword or a stone may do, but they cannot injure us. But some people think that a man is insulted when the same horses which are submissive to one rider are rebellious toward another, just as if it were due to the animal's
<Ess1-221>

ON ANGER, II. xxvi. 6-xxvii. 4

choice and not rather to the rider's practised skill in management that certain animals prove more tractable to certain men. But it is as foolish to be angry with these as it is to be angry with children and all who are not much different from children in point of wisdom; for in the eyes of a just judge all such mistakes can plead ignorance as the equivalent of innocence.

But there are certain agents that are unable to harm us and have no power that is not beneficent and salutary, as, for example, the immortal gods, who neither wish nor are able to hurt; for they are by nature mild and gentle, as incapable of injuring others as of injuring themselves. {**Jesus+**} Those, therefore, are mad and ignorant of truth who lay to the gods' charge the cruelty of the sea, excessive rains, and the stubbornness of winter, whereas all the while none of the phenomena which harm or help us are planned personally for us. {**what_is_is_right+**} For it is not because of us that the universe brings back winter and summer; these have their own laws, by which the divine plan operates. We have too high a regard for ourselves if we deem ourselves worthy to be the cause of such mighty movements. Therefore none of these phenomena takes place for the purpose of injuring us, nay, on the contrary, they all tend toward our benefit. I have said that there are certain agents that cannot, certain ones that would not, harm us.

To the latter class will belong good magistrates and parents, teachers and judges, and we ought to submit to the chastening they give in the same spirit in which we submit to the surgeon's knife, a regimen of diet, and other things which cause suffering that they may bring profit. We have been visited with
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ON ANGER, II. xxvii. 4-xxviii. 4

punishment; then let it bring up the thought, not so much of what we suffer, as of what we have done; let us summon ourselves to give a verdict upon our past life; if only we are willing to be frank with ourselves, we shall assess our fines at a still higher figure.

If we are willing in all matters to play the just judge, let us convince ourselves first of this - that no one of us is free from fault. For most of our indignation arises from our saying, "I am not to blame," " I have done nothing wrong." Say, rather, you admit nothing wrong. We chafe against the censure of some reprimand or chastisement although at the very time we are at fault because we are adding to wrong-doing arrogance and obstinacy. What man is there who can claim that in the eyes of every law he is innocent? But assuming that this may be, how limited is the innocence whose standard of virtue is the law! How much more comprehensive is the principle of duty than that of law! How many are the demands laid upon us by the sense of duty, humanity, generosity, justice, integrity - all of which lie outside the statute books! But even under that other exceedingly narrow definition of innocence we cannot vouch for our claim. Some sins we have committed, some we have contemplated, {**sinful_nature_of_man+**} some we have desired, some we have encouraged; in the case of some we are innocent only because we did not succeed. Bearing this in mind, let us be more just to transgressors, more heedful to those who rebuke us; especially let us not be angry with the good (for who will escape if we are to be angry even with the good?), and least of all with the gods, for it is not by their power,
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ON ANGER, II. xxviii. 4-7

but by the terms of our mortality, that we are forced to suffer whatever ill befalls. " But," you say, " sickness and pain assail us." at any rate there must be an ending some time, seeing that we have been given a crumbling tenement! {**Thou_owest_God_a_death+**}

It will be said that some one spoke ill of you consider whether you spoke ill of him first, consider how many there are of whom you speak ill. Let us consider, I say, that some are not doing us an injury but repaying one, that others are acting for our good, that some are acting under compulsion, others in ignorance, that even those who are acting intentionally and wittingly do not, while injuring us, aim only at the injury; one slipped into it allured by his wit, another did something, not to obstruct us, but because he could not reach his own goal without pushing us back; often adulation, while it flatters, offends. If any one will recall how often he himself has fallen under undeserved suspicion, how many of his good services chance has clothed with the appearance of injury, how many persons whom once be hated he learned to love, he will be able to

avoid all hasty anger, particularly if as each offence occurs he will first say to himself in silence: " I myself have also been guilty of this." But where will you find a judge so just? The man who covets everybody's wife and considers the mere fact that she belongs to another an ample and just excuse for loving her this same man will not have his own wife looked at; the strictest enforcer of loyalty is the traitor, the punisher of falsehood is himself a perjurer, and the trickster lawyer deeply resents an indictment being brought against himself; the man who has no regard for his own chastity will permit no tampering with
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ON ANGER, II. xxviii. 8-xxix. 3

that of his slaves. The vices of others we keep before our eyes, our own behind our back/a; hence it happens that a father who is even worse than his son rebukes his son's untimely revels, that a man does not pardon another's excesses who sets no bound to his own, that the murderer stirs a tyrant's wrath, and the temple- robber punishes theft. It is not with the sins but with the sinners that most men are angry. We shall become more tolerant from self-inspection if we cause ourselves to consider "Have we ourselves never been guilty of such an act? Have we never made the same mistake? Is it expedient for us to condemn such conduct?"

The best corrective of anger lies in delay. Beg this concession from anger at the first, not in order that it may pardon, but in order that it may judge. Its first assaults are heavy; it will leave off if it waits. And do not try to destroy it all at once; attacked piecemeal, it will be completely conquered. Of the things which offend us some are reported to us, others we ourselves hear or see. As to what is told us, we should not be quick to believe; many falsify in order that they may deceive; many others, because they themselves are deceived. One courts our favour by making an accusation and invents an injury in order to show that he regrets the occurrence; then there is the man who is spiteful and wishes to break up binding friendships, and the one who is sharp-tongued and, eager to see the sport, watches from a safe distance the friends whom he has brought to blows. If the question of even a small payment should come before you to be judged, you would require a witness to prove the claim, the witness would have no weight except on oath, you
<Ess1-229>

ON ANGER, II. xxi . 3-xxx. 1

would grant to both parties the right of process, you would allow them time, you would give more than one hearing; for the oftener you come to close quarters with truth, the more it becomes manifest. Do you condemn a friend on the spot? Will you be angry with him before you hear his side, before you question him, before he has a chance to know either his accuser or the charge? What, have you already heard what is to be said on both sides? The man who gave you the information will of his own accord stop talking if he is forced to prove what he says. "No need to drag me forward," he says; "if I am brought forward I shall make denial; otherwise I shall never tell you anything." At one and the same time he both goads you on and withdraws himself from the strife and the battle. The man who is unwilling to tell you anything except in secret has, we may almost say, nothing to tell. What is more unfair than to give credence secretly but to be angry openly?

To some offences we can bear witness ourselves; in such cases we shall search into the character and the purpose of the offender. Does a child offend? Excuse should be made for his age - he does not know what is wrong. A father? Either he has been so good to us that he has the right even to injure us, or mayhap the very act which offends us is really a service. A woman? It was a blunder. Some one under orders? What fair- minded person chafes against the inevitable? Some one who has been wronged? There is no injustice in your having to submit to that which you were the first to inflict. Is it a judge? You should trust his opinion more than your own. Is it a king? If he punishes you
<Ess1-231>

ON ANGER, II. xxx. 2-xxxi. 4

when you are guilty, submit to justice, if when you are innocent, submit to fortune. A dumb animal perhaps, or something just as dumb? You become like it if you get angry. Is it a sickness or a

misfortune? It will pass by more lightly if you bear up under it. Is it God? You waste your pains when you become angry with him as much as when you pray him to be angry with another. Is it a good man who has done you injury? Do not believe it. A bad man? Do not be surprised; he will suffer from another the punishment which is due from you, and he who has sinned has already punished himself.

There are, as I have said, two conditions under which anger is aroused: first, if we think that we have received an injury - about this enough has been said; second, if we think that we have received it unjustly - about this something must now be said. Men judge some happenings to be unjust because they did not deserve them, some merely because they did not expect them. What is unexpected we count undeserved. And so we are mightily stirred by all that happens contrary to hope and expectation, and this is the only reason why in domestic affairs we are vexed by trifles, why in the case of friends we call neglect a wrong. "Why, then," you query, "do the wrongs done by our enemies stir us?" Because we did not expect them, or at any rate not wrongs so serious. This, in turn, is due to excessive self-love. We decide that we ought not to be harmed even by our enemies; each one in his heart has the king's point of view, and is willing to use license, but unwilling to suffer from it. And so it is either arrogance or ignorance that makes us prone to anger; for what is there surprising in wicked men's

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ON ANGER, II. xxxi. 4-7

practising wicked deeds? Why is it strange if an enemy injures us, a friend offends us, a son errs, or a servant blunders? Fabius used to say that the excuse, "I did not think," was the one most shameful for a commander; I think it most shameful for any man. Think of everything, expect everything; even in good characters some unevenness will appear. Human nature begets hearts that are deceitful, that are ungrateful, that are covetous, that are undutiful. When you are about to pass judgement on one single man, s character, reflect upon the general mass.

When you are about to rejoice most, you will have most to fear. When everything seems to you to be peaceful, the forces that will harm are not nonexistent, but inactive. Always believe that there will come some blow to strike you. No skipper is ever so reckless as to unfurl all his canvas without having his tackle in order for quickly shortening sail. Above all, bear this in mind, that the power of injury is vile and detestable and most unnatural for man, by whose kindness even fierce beasts are tamed. Look how elephants/a submit their necks to the yoke, how boys and women alike leap upon bulls/b and tread their backs unhurt, how serpents crawl in harmless course among our cups and over our laps, how gentle are the faces of bears and lions when their trainers are inside their cages, and how wild beasts fawn upon their keeper - we shall blush to have exchanged characters with the beasts!/c To injure one's country is a crime; consequently, also, to injure a fellow-citizen - for he is a part of the country, and if we reverence the whole, the parts are sacred - consequently to injure any man is a crime, for he is your fellow-citizen in the greater commonwealth. What

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ON ANGER, II. xxxi. 7-xxxii. 2

if the hands should desire to harm the feet, or the eyes the hands? As all the members of the body are in harmony one with another because it is to the advantage of the whole that the individual members be unharmed, so mankind should spare the individual man, because all are born for a life of fellowship, and society can be kept unharmed only by the mutual protection and love of its parts. {**Macro_Micro**+} We would not crush even a viper or a water-snake or any other creature that harms by bite or sting if we could make them kindly in future, or keep them from being a source of danger to ourselves and others. Neither, therefore, shall we injure a man because he has done wrong, but in order to keep him from doing wrong, and his punishment shall never look to the past, but always to the future; for that course is not anger, but precaution. For if every one whose nature is evil and depraved must be punished, punishment will exempt no one.

"But of course there is some pleasure in anger," you say, "and it is sweet to return a smart." Not at all; for it is not honourable, as in acts of kindness to requite benefits with benefits, so to requite injuries with injuries. In the one case it is shameful to be outdone, in the other not to be outdone. "Revenge" is an inhuman word and yet one accepted aslegitimate, and "retaliation" is not much

different except in rank; the man who returns a smart commits merely the more pardonable sin./a Once when Marcus Cato was in the public bath, a certain man, not knowing him, struck him unwittingly; for who would knowingly have done injury to that great man? Later, when the man was making apology, Cato said, I do not recall that I received
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ON ANGER, II. xxxii. 2-xxxiii. 3

a blow." It was bettor, he thought, to ignore the incident than to resent it. "Then the fellow," you ask, "got no punishment for such an act of rudeness?" No, but much good - he began to know Cato. Only a great soul can be superior to injury; the most humiliating kind of revenge is to have it appear that the man was not worth taking revenge upon. Many have taken slight injuries too deeply to heart in the act of revenging them. He is a great and noble man who acts as does the lordly wild beast that listens unconcernedly to the baying of tiny dogs. "If we avenge an injury," you say, "we shall be less subject to contempt." If we must must resort to a remedy let us do so without anger - not with the plea that revenge is sweet, but that it is expedient; it is often, however, better to feign ignorance of an act than to take vengeance for it. Injuries from the more powerful must be borne, not merely with submission, but even with a cheerful countenance; they will repeat the offence if they are convinced that they have succeeded once. Men whose spirit has grown arrogant from the great favour of fortune have this most serious fault - those whom they have injured they also hate. The words of the man who had grown old in doing homage to kings are familiar to all. When some one asked him how he had attained what was so rarely achieved at court, namely old age, he replied, "By accepting injuries and returning thanks for them." So far from its being expedient to avenge injuries, it is often inexpedient even to acknowledge them. Gaius Caesar, offended with the son of Pastor, a distinguished, Roman knight, because of his foppishness and his too elaborately dressed hair, sent him to
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ON ANGER, II. xxxiii. 3-6

prison; when the father begged that his son's life might be spared, Caesar, just as if he had been reminded to punish him, ordered him to be executed forthwith; yet in order not to be wholly brutal to the father, he invited him to dine with him that day. Pastor actually came and showed no reproach in his countenance. Caesar, taking a cup, proposed his health and set some one to watch him; the poor wretch went tbrough with it, although he seemed to be drinking the blood of his Son. Caesar then sent him perfume and garlands of flowers and gave orders to watch whether he used them: he used them. On the very day on which he had buried - no, before he had yet buried - his son, he took his place among a hundred dinner-guests, and, old and gouty as he was, drained a draught of wine that would scarce have been a seemly potion even on the birthday of one of his children, all the while shedding not a single tear nor by any sign suffering his grief to be revealed; at the dinner he acted as if he had obtained the pardon he had sought for his son. Do you ask why? He had a sccond son. And what did great Priam do? Did he not disguise his anger and embrace the knees of the king? Did he not carry to his lips the murderous hand all stained with the blood of his son?/a Did he not dine? True, but there was no perfume for him, no garlands, and his bloodthirsty enemy with many soft words pressed him to take food, and did not force him to drain huge beakers while some one stood over him to watch. The Roman father you would have despised if his fears had been for himself; as it was, affection curbed his anger. He deserved to be permitted to leave the banquet in order that he might gather up the bones of his son, but that
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ON ANGER, II. xxxiii. 6-xxxiv. 4

striplng prince, all the while so kindly and polite, did not permit even this; pledging the old man's health again and again, he tortured him by urging him to lighten his sorrow, while on the other hand the father made a show of being happy and oblivious of all that had been done that day. The other son was doomed, had the guest displeased the executioner.

We must, therefore, refrain from anger, whether he be an equal or a superior or an inferior who provokes its power. A contest with one's equal is hazardous, with a superior mad, with an inferior

degrading. It is a petty and sorry person who will bite back when he is bitten. Mice and ants, if you bring your head near them, do turn at you; feeble creatures think they are hurt if they are only touched. It will make us more kindly if we remember the benefit we once received from him who now provokes our anger, and let his kindnesses atone for his offence. Let us also bear in mind how much approval we shall gain from a reputation for forbearance, how many have been made useful friends through forgiveness. From the examples of Sulla's cruelty comes. the lesson that we should feel no anger toward the children of personal and political enemies, since he removed from the state even the children of the proscribed. There is no greater injustice than to make a man the inheritor of hatred borne toward his father. Whenever we are loth to pardon, let us consider whether we ourselves should benefit if all men were inexorable. How often has he who refused forgiveness sought it! How often has he grovelled at the feet of the man whom he had repulsed from his own! What is more splendid than to exchange
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ON ANGER, II. xxxiv. 4-xxxv. 3

anger for friendship? What more faithful allies does the Roman people possess than those who were once its most stubborn foes? Where would the empire be today had not a sound foresight united the victors and the vanquished into one? Does a man get angry? Do you on the contrary challenge him with kindness. Animosity, if abandoned by one side, forthwith dies; it takes two to make a fight. But if anger shall be rife on both sides, if the conflict comes, he is the better man who first withdraws; the vanquished is the one who wins. If some one strikes you, step back; for by striking back you will give him both the opportunity and the excuse to repeat his blow; when you later wish to extricate yourself, it will be impossible. {**other_cheek+**}

Would any one want to stab an enemy with such force as to leave his own hand in the wound and be unable to recover himself from the blow? But such a weapon is anger; it is hard to draw back. We take care to have light arms, a handy and nimble sword; shall we not avoid those mental outbursts that are clumsy, unwieldy, and beyond control? The only desirable speed is that which will check its pace when ordered, which will not rush past the appointed goal, and can be altered and reduced from running to a walk; when our muscles twitch against our will, we know that they are diseased; he who runs when he tries to walk is either old or broken in body. In the operations of the mind we should deem those to be the sanest and the soundest which will start at our pleasure, not rush on at their own.

Nothing, however, will prove as profitable as to consider first the hideousness of the thing, and then its danger. No other emotion has an outward aspect
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ON ANGER, II. xxxv. 3-5

so disordered: it makes ugly the most beautiful faces; through it the most peaceful countenance becomes transformed and fierce; from the angry all grace departs; if they were well-kempt and modish in their dress, they will let their clothing trail and cast off all regard for their person; if their hair was disposed by nature or by art in smooth and becoming style, it bristles up in sympathy with their state of mind; the veins swell, the breast will be racked by incessant panting, the neck will be distended by the frantic outrush of the voice; then the limbs tremble, the hands are restless, the whole body is agitated. What state of mind, think you, lies within when its outward manifestation is so horrible? Within the man's breast how much more terrible must be the expression, how much fiercer the breathing, how much more violent the strain of his fury, that would itself burst unless it found an outburst! As is the aspect of an enemy or wild beasts wet with the blood of slaughter or bent upon slaughter; as are the hellish monsters of the poet's brain, all girt about with snakes and breathing fire; as are those most hideous shapes that issue forth from hell to stir up wars and scatter discord among the peoples and tear peace all to shreds; as such let us picture anger - its eyes aflame with fire, blustering with hiss and roar and moan and shriek and every other noise more hateful still if such there be, brandishing weapons in both hands (for it cares naught for self-protection!), fierce and bloody, scarred, and black and blue from its own blows, wild in gait, enveloped in deep darkness, madly charging, ravaging and routing, in travail with hatred of all men, especially of itself, and ready to overturn earth and sea and sky
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ON ANGER, II. xxxv. 6-xxxvi. 4

if it can find no ether way to harm, equally hating and hated. Or, if you will, let us take the picture from our poets:

Flaunting her bloody scourge the War-dame strides,
Or Discord glorying in her tattered robe./a

Or make you any other picture of this dread passion that can be devised still more dread.

As Sextius remarks, it has been good for some people to see themselves in a mirror while they are angry the great change in themselves alarmed them; brought, as it were, face to face with the reality they did not recognize themselves. And how little of the real ugliness did that image reflected in the mirror disclose! If the soul could be shown, if it were in some substance through which it might shine, its black and mottled, inflamed, distorted and swollen appearance would confound us as we gazed upon it. Even as it is, though it can only come to the surface through flesh, bones, and so many obstacles, its hideousness is thus great - what if it could be shown stark naked? You may perhaps think that no one has really been frightened out of anger by a mirror. Well, what then? The man who had gone to the mirror in order to effect a change in himself was already a changed man; while men remain angry no image is more beautiful than one which is fierce and savage, and such as they are they wish also to appear.

This, rather, is what we ought to realize - how many men anger in and of itself has injured. Some through too much passion have burst their veins, a shout that strains our strength has carried with it blood, and too powerful a rush of tears to the eyes

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ON ANGER, II. xxvi. 4-6

has blurred the sharpness of their vision, and sickly people have fallen back into illnesses. There is no quicker road to madness. Many, therefore, have continued in the frenzy of anger, and have never recovered the reason that had been unseated. {anger_madness} It was frenzy that drove Ajax to his death and anger drove him into frenzy. These all call down death upon their children, poverty upon themselves, destruction upon their house, and they deny that they are angry just as the frenzied deny that they are mad. They become enemies to their closest friends and have to be shunned by those most dear; regardless of all law except as a means to injure, swayed by trifles, difficult to approach by either word or kindly act, they conduct themselves always with violence and are ready either to fight with the sword or to fall upon it./a {Ajax} For the fact is that the greatest of all evils, the vice that surpasses all others, has laid bold upon them. Other ills come gradually, but the power of this is sudden and complete. In short, it brings into subjection all other passions. {ruling_passion} {Othello} It conquers the most ardent love, and so in anger men have stabbed the bodies that they loved and have lain in the arms of those whom they had slain; avarice, the most stubborn and unbending evil, has been trodden under foot by anger after being forced to scatter her wealth and to set fire to her home and all her collected treasure. Tell me, has not also the ambitious man torn off the highly prized insignia of his office and rejected the honour that had been conferred? There is no passion of any kind over which anger does not hold mastery.
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BOOK V TO NOVATUS

ON ANGER
BOOK III

WE shall now, Novatus, attempt to do what you have especially desired - we shall try to banish anger from the mind, or at least to bridle and restrain its fury. This must be done sometimes plainly and openly, whenever a slighter attack of the malady makes this possible, sometimes secretly, when its flame burns hot and every obstacle but intensifies and increases its power; it depends upon how much strength and vigour it has whether we ought to beat back its attack and force a

retreat, or should yield before it until the first storm of its fury has passed, in order to keep it from sweeping along with it the very means of relief.

Each man's character will have to determine his plan of action: some men yield to entreaty; some trample and stamp upon those who give way, and we shall quiet these by making them fear; some are turned from their course by reproof, others by a confession of guilt, others by shame, others by procrastination - a slow remedy, this last, for a swift disorder, to be used only as a last resort. For while the other passions admit of postponement and may
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ON ANGER, III. i.3-ii.1

be cured more leisurely, this one in hurried and selfdriven violence does not advance by slow degrees, but becomes full-grown the moment it begins; and, unlike the other vices, it does not seduce but abducts the mind, and it goads on those that, lacking all self-control, desire, if need be, the destruction of all, and its fury falls not merely upon the objects at which it aims, but upon all that meet it by the way. The other vices incite the mind, anger overthrows it. Even if a man may not resist his passions, yet at least the passions themselves may halt; anger intensifies its vehemence more and more, like the lightning's stroke, the hurricane, {Lear} and the other things that are incapable of control for the reason that they not merely move, but fall. Other vices are a revolt against intelligence, this against sanity; the others approach gently and grow up unnoticed, but the mind plunges headlong into anger. Therefore no more frenzied state besets the mind, none more reliant upon its own power, none more arrogant if it is successful, none more insane if it is baffled; since it is not reduced to weariness even by defeat, if chance removes its foe it turns its teeth upon itself. And the source from which it springs need not be great; for rising from most trivial things it mounts to monstrous size.

It passes by no time of life, makes exception of no class of men. Some races by the blessing of poverty know nothing of luxury; some because they are restless and wandering have escaped sloth; the uncivilized state of some and their rustic mode of life keep them strangers to trickery and deception and all the evil that the forum breeds. {Swift} But there lives no race that does not feel the goad of anger,
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ON ANGER, III. ii. 1-5

which masters alike both Greeks and barbarians, and is no less ruinous to those who respect the law than to those who make might the only measure of their right. Lastly, though the other vices lay hold of individual men, this is the only passion that can at times possess a whole state. No entire people has ever burned with love for a woman, no whole state has set its hope upon money or gain; ambition is personal and seizes upon the individual; only fury is an affliction of a whole people. Often in a single mass they rush into anger; men and women, old men and boys, the gentry and the rabble, are all in full accord, and the united body, inflamed by a very few incendiary words, outdoes the incendiary himself; they fly forthwith to fire and sword, and proclaim war against their neighbours or wage it against their countrymen; whole houses are consumed, root and branch, and the man who but lately was held in high esteem and applauded for his eloquence receives now the anger of his following; legions hurl their javelins upon their own commanders; all the commoners are at discord with the nobles; the senate, the high council of the state, without waiting to levy troops, without appointing a commander, chooses impromptu agents of its wrath, and hunting down its high-born victims throughout the houses of the city, takes punishment in its own hand; embassies are outraged, the law of nations is broken, and unheard of madness sweeps the state, and no time is given for the public ferment to subside, but fleets are launche
d forthwith and loaded with hastily gathered troops; without training, without auspices, under the leadership of its own anger, the populace goes forth, snatching up for arms whatever chance has offered, and then atones
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ON ANGER, III. ii. 5-iii. 4

for the rash daring of its anger by a great disaster. Such is the outcome, when barbarians rush haphazard into war; the moment their excitable minds are roused by the semblance of injury, they are forthwith in action, and where their resentment draws them, like an avalanche they fall upon our legions - all unorganized, unfearful, and unguarded, seeking their own destruction; with joy they are struck down, or press forward upon the sword, or thrust their bodies upon the spear, or perish from a self-made wound.

"There can be no doubt," you say, "that such a force is powerful and pernicious; show, therefore, how it is to be cured."

And yet, as I said in my earlier books,/a Aristotle stands forth as the defender of anger, and forbids us to cut it out; it is, he claims, a spur to virtue, and if the mind is robbed of it, it becomes defenceless and grows sluggish and indifferent to high endeavour. Therefore our first necessity is to prove its foulness and fierceness, and to set before the eyes what an utter monster a man is when he is enraged against a fellow-man, with what fury he rushes on working destruction destructive of himself as well and wrecking what cannot be sunk unless he sinks with it.

Tell me, then, will any one call the man sane who, just as if seized by a hurricane, does not walk but is driven along, and is at the mercy of a raging demon, who entrusts not his revenge to another, but himself exacts it, and thus, bloodthirsty alike in purpose and in deed, becomes the murderer of those persons who are dearest and the destroyer of those things for which, when lost, he is destined ere long to weep? Can any one assign this passion to virtue as its supporter and consort
<Ess1-259>

ON ANGER, III. iii. 4-iv. i

when it confounds the resolves without which virtue accomplishes nothing? Transient and baneful, and potent only for its own harm, is the strength which a sick man acquires from the rising of his fever. Therefore when I decry anger on the assumption that men are not agreed a in their estimate of it, you are not to think that I am wasting time on a superfluous matter; for there is one, and he, too, a distinguished philosopher, who ascribes to it a function, and on the ground that it is useful and conducive to energy would evoke it for the needs of battle, for the business of state - for any undertaking, in fact, that requires some fervour for its accomplishment. To the end that no one may be deceived into supposing that at any time, in any place, it will be profitable, the unbridled and frenzied madness of anger must be exposed, and there must be restored to it the trappings that are its very own - the torture-horse, the cord, the jail, the cross, and fires encircling living bodies implanted in the ground, the drag-hook that seizes even corpses, and all the different kinds of chains and the different kinds of punishment, the rending of limbs, the branding of foreheads, the dens of frightful beasts - in the midst of these her implements let anger be placed, while she hisses forth her dread and hideous sounds, a creature more loathsome even than all the instruments through which she vents her rage.

Whatever doubt there may be concerning anger in other respects, there is surely no other passion whose countenance is worse - that countenance which we have pictured in the earlier books/b - now harsh and fierce, now pale b.

ON ANGER, III. iv. 1-5

and seemingly steeped in blood when all the heat and fire of the body has been turned toward the face, with swollen veins, with eyes now restless and darting, now fastened and motionless in one fixed gaze; mark, too, the sound of clashing teeth, as if their owners were bent on devouring somebody, like the noise the wild boar makes when he sharpens his tusks by rubbing; mark the crunching of the joints as the hands are violently crushed together, the constant beating of the breast, the quick breathing and deep-drawn sighs, the unsteady body, the broken speech and sudden outcries, the lips now trembling, now tight and hissing out a curse. Wild beasts, I swear, whether tormented by hunger or by the steel that has pierced their vitals - even when, half dead, they rush upon their hunter for one last bite - are less hideous in appearance than a man inflamed by anger. If you are free to listen to his cries and threats, hear what language issues from his tortured soul! {**Lear+**} Will not everyone be glad to check any impulse to anger when he realizes that it begins by working harm, first of all, to himself? If there are those who grant full sway to

anger and deem it a proof of power, who count the opportunity of revenge among the great blessings of great estate, would you not, then, have me remind them that a man cannot be called powerful -no, not even free - if he is the captive of his anger? To the end that each one may be more careful and may set a guard upon himself, would you not have me remind him that while other base passions affect only the worst type of men, wrath steals upon those also who are enlightened and otherwise sane? So true is this, that there are some who call wrath a sign of in-
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ON ANGER, III. iv. 5-v. 5

genuousness,/a and that it is commonly believed that the best- natured people are most liable to it!

" What," you say, "is the purpose of this?" That no man may consider himself safe from anger, since it summons even those who are naturally kind and gentle into acts of cruelty and violence. As soundness of body and a careful regard for health avail nothing against the plague - for it attacks indiscriminately the weak and the strong - so calm and languid natures are in no less danger from anger than the more excitable sort, and the greater the change it works in these, the greater is their disgrace and danger. But since the first requirement is not to become angry, the second, to cease from anger, the third, to cure also the anger of others, I shall speak first of how we may avoid falling into anger, next of how we may free ourselves from it, and lastly of how we may curb an angry man - how we may calm him and restore him to sanity.

We shall forestall the possibility of anger if we repeatedly set before ourselves its many faults and shall rightly appraise it. Before our own hearts we must arraign it and convict it; we must search out its evils and drag them into the open; in order that it may be shown as it really is, it should be compared with all that is worst. Man's avarice assembles and gathers wealth for some one who is better to use; but anger is a spender -few indulge in it without cost. How many slaves a master's anger has driven to flight, how many to death! How much more serious was his loss from indulging in anger than was the incident which caused it! Anger brings to a father grief, to a husband divorce, to a magistrate hatred, to a candidate defeat. It is worse
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ON ANGER, III. v. 5-8

than wantonness, since that finds satisfaction in its own enjoyment, this in another's pain. It exceeds spite and envy; for they desire a man to be unhappy, while anger tries to make him so; they delight in the ills that chance may bring, while it cannot wait for chance - to the man it hates it not merely wishes harm to come, but brings it. There is nothing more baleful than enmity, yet it is anger that breeds it; nothing is more deadly than war, yet in that the anger of the powerful finds its vent; none the less anger in the common folk or private persons is also war - war without arms and without resources. Moreover, leaving out of account the immediate consequences that will come from anger, such as losses of money, plots, and the never-ending anxiety of mutual strife, anger pays for the penalty it exacts - it renounces human nature, which incites to love, whereas it incites to hate; which bids us help, whereas it bids us injure. And besides, though its chafing originates in an excess of self- esteem and seems to be a show of spirit, it is petty and narrow- minded; for no man can fail to be inferior to the one by whom he regards himself despised. But the really great mind, the mind that has taken the true measure of itself, fails to revenge injury only because it fails to perceive it. As missiles rebound from a hard surface, and the man who strikes solid objects is hurt by the impact, so no injury whatever can cause a truly great mind to be aware of it, since the injury is more fragile than that at which it is aimed. How much more glorious it is for the mind, impervious, as it were, to any missile, to repel all insults and injuries! **Revenge+** is the confession of a hurt; no mind is truly great that
<Ess1-267>

ON ANGER, III. v. 8-vi. 4 bends before injury. The man who has offended you is either stronger or weaker than you: if he is weaker, spare him; if he is stronger, spare yourself. There is no surer proof of greatness than to be in a state where nothing can possibly happen to disturb you. The higher region of the universe, being better ordered and near to the stars, is condensed into no cloud, is lashed into no tempest, is churned into no whirlwind; it is free from all turmoil; it is in the

lower regions that the lightnings flash. In the same way the lofty mind is always calm, at rest in a quiet haven/a {**nil_admirari+**}; crushing down all that engenders anger, it is restrained, commands respect, and is properly ordered. In an angry man you will find none of these things. For who that surrenders to anger and rage does not straightway cast behind him all sense of shame? Who that storms in wild fury and assails another does not cast aside whatever he had in him that commands respect? Who that is enraged maintains the full number or the order of his duties? Who restrains his tongue? Who controls any part of his body? Who is able to rule the self that he has set loose? We shall do well to heed that sound doctrine of Democritus/b in which he shows that tranquillity is possible only if we avoid most of the activities of both private and public life, or at least those that are too great for our strength. The man who engages in, many affairs is never so fortunate as to pass a day that does not beget from some person or some circumstance a vexation that fits the mind for anger. Just as a man hurrying through the crowded sections of the city cannot help colliding with many people, and in one place is sure to slip, in another to be held back,
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ON ANGER, III. vi. 4-vii. 2

in another to be splashed, so in this diverse and restless activity of life many hindrances befall us and many occasions for complaint. Our hopes one man deceives, another defers, another destroys; our projects do not proceed as they were planned. To no man is Fortune so wholly submissive that she will always respond if often tried. The result is, consequently, that when a man finds that some of his plans have turned out contrary to his expectations, he becomes impatient with men and things, and on the slightest provocation becomes angry now with a person, now with his calling, now with his place of abode, now with his luck, now with himself. In order, therefore, that the mind may have peace, it must not be tossed about, it must not, as I have said, be wearied by activity in many or great affairs, or by attempting such as are beyond its powers. It is easy to fit the shoulders to light burdens, and to shift the load from this side to that without slipping; but it is hard to support what others' hands have laid upon us, and exhausted we cast the load upon a neighbour. Even while we stand beneath the burden, we stagger if we are too weak to bear its weight. In public and in private affairs, be sure, the same condition holds. Light and easy tasks accept the control of the doer; those that are heavy and beyond the capacity of the performer are not easily mastered; and if they are undertaken, they outweigh his efforts and run away with him, and just when he thinks he has them in his grasp, down they crash and bring him down with them. So it happens that the man who is unwilling to approach easy tasks, yet wishes to find easy the tasks he approaches, is often disappointed in his desire. Whenever you would
<Ess1-271>

ON ANGER, III. vii. 2-viii. 3 attempt anything, measure yourself and at the same time the undertaking -both the thing you intend and the thing for which you are intended; for the regret that springs from an unaccomplished task will make you bitter. It makes some difference whether a man is of a fiery or of a cold and submissive nature; the man of spirit will be driven by defeat to anger, a dull and sluggish nature to sorrow. Let our activities, consequently, be neither petty, nor yet bold and presumptuous; let us restrict the range of hope; let us attempt nothing which later, even after we have achieved it, will make us surprised that we have succeeded.

Since we do not know how to bear injury, let us endeavour not to receive one. We should live with a very calm and good- natured person - one that is never worried or captious; we adopt our habits from those with whom we associate, and as certain diseases of the body spread to others from contact, so the mind transmits its faults to those near-by. The drunkard lures his boon companions into love of wine; shameless company corrupts even the strong man and, perchance, the hero; avarice transfers its poison to its neighbours. The same principle holds good of the virtues, but with the opposite result - that they ameliorate whatever comes in contact with them; an invalid does not benefit so much from a suitable location or a more healthful climate as does the mind which lacks strength from association with a better company. You will understand what a powerful factor this is if you observe that even wild animals grow tame from intercourse with us, and that all beasts, no matter how savage, after enduring long companionship with man cease to be violent; all
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ON ANGER, III. viii. 3-6

their fierceness is blunted and gradually amid peaceful conditions is forgotten. Moreover, the man who lives with tranquil people not only becomes better from their example, but finding no occasions for anger he does not indulge in his weakness. It will, therefore, be a man's duty to avoid all those who he knows will provoke his anger. "Just whom do you mean?" you ask. There are many who from various causes will produce the same result. The proud man will offend you by his scorn, the caustic man by an insult, the forward man by an affront, the spiteful man by his malice, the contentious by his wrangling, the windy liar by his hollowness; you will not endure to be feared by a suspicious man, to be outdone by a stubborn one, or to be despised by a coxcomb. Choose frank, good-natured, temperate people, who will not call forth your anger and yet will bear with it. Still more helpful will be those who are yielding and kindly and suave - not, however, to the point of fawning, for too much cringing incenses hot-tempered people. I, at any rate, had a friend, a good man, but too prone to anger, whom it was not less dangerous to wheedle than to curse. It is well known that Caelius, the orator, was very hot-tempered. A client of rare forbearance was, as the story goes, once dining with Caelius in his chamber, but it was difficult for him, having got into such close quarters, to avoid a quarrel with the companion at his side; so he decided that it was best to agree with whatever Caelius said and to play up to him. Caelius, however, could not endure his compliant attitude, and cried out, "Contradict me, that there may be two of us!" But even he, angry because he was not angered, quickly subsided when
<Ess1-275>

ON ANGER, III. viii. 7-ix. 3

he had no antagonist. Consequently, if we are conscious of being hot-tempered, let us rather pick out those who will be guided by our looks and by our words. Such men, it is true, will pamper us and lead us into the harmful habit of hearing nothing that we do not like, but there will be the advantage of giving our weakness a period of respite. Even those who are churlish and intractable by nature will endure caressing; no creature is savage and frightened if you stroke it. Whenever a discussion tends to be too long or too quarrelsome, let us check it at the start before it gains strength. Controversy grows of itself and holds fast those that have plunged in too deeply. It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a struggle.

Hot-tempered people should also abstain from the more burdensome pursuits, or at least should not ply these to the point of exhaustion, and the mind should not be engaged by too many interests, but should surrender itself to such arts as are pleasurable. Let it be soothed by the reading of poetry and gripped by the tales of history; it should be much coddled and pampered. Pythagoras used to calm his troubled spirit with the lyre; and who does not knnow that the clarion and the trumpet act as incitements to the mind, and that, similarly, certain songs are a soothing balm that brings it relaxation? Green things are good for disordered eyes, and certain colours are restful to weak vision, while by the brightness of others it is blinded, So pleasant pursuits soothe the troubled mind. We should shun the courts, court appearances, and trials, and everything that aggravates our weakness, and we should equally guard against physical exhaustion; for this destroy's what-
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ON ANGER, III. ix. 3-x. 3

ever gentleness and mildness we have and engenders sharpness. Those, therefore, who distrust their digestion, before they proceed to the performance of tasks of unusual difficulty, allay their bile with food; for fatigue especially arouses the bile, possibly because it drives the body's heat toward the centre, vitiates the blood, and stops its circulation by clogging the veins, or because the body when it is worn and feeble weighs down the mind. For the same reason, undoubtedly, those who are broken by ill-health and age are more irascible than others. Hunger and thirst also, for the same reasons, must be avoided; they exasperate and irritate the mind. There is an old proverb that "the tired man seeks a quarrel," but it applies just as well to the hungry and thirsty man, and to any man who chafes under something. For just as a bodily sore hurts under the slightest touch, afterwards even at the suggestion of a touch, so the disordered mind takes offence at the merest trifles, so that even, in the case of some people, a greeting, a letter, a speech, or a question provokes a dispute. There will always be a protest if you touch a sore spot. It is best, therefore, to

treat the malady as soon as it is discovered; then, too, to allow oneself the least possible liberty of speech, and to check impulsiveness. It is easy, moreover, to detect one's passion as soon as it is born; sickness is preceded by symptoms. Just as the signs of storm and rain appear before the storms themselves, so there are certain forerunners of anger, of love, and of all those tempests that shake the soul. Those who are subject to fits of**epilepsy+** know that the attack is coming on if heat leaves their extremities, if their sight wavers,
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ON ANGER, III. x. 3-xi. 1

if there is a twitching of the muscles, or if memory forsakes them and the head swims; therefore by customary remedies they try to forestall the disease in its incipiency, and they ward off whatever it is that causes unconsciousness by smelling or tasting something, or they battle against cold and stiffness with hot applications; or if the remedy is of no avail, they escape from the crowd and fall where no one may see. It is well to understand one's malady and to break its power before it spreads.

Let us discern what it is that especially irritates us. One man is stirred by insulting words, another by insulting actions; this man craves respect for his rank, this one for his person; this one wishes to be considered a fine gentleman, that one a fine scholar; this one cannot brook arrogance, this one obstinacy; that one does not think his slaves worthy of his wrath, this one is violent inside his house and mild outside; that man considers it a disgrace to be put up for office, this one an insult not to be put up. We are not all wounded at the same spot; therefore you ought to know what your weak spot is in order that you may especially protect it. It is well not to see everything, not to hear everything. Many affronts may pass by us; in most cases the man who is unconscious of them escapes them. Would you avoid being provoked? Then do not be inquisitive, He who tries to discover what has been said against him, who unearths malicious gossip even if it was privately indulged in, is responsible for his own disquietude. There are words which the construction put upon them can make appear an insult; some, therefore, ought to be put aside, others derided, others condoned. In various
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ON ANGER, III. xi. 2-xii. 2

ways anger must be circumvented; most offences may be turned into farce and jest. Socrates, it is said, when once he received a box on the ear, merely declared that it was too bad that a man could not tell when he ought to wear a helmet while taking a walk. Not how an affront is offered, but how it is borne is our concern; and I do not see why it is difficult to practise restraint, since I know that even despots, though their hearts were puffed up with success and privilege, have nevertheless repressed the cruelty that was habitual to them. At any rate, there is the story handed down about Pisistratus, the Athenian despot - that once when a tipsy table-guest had declaimed at length about his cruelty, and there was no lack of those who would gladly place their swords at the service of their master, and one from this side and another from that supplied fuel to the flame, the tyrant, none the less, bore the incident calmly, and replied to those who were goading him on that he was no more angry at the man than he would be if some one ran against him blindfold. A great many manufacture grievances either by suspecting the untrue or by exaggerating the trivial. Anger often comes to us, but more often we go to it. It should never be invited; even when it falls upon us, it should be repulsed. No man ever says to himself, "I myself have done, or at least might have done, this very thing that now makes me angry"; no one considers the intention of the doer, but merely the deed. Yet it is to the doer that we should give thought -whether he did it intentionally or by accident, whether under compulsion or by mistake, whether he was led on by hatred or by the
<Ess1-283>

ON ANGER, III. xii. 2-6

hope of reward, whether he was pleasing himself or lending aid to another. The age of the offender counts for something, his station for something, so that to tolerate or to submit becomes merely indulgence or deference. Let us put ourselves in the place of the man with whom we are angry; as

it is, an unwarranted opinion of self makes us prone to anger, and we are unwilling to bear what we ourselves would have been willing to inflict. No one makes himself wait; yet the best cure for anger is waiting, to allow the first ardour to abate and to let the darkness that clouds the reason either subside or be less dense. Of the offences which were driving you headlong, some an hour will abate, to say nothing of a day, some will vanish altogether; though the postponement sought shall accomplish nothing else, yet it will be evident that judgement now rules instead of anger. If ever you want to find out what a thing really is, entrust it to time; you can see nothing clearly in the midst of the billows. Plato once, when he was angry with his slave, was unable to impose delay upon himself, and, bent upon flogging him with his own hand, ordered him forthwith to take off his shirt and bare his shoulders for the blows; but afterwards realizing that he was angry he stayed his uplifted hand, and just as he was stood with his band in the air like one in the act of striking. Later, when a friend who happened to come in asked him what he was doing, he said, "I am exacting punishment from an angry man." As if stunned he maintained that attitude, unbecoming to a philosopher, of a man in the act of venting his passion, forgetful now of the slave since he had found another whom he was more anxious to punish. He therefore denied
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ON ANGER, III. xii. 6-xiii. 3

himself all power over his own household, and once, when he was deeply provoked at some fault, he said, "Do you, Speusippus, punish this dog of a slave with a whip, for I am angry." His reason for not striking was the very reason that would have caused another to strike. "I am angry," said he; "I should do more than I ought, and with too much satisfaction; this slave should not be in the power of a master who is not master of himself." {**king_over_himself+**} Can any one wish to entrust punishment to an angry man when even Plato denied himself this authority? Let nothing be lawful to you while you are angry. Do you ask why? Because then you wish everything to be lawful.

Fight against yourself! If you will to conquer anger, it cannot conquer you. If it is kept out of sight, if it is given no outlet, you begin to conquer. Let us conceal the signs, and so far as it is possible let us keep it hidden and secret. We shall have great trouble in doing this, for it is eager to leap forth and fire the eyes and transform the countenance; but if we allow it to show itself outside of us, at once it is on top of us. It should be kept hidden in the deepest depths of the heart and it should not drive, but be driven; and more, all symptoms of it let us change into just the opposite. Let the countenance be unruffled, let the voice be very gentle, the step very slow; gradually the inner man conforms itself to the outer. In the case of Socrates, it was a sign of anger if he lowered his voice and became sparing of speech. It was evident then that he was struggling against himself. And so his intimate friends would find him out and accuse him, yet he was not displeased by the charge of concealing his anger. Why
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ON ANGER, III. xiii. 3-xiv. 1

should he not have been happy that many perceived his anger, yet no man felt it? But they would have felt it, had his friends not been granted the same right to criticize him which he himself claimed over them. How much more ought we to do this! Let us beg all our best friends to use to the utmost such liberty toward us, especially when we are least able to bear it, and let there be no approval of our anger. While we are sane, while we are ourselves, let us ask help against an evil that is powerful and oft indulged by us. Those who cannot carry their wine discreetly and fear that they will be rash and insolent in their cups, instruct their friends to remove them from the feast; those who have learned that they are unreasonable when they are sick, give orders that in times of illness they are not to be obeyed. It is best to provide obstacles for recognized weaknesses, and above all so to order the mind that even when shaken by most serious and sudden happenings it either shall not feel anger, or shall bury deep any anger that may arise from the magnitude of the unexpected affront and shall not acknowledge its hurt. That this can be done will become clear if from a great array of instances I shall cite a few examples; from these you may learn two things - how great evil there is in anger when it wields the complete power of supremely powerful men, and how great control it can impose upon itself when restrained by the stronger influence of fear.

Since Cambyses was too much addicted to wine, Praexaspes, one of his dearest friends, urged

him to drink more sparingly, declaring that drunkenness is disgraceful for a king, towards whom all eyes and ears are turned. To this Cambyses replied "To
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ON ANGER, III. xiv. 1-4

convince you that I never lose command of myself, I shall proceed to prove to you that my eyes and my hands perform their duty in spite of wine." Thereupon taking larger cups he drank more recklessly than ever, and when at length he was heavy and besotted with wine, he ordered the son of bis critic to proceed beyond the threshold and stand there with his left hand lifted above his head. Then he drew his bow and shot the youth through the very heart - he had mentioned this as his mark - and cutting open the breast of the victim he showed the arrow-head sticking in the heart itself, and then turning toward the father he inquired whether he had a sufficiently steady hand. But he replied that Apollo himself could not have made a more unerring shot. Heaven curse such a man, a bondslave in spirit even more than in station! He praised a deed, which it were too much even to have witnessed. The breast of his son that had been torn asunder, his heart quivering from its wound, he counted a fitting pretext for flattery. He ought to have provoked a dispute with him about his boast and called for another shot, that the king might have the pleasure of displaying upon the person of the father himself an even steadier hand! What a bloodthirsty king! What a worthy mark for the bows of all his followers! Though we may execrate him for terminating a banquet with punishment and death, yet it was more accursed to praise that shot than to make it. We shall see later how the father should have borne himself as he stood over the corpse of his son, viewing that murder of which he was both the witness and the cause. The point now under discussion is clear, namely, that it is possible to suppress anger. He
<Ess1-291>

ON ANGER, III. xiv. 5-xv. 3

did not curse the king, he let slip no word even of anguish, though he saw his own heart pierced as well as his son's. It may be said that he was right to choke back words; for even if he had spoken as an angry man, he could have accomplished nothing as a father. He may, I say, be thought to have acted more wisely in that misfortune than he had done in recommending moderation in drinking to a man who would have much better drunk wine than blood, with whom peace meant that his hands were busy with the wine-cup. He, therefore, added one more to the number of those who have shown by bitter misfortune the price a king's friends pay for giving good advice. {**Cordelia+**}

I doubt not that Harpagus also gave some such advice to his king, the king of the Persians, who, taking offence thereat, caused the flesh of Harpagus's own children to be set before him as a course in the banquet, and kept inquiring whether he liked the cooking; then when he saw him sated with his own ills, he ordered the heads of the children to be brought in, and inquired what he thought of his entertainment. The poor wretch did not lack words, his lips were not sealed. "At the king's board," he said, "any kind of food is delightful." And what did he gain by this flattery? He escaped an invitation to eat what was left. I do not say that a father must not condemn an act of his king, I do not say that he should not seek to give so atrocious a monster the punishment he deserves, but for the moment I am drawing this conclusion - that it is possible for a man to conceal the anger that arises even from a monstrous outrage and to force himself to words that belie it. Such restraint of distress is necessary, particularly for
<Ess1-293>

ON ANGER, III. xv. 3-xvi. 1

those whose lot is cast in this sort of life and who are invited to the board of kings. So must they eat in that company, so must they drink, so must they answer, so must they mock at the death of their dear ones. Whether the life is worth the price we shall see; that is another question. We shall not condole with such a chain-gang of prisoners so wretched, we shall not urge them to submit to the commands of their butchers; we shall show that in any kind of servitude the way lies open to liberty. {**suicide+**} If the soul is sick and because of its own imperfection unhappy, a man may end its sorrows and at the same time himself. To him to whom chance has given a king that aims his shafts at the breasts of his friends, to him who has a master that gorges fathers with the flesh of

their children, I would say: "Madman, why do you moan? Why do you Wait for some enemy to avenge you by the destruction of your nation, or for a mighty king from afar to fly to your rescue? In whatever direction vou may turn your eyes, there lies the means to end; our woes. See you that precipice? Down that is the way to liberty. See you that sea, that river, that well? There sits liberty - at the bottom. See you that tree, stunted, blighted, and barren? Yet from its branches hangs liberty. See you that throat of yours, your gullet, your heart? They are ways of escape from servitude. Are the ways of egress I show you too toilsome, do they require too much courage and strength? Do you ask what is the highway to liberty? Any vein in your body!" So long indeed as there shall be no hardship so intolerable in our opinion as to force us to abandon life, let us, no matter what our station in life may
<Ess1-295>

ON ANGER, III. xvi. 1-4

be, keep ourselves from anger. It is harmful for all who serve. For any sort of chafing grows to self-torture, and the more rebellious we are under authority, the more oppressive we feel it to be. So a wild beast by struggling but tightens its noose; so birds by trying in their alarm to get free from birdlime, smear all their plumage with it. No yoke is so tight but that it hurts less to carry it than to struggle against it. The only relief for great misfortunes is to bear them and submit to their coercion. But though it is expedient for subjects to control their passions, especially this mad and unbridled one, it is even more expedient for kings. When his position permits a man to do all that anger prompts, general destruction is let loose, nor can any power long endure which is wielded for the injury of many; for it becomes imperilled when those who separately moan in anguish are united by a common fear. Consequently, many kings have been the victims now of individual, now of concerted, violence, at times when a general animosity had foreed men to gather together their separate angers into one. Yet many kinds have employed anger as if it were the badge of real power; for example Darius, who after the dethronement of the Magian/a became the first ruler of the Persians and of a great part of the East./b For after he had declared war on the Scythians who were on his eastern border, Oeobazus, an aged noble, besought him to use the services of two of his sons, but to leave one out of the three as a comfort to his father. Promising more than was asked, and saying that he would exempt all three, Darius flung their dead bodies before their father's eyes - for it would have been cruelty if he had taken them all with him!
<Ess1-297>

ON ANGER, III. xvi. 4-xvii. 4

But how much kinder was Xerxes! For he, when Pythius, the father of five sons, begged for the exemption of one, permitted him to choose the one he wished; then he tore into halves the son who had been chosen, and placing a half on each side of the road offered the body as an expiatory sacrifice for the success of the army. And so the army met the fate it deserved. Defeated, routed far and wide, and seeing its own destruction spread on every side, between two lines of the dead bodies of its comrades it trudged along.

Such was the ferocity of barbarian kings when in anger - men who had had no contact with learning or the culture of letters. But I shall now show you a king from the very bosom of Aristotle, even Alexander, who in the midst of a feast with his own hand stabbed Clitus, his dearest friend, with whom he had grown up, because he withheld his flattery and was reluctant to transform himself from a Macedonian and a free man into a Persian slave. Lysimachus, likewise a familiar friend, he threw to a lion. Though Lysimachus escaped by some good luck from the lion's teeth, was he therefore, in view of this experience, a whit more kind when he himself became king? Not so, for Telesphorus the Rhodian, his own friend, he completely mutilated, and when he had cut of his ears and nose, he shut him up in a cage as if he were some strange and unknown animal and for a long time lived in terror of him, since the hideousness of his hacked and mutilated face had destroyed every appearance of a human being; to this were added starvation and squalor and the filth of a body left to wallow in its own dung; furthermore his hands and knees becoming all calloused -
<Ess1-299>

ON ANGER, III. xvii. 4-xviii. 3

for by the narrowness of his quarters he was forced to use these instead of feet - his sides, too, a mass of sores from rubbing, to those who beheld him his appearance was no less disgusting than terrible, and having been turned by he punishment into a monster he had forfeited even pity. Yet, while he who suffered these things was utterly unlike a human being, he who inflicted them was still less like one.

Would to heaven that the examples of such cruelty had been confined to foreigners, and that along with other vices from abroad the barbarity of torture and such venting of anger had not been imported into the practices of Romans! Marcus Marius, to whom the people erected statues in every street, whom they worshipped with offerings of frankincense and wine - this man by the command of Lucius Sulla had his ankles broken, his eyes gouged out, his tongue and his hands cut off, and little by little and limb by limb Sulla tore him to pieces, just as if he could make him die as many times as he could maim him. And who was it who executed this command? Who but Catiline, already training his hands to every sort of crime? He hacked him to pieces before the tomb of Quintus Catulus, doing violence to the ashes of that gentlest of men, above which a hero - of evil influence, no doubt, yet popular and loved not so much undeservedly as to excess - shed his blood drop by drop. It was meet that a Marius should suffer these things, that a Sulla should give the orders, and that a Catiline should execute them, but it was not meet that the state should receive in her breast the swords of her enemies and her protectors alike. But why do I search out ancient crimes? Only recently Gaius Caesar slashed with the scourge
<Ess1-301>

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and tortured Sextus Papinius, whose father had been consul, and Betilienus Bassus, his own quaestor and the son of his procurator, and others, both Roman senators and knights, all in one day - and not to extract information but for amusement. Then so impatient was he of postponing his pleasure - a pleasure so great that his cruelty demanded it without delay - that he decapitated some of his victims by lamplight, as he was strolling with some ladies and senators on the terrace of his mother's gardens, which runs between the colonnade and the bank of the river. But what was the pressing need? What public or private danger was threatened by a single night's delay? How small a matter it would have been if he had waited just till dawn, so as not to kill the senators of the Roman people in his pumps/a! It is relevant, too, to note the insolence of his cruelty, though some one may consider that we are straying from the subject and embarking upon a digression; but such insolence will be an element in cruelty when it is extravagant in its fury. He had scourged senators, but he himself made it possible to say, "An ordinary event." He had tortured them by every unhappy device in existence - by the cord, by knotted bones, by the rack, by fire, by his own countenance. But here also will come the answer: "A great matter, truly! Because three senators, as if no better than worthless slaves, were mangled by whip and flame at the behest of a man who contemplated murdering the whole senate, a man who used to wish that the Roman people had only one neck in order that he might concentrate into one day and one stroke all his crimes, now spread over so many places and times." What was ever so unheard of as an
<Ess1-303>

ON ANGER, III. xix. 2-xx. 1

execution by night? Though robberies are generally curtained by darkness, the more publicity punishments have, the more they avail as an admonition and warning. But here also I shall hear the answer "That which surprises you so much is the daily habit of that beast; for this he lives, for this he loses sleep, for this he burns the midnight oil." But surely you will find no other man who has bidden that the mouths of all those who were to be executed by his orders should be gagged by inserting a sponge, in order that they might not even have the power to utter a cry. What doomed man was ever before deprived of the breath with which to moan? Caesar feared lest the man's last agony should give utterance to some speech too frank, lest he might hear something that he would rather not. He was well aware, too, that there were countless crimes, with which none but a dying man would dare reproach him. If no sponges were to be found, he ordered the garments of the poor wretches to be torn up, and their mouths to be stuffed with the strips. What savagery is this? Let a man draw his last breath, leave a passage for his departing soul, let it have some other course of exit than a wound! It would be tedious to add more - how he sent officers to the homes of his

victims, and on that same night made away with their fathers too - that is, out of human pity he freed the fathers from their sorrow! And, indeed, my purpose is not to picture the cruelty of Gaius, but the cruelty of anger, which not only vents its fury on a man here and there, but rends in pieces whole nations, which lashes cities and rivers/a and lifeless things that are immune to all feeling of pain.

Thus, the king of the Persians cut off the noses of
<Ess1-305>

ON ANGER, III. xx. 1-4

a whole population in Syria, whence it gets its name of "Land-of- the-stump-nosed." Think you he was merciful because he did not cut off their entire heads? No, he got some pleasure from a new kind of punishment. And the Ethiopians, who on account of the prodigiously long time they live are known as the "Longevals," might also have suffered some such fate. For Cambyses became enraged against them because, instead of embracing servitude with outstretched arms, they sent envoys and made reply in the independent words which kings call insults; wherefore, without providing supplies, without investigating the roads, through a trackless and desert region he hurried against them his whole host of fighting men. During the first day's march his food supplies began to fail, and the country itself, barren and uncultivated and untrodden by the foot of man, furnished them nothing. At first the tenderest parts of leaves and shoots of trees satisfied their hunger, then skins softened by fire and whatever necessity forced them to use as food. After, amid the desert sands, even roots and herbage failed them, and they viewed a wilderness destitute also of animal life, choosing every tenth man by lot, they secured the nutriment that was more cruel than hunger. And still the king was driven headlong onwards by his anger, until having lost one part of his army and having devoured another part, he began to fear that he too might be summoned to the choice by lot. Only then did he give the signal for retreat.

And all the while fowls of choice breed were being kept for him, and camels carried supplies for his feasts, while his soldiers drew lots to discover who should miserably perish, who should more miserably live.
<Ess1-307>

ON ANGER, III. xxi. 1-5

This man raged against a people unknown and inoffensive, yet able to feel his anger; Cyrus, however, raged against a river. For when, with the purpose of taking Babylon, he was hastening to war - in which the favourable opportunity is of the utmost importance - he attempted to ford the river Gyndes, then in full flood, though such an undertaking is scarcely safe even after the river has felt the heat of summer and is reduced to its smallest volume. There, when one of the white horses which regularly drew the royal chariot was swept away, the king became mightily stirred. And so he swore that he would reduce that river, which was carrying away the retinue of the king, to such proportions that even women could cross it and trample it under foot. To this task, then, he transferred all his preparations for war, and having lingered thereat long enough to cut one hundred and eighty runways across the channel of the river, he distributed its water into three hundred and sixty runnels, which flowing in different directions left the channel dry. And so he sacrificed time, a serious loss in important operations, the enthusiasm of his soldiers, which was crushed by the useless toil, and the opportunity of attacking the enemy unprepared, while he waged against a river the war he had declared against a foe. Such madness - for what else can you call it? - has befallen Romans also. For Gaius Caesar destroyed a very beautiful villa near Herculaneum because his mother had once been imprisoned in it, and by his very act gave publicity to her misfortune; for while the villa stood, we used to sail by unconcerned, but now people ask why it was destroyed.
<Ess1-309>

ON ANGER, III. xxii. 1-5

These should be regarded as examples to be avoided; the following, on the other hand, are to be imitated, being instances of restrained and gentle men, who lacked neither the provocation to anger nor the power of requital. What indeed would have been easier than for Antigonus to order the execution of the two common soldiers, who, while they leaned against the royal tent, expressed -as men will do with equally great danger and delight - their ill opinion of their king? Antigonus heard

everything, only a canvas intervening between the speakers and the listener; this he gently shook and said, "Move a little farther off, for the king might hear you. Again, one night, when he overheard some of his soldiers invoking all kinds of curses upon the king for having led them into such a road and inextricable mud, he went up to those who were struggling most, and when he had got them out, without revealing who their helper was, he said, "Now curse Antigonus, by whose fault you have fallen upon this mishap, but bless him who has led you out of this swamp." He also bore the abuse of his enemies as calmly as that of his countrymen. And so, when he was besieging some Greeks in a small fort, and they, confident in their position, showed open contempt for the enemy, and cracking many jokes upon the ugliness of Antigonus scoffed now at his diminutive stature, now at his flattened nose, he merely said, "If I have a Silenus in my camp, I am fortunate and hope for good luck." When he had subdued these wags by hunger, he disposed of his captives as follows: those who were fit for military service he assigned to regiments; the rest he put up at auction, saying that he would not have done
<Ess1-311>

ON ANGER, III. xxii. 5-xxiii. 5

so had it not seemed good for men who had such an evil tongue to find a master. The grandson of this man was Alexander,/a who used to hurl his spear at his dinner-guests, who, of the two friends mentioned above, exposed one to the fury of a wild beast, the other to his own. Of these two, however, the one who was thrown to a lion lived. Alexander did not get this weakness from his grandfather, nor from his father either; for if Philip possessed any virtues at all, among them was the ability to endure insults - a great help in the maintenance of a throne. Democharés, surnamed Parrhesiastes" on account of his bold and impudent tongue, came to him once in company with other envoys from the Athenians. Having granted the delegation a friendly hearing, Philip said, "Tell me what I can do that will please the Athenians." Democharés took him at his word and replied, "Hang yourself." All the bystanders flared up in indignation at such brutal words, but Philip bade them keep quiet and let that Thersites/c withdraw safe and unharmed. "But you," he said, "you other envoys, go tell the Athenians that those who speak such words show far more arrogance than those who listen to them without retaliation."

The deified Augustus also did and said many things that are memorable, which prove that was not ruled by anger. Timagenes, a writer of history, made some unfriendly remarks about the emperor himself, his wife, and all his family, and they had not been lost; for reckless wit gets bandied about more freely and is on everybody's lips. Often did Caesar warn him that he must have a more prudent tongue; when he persisted, he forbade
<Ess1-313>

ON ANGER, III. xxiii. 5-xxiv. 2

him the palace. After this, Timagenes lived to old age in the house of Asinius Pollio, and was lionized by the whole city. Though Caesar had excluded him from the palace, he was debarred from no other door. He gave readings of the history which he had written after the incident, and the books which contained the doings of Augustus Caesar he put in the fire and burned. He maintained hostility against Caesar, yet no one feared to be his friend, no one shrank from him as a blasted man; though he fell from such a height, he found some one ready to take him to his bosom. As I have said, Caesar bore all of this patiently, not even moved by the fact that his renown and his achievements had been assailed; he made no complaint against the host of his enemy. To Asinius Pollio he merely said, "You're keeping a wild beast."/a Then, when the other was trying to offer some excuse, he stopped him and said, "enjoy yourself, my dear Pollio, enjoy yourself!" and when Pollio declared, "If you bid me, Caesar, I shall forthwith deny him the house," he replied, "Do you think that I would do this, when it was I who restored the friendship between you? For the fact is, Pollio had once had a quarrel with Timagenes, and his only reason for ending it was that Caesar had now begun one.

Whenever a man is provoked, therefore, let him say to himself, "Am I more mighty than Philip? Yet he was cursed and did not retaliate. Have I more authority over my house than the deified Augustus had over all the world? Yet he was content merely to keep away from his maligner. "What right have I to make my slave atone by stripes and manacles for too loud a reply, too

rebellious a
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ON ANGER, III. xxiv. x-xxv. 2

look, a muttering of something that I do not quite hear? Who am I that it should be a crime to offend my ears? Many have pardoned their enemies; shall I not pardon the lazy, the careless, and the babbler? Let a child be excused by bis age, a woman by her sex, a stranger by his independence, a servant by the bond of intercourse. Does some one offend for the first time? Let us reflect how long he has pleased us. At other times and often has he given offence? Let us bear longer what we have long borne. Is he a friend? He has done what he did not mean to do. Is he an enemy? He did what he had a right to do. One that is sensible let us believe, one that is foolish let us forgive. Whoever it may be, let us say to ourselves on his behalf that even the wisest men have many faults, that no man is so guarded that he does not sometimes let his diligence lapse, nor so seasoned that accident does not drive his composure into some hot-headed action, none so fearful of giving offence that he does not stumble into it while seeking to avoid it.

As to the humble man, it brings comfort in trouble that great men's fortune also totters, and as he who weeps for his son in a hovel is more content if he has seen the piteous procession move from the palace also, so a man is more content to be injured by one, to be scorned by another, if he takes thought that no power is so great as to be beyond the reach of harm. But if even the wisest do wrong, whose sin will not have good excuse? Let us look back upon our youth and recall how often we were too careless about duty, too indiscreet in speech, too intemperate in wine. If a man gets angry, let us give him enough time to discover what he has done;
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he will chastise himself. Suppose in the end he deserves punishment; then there is no reason why we should match his misdeeds. There will be no doubt about this - that whoever scorns his tormentors removes himself from the common herd and towers above them. The mark of true greatness is not to notice that you have received a blow. So does the huge wild beast calmly turn and gaze at barking dogs, so does the wave dash in vain against a mighty cliff. The man who does not get angry stands firm, unshaken by injury; he who gets angry is overthrown. But he whom I have just set above the reach of all harm holds, as it were, in his arms the highest good, and not only to a man, but to Fortune herself, he will say: "Do what you will, you are too puny to disturb my serenity. Reason, to whom I have committed the guidance of my life, forbids it. My anger is likely to do me more harm than your wrong. And why not more? The limit of the injury is fixed, but how far the anger will sweep me no man knows." "I cannot," you say, "be forbearing; it is difficult to submit to a wrong." That is not true; for who that can tolerate anger will yet be unable to tolerate wrong? Besides, what you now propose is to tolerate both anger and wrong. Why do you tolerate the delirium of a sick man, the ravings of a lunatic, or the wanton blows of children? Because, of course, they seem not to know what they are doing. What difference does it make what weakness it is that makes a person irresponsible? The plea of irresponsibility holds equally good for all. "What then?" you say; "shall the man go unpunished?" Grant that you wish it so, nevertheless it will not be
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so; for the greatest punishment of wrong-doing is the having done it, and no man is more heavily punished than he who is consigned to the torture of remorse. Again, we must consider the limitations of our human lot if we are to be just judges of all that happens; he, however, is unjust who blames the individual for a fault that is universal. Amongst his own people the colour of the Ethiopian is not notable, and amongst the Germans red hair gathered into a knot is not unseemly for a man. You are to count nothing odd or disgraceful for an individual which is a general characteristic of his nation, even those examples that I have cited can plead in defence the practice of some one section and corner of the world. Consider now how much more justly excuse may be made for those qualities that are common to the whole human race. We are all inconsiderate and

unthinking, we are all untrustworthy, discontented, ambitious - why should I hide the universal sore by softer words? - we are all wicked. And so each man will find in his own breast the fault which he censures in another. Why do you notice the pallor of A, the gauntness of B? These qualities are epidemic! And so let us be more kindly toward one another; we being wicked live among the wicked. Only one thing can bring us peace -the compact of mutual indulgence. You say, perhaps, "That man has already injured me, but I have not yet injured him." But perhaps you have already harmed, perhaps you will some day harm, some man. Do not count only this hour or this day; consider the whole character of your mind - even if you bave done no wrong, you are capable of doing it. How much better it is to heal than to avenge an
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injury! Vengeance consumes much time, and it exposes the doer to many injuries while he smarts from one; our anger alays lasts longer than the hurt. How much better it is to take the opposite course and not to match fault with fault. Would any one think that he was well balanced if he repaid a mule with kicks and a dog with biting? But you say, "Those creatures do not know that they are doing wrong." In the first place, how unjust is he in whose eyes being a man is fatal to obtaining pardon! In the second place, if other creatures escape your anger for the very reason that they are lacking in understanding, every man who lacks understanding should hold in your eyes a like position. For what difference does it make that his other qualities are unlike those of dumb animals if he' resembles them in the one quality that excuses dumb animals for every misdeed - a mind that is all darkness? "He did wrong," you say. Well, was this the first time? Will it be the last time? You need not believe him even if he should say, "I will never do it again." He will go on sinning and some one else will sin against him , and the whole of life will be a tossing about amid errors. Kindness must be treated with kindness. The words so often addressed to one in grief will prove most effective also for a man in anger: "Will you ever desist - or never?" If ever, how much better it is to forsake anger than to wait for anger to forsake you! Or shall this turmoil continue for ever? Do you see to what life-long unrest you are dooming yourself? For what will be the life of one who is always swollen with rage? Besides, when you have successfully inflamed yourself with passion, and have repeatedly <Ess1-323>

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renewed the causes that spur you on, your anger will leave you of its own accord, and lapse of time will reduce its power. How much better it is that it should be vanquished by you than by itself!

You will be angry first with this man, then with that one; first with slaves, then with freedmen; first with parents, then with children; first with acquaintances, then with strangers; for there are causes enough everywhere unless the mind enters to intercede. Rage will sweep you hither and yon, this way and that, and your madness will be prolonged by new provocations that constantly arise. Tell me, unhappy man, will you ever find time to love? What precious time you are wasting upon an evil thing! How much better would it be at this present moment to be gaining friends, reconciling enemies, serving the state, devoting effort to private affairs, than to be casting about to see what evil you can do to some man, what wound you may deal to his position, his estate, or his person, although you cannot attain this without struggle and danger even if your adversary be an inferior! You may take him in chains and at your pleasure expose him to every test of endurance; but too great violence in the striker has often dislocated a joint, or left a sinew fastened in the very teeth it had broken. Anger has left many a man crippled, many disabled, even when it has found its victim submissive. Besides, there lives no creature so weak that it will die without trying to harm its destroyer; sometimes pain, sometimes a mishap, makes the weak a match for the strongest. And is it not true that most of the things that make us angry offend us more than they harm us? But it makes a great difference whether a man
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thwarts my wish or fails to further it, whether he robs me or merely fails to give. And yet we attach the same value to both - whether a man deprives us of something or merely withholds it, whether

be shatters our hope or defers it, whether he acts against us or in his own interest, whether from love of another or from hatred of us. Some men, indeed, have not only just, but even honourable reasons for opposing us. One is protecting his father, another his brother, another his country, another his friend. Nevertheless, we do not excuse these for doing the very thing which we should blame them for not doing; nay, more, though it is quite unbelievable, we often think well of an act, but ill of its doer. But, in very truth, a great and just man honours those of his foes who are bravest and are most stubborn in the defence of the liberty and the safety of their country, and prays that fortune may grant him such men as fellow-citizens, such as fellow-soldiers.

It is base to hate a man who commands your praise, but how much baser to hate any one for the very reason that he deserves your pity. If a captive, suddenly reduced to servitude, still retains some traces of his freedom and does not run nimbly to mean and toilsome tasks, if sluggish from inaction he does not keep pace with the speed of his master's horse and carriage, if worn out by his daily vigils he yields to sleep, if when transferred to hard labour from service in the city with its many holidays he either refuses the toll of the farm or does not enter into it with energy - in such cases let us discriminate, asking whether he cannot or will not serve. We shall acquit many if we begin with discernment instead of with anger. But as it is, we obey our first impulse; then,
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although we have been aroused by mere trifles, we continue to be angry for fear that we may seem to have had no reason to be so from the first, and -what is most unjust - the very injustice of our anger makes us the more obstinate. For we hold on to it and nurse it, as if the violence of our anger were proof of its justice.

How much better it is to perceive its first beginnings - how slight, how harmless they are! You will find that the same thing happens with a man which you observe in dumb animals; we are ruffled by silly and petty things. The bull is aroused by a red colour, the asp strikes at a shadow, bears and lions are irritated by a handkerchief; all creatures by nature wild and savage are alarmed by trifles. The same is true of men, whether they are by nature restless or inert. They are smitten with suspicions, so powerfully, even,that they sometimes call moderate benefits injuries; these are the most common, certainly the most bitter, source of anger. For we become angry at our dearest friends because they have bestowed less than we anticipated, and less than they conferred upon another; and yet for both troubles there is a ready remedy. More favour has been shown another; then let us without making comparison be pleased with what we have. That man will never be happy whom the sight of a happier man tortures. I may have less than I hoped for; but perhaps I hoped for more than I ought. It is from this direction that we have most to fear; from this springs the anger that is most destructive, that will assail all that is most holy. Among those who dispatched the divine Julius there were more friends than enemies - friends whose insatiate hopes he had failed to satisfy, He wished
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ON ANGER, III. xxx. 4-xxxi. 3

indeed to do so - for no man ever made a more generous use of victory, from which he claimed nothing for himself except the right to give away - but how could he gratify such unconscionable desires, since every one of them coveted as much as any one could possibly covet? And so he saw his fellow-soldiers around his chair with their swords drawn - Tillius Cimber, a little while before the boldest defender of his cause, and others who, after Pompey was no more, had at length become Pompeians./a It is this that turns against kings their own weapons, and drives their most trusted followers to the point of planning for the death of those for whom and before whom they had vowed to die. No man when he views the lot of others is content with his own. This is why we grow angry even at the gods, because some person is ahead of us, forgetting how many men there are behind us, and how huge a mass of envy follows at the back of him who envies but a few. Nevertheless such is the presumptuousness of men that, although they may have received much, they count it an injury that they might have received more. "He gave me the praetorship, but I had hoped for the consulship; he gave me the twelve fasces, but he did not make me a regular consul; he was willing that my name should be attached to the year,/b but he disappointed me with respect to the priesthood; I was elected a member of the college, but why of one only? he crowned me

with public honour, but he added nothing to my patrimony; what he gave me he had to give to somebody - he took nothing out of his own pocket." Express thanks rather for what you have received; wait for the rest, and be glad that you are not yet surfeited. There is a
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ON ANGER, III. xxxi. 3-xxxiii. 1

pleasure in having something left to hope for. Have you outstripped all others? Rejoice that you are first in the regard of your friend. Are there many who outstrip you? Consider how many more you are ahead of than behind, Do you ask me what is your greatest fault? Your book-keeping is wrong; what you have paid out you take high; what you have received, low. Different considerations should in different cases restrain us. From some let fear stay our anger, from others respect, from others pride. A fine thing we shall have done, no doubt, if we send a wretched slave to prison! Why are we in such a hurry to flog him at once, to break his legs forthwith? Such power,though deferred, will not perish. Wait for the time when the order will be our own; at the moment we shall speak under the dictation of anger; when that has passed, then we shall be able to see at what value we should appraise the damage. For it is in this that we are most liable to be wrong. We resort to the sword and to capital punishment, and an act that deserves the censure of a very light flogging we punish by chains, the prison, and starvation. "In what way," you ask, "do you bid us discover how paltry, how pitiful, how childish are all those things by which we think we are injured?" I, assuredly, could suggest nothing better than that you acquire a truly great spirit, and that you realize how sordid and worthless are all these things for the sake of which we wrangle, rush to and fro, and pant; these do not deserve a thought from the man who has any high and noble purpose.

Most of the outcry is about money. It is this which wearies the courts, pits father against son, brews poisons, and gives swords alike to the legions and to
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ON ANGER, III. xxxiii. 1-xxxlv. 1

cut-throats it is daubed with our blood; because of it husbands and wives make night hideous with their quarrels, crowds swarm to the tribunals of the magistrates, kings rage and plunder and overthrow states that have been built by the long labour of centuries, in order that they may search for gold and silver in the very ashes of cities. It is a pleasure, you say, to see money-bags lying in the corner. But these are what men shout for until their eyeballs start; for the sake of these the law-courts resound with the din of trials, and jurors summoned from distant parts sit in judgement to decide which man's greed has the juster claim. But what if it is not even a bag of money, but only a handful of copper or a silver piece, reckoned by a slave, which causes an heirless old man on the verge of the grave to split with rage? And what if it is only a paltry one per cent of interest/a that causes the moneylender, sick though he be, with crippled feet and with gnarled hands that no longer serve for counting money, to shout aloud, and in the very throes of his malady to require securities for his pennies? If you were to offer me all the money from all the mines, which we are now so busy in digging, if you were to cast before my eves all the money that buried treasures hold - for greed restores to earth what it once in wickedness drew forth - I should not count that whole assembled hoard worth even a good man's frown. With what laughter should we attend the things that now draw tears from our eyes!

Come, now, run through the other causes of anger - foods, drinks, and the refinements in regard to them devised to gratify pride, insulting words, disrespectful gestures, stubborn beasts of burden and lazy slaves,
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suspicion and the malicious misconstruction of another's words, the result of which is that the very gift of human speech is counted among the injustices of nature. Believe me, these things which incense us not a little are little things, likc the trifles that drive children to quarrels and blows. Not one of them, though we take them so tragically, is a serious matter, not one is important. From this, I say, from the fact that you attach great value to petty things, come your anger and your madness. This man wanted to rob me of my inheritance; this one slandered me to people whom I had long

courted in the expectation of a legacy; this one coveted my mistress. The desire for the same thing, which ought to have been a bond of love,/a becomes the source of discord and of hatred. A narrow path drives passers-by to blows; on a wide and open road even a multitude will not jostle. Because the things you strive for are trifles, and yet cannot be given to one without robbing another, they provoke those desiring the same things to struggle and strife.

You are indignant because your slave, your freedman, your wife, or your client answered you back; and then you complain that the state has been deprived of that liberty of which you have deprived your own household. Again, you call it obstinacy if a man keeps silent when he is questioned. But let him speak and let him keep silent and let him laugh! "In the presence of his master?" you ask. Yes, even in the presence of the head of the family. Why do you shout? Why do you rant? Why do you call for the whip in the midst of dinner, all because the slaves are talking, because there is not the silence of the desert in a room that holds a crowd big as a
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mass-meeting? You do not have ears only for the purpose of listening to melodious sounds, soft and sweetly drawn and all in harmony; you should also lend ear to laughter and weeping, to soft words and bitter, to happiness and sorrow, to the voices of men and the roars and barking of animals. Poor fellow! why do you shudder at the shouting of a slave, at the rattling of bronze, or the banging of a door? Although you are so sensitive, you have to listen to thunder. And all this which I have said about the ears you may apply as well to the eyes, which if they are not well schooled suffer not less from squeamishness. They are offended by a spot, by dirt, by tarnished silver, and by a pool that isonot transparent to the bottom. These same eyes, forsooth, that cannot tolerate marble unless it is mottled and polished with recent rubbing, that cannot tolerate a table unless it is marked by many a vein, that at home would see under foot only pavements more costly than gold - these eyes when outside will behold, all unmoved, rough and muddy paths and dirty people, as are most of those they meet, and tenement walls crumbled and cracked and out of line. Why is it, then, that we are not offended on the street, yet are annoyed at home, except that in the one case we are in an unruffled and tolerant state of mind, and in the other are peevish and fault-finding? All our senses ought to be trained to endurance. They are naturally long-sufffering, if only the mind desists from weakening them. This should be summoned to give an account of itself every day. Sextius had this habit, and when the day was over and he had retired to his nightly rest, he would put
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ON ANGER, III. xxxvi. 1-xxxvii. 1

these questions to his soul: "What bad habit have you cured to- day? What fault have you resisted? In what respect are you better?" Anger will cease and become more controllable if it finds that it must appear before a judge every day. Can anything be more excellent than this practice of thoroughly sifting the whole day? And how delightful the sleep that follows this self- examination - how tranquil it is, how deep and untroubled, when the soul has either praised or admonished itself, and when this secret examiner and critic of self has given report of its own character! I avail myself of this privilege, and every day I plead my cause before the bar of self. When the light has been removed from sight, and my wife, long aware of my habit, has become silent, I scan the whole of my day and retrace all my deeds and words. I conceal nothing from myself, I omit nothing. For why should I shrink from any of my mistakes, when I may commune thus with myself?

"See that you never do that again; I will pardon you this time. In that dispute, you spoke too offensively; after this don't have encounters with ignorant people; those who have never learned do not want to learn. You reproved that man more frankly than you ought, and consequently you have, not so much mended him as offended him. In the future, consider not only the truth of what you say, but also whether the man to whom you are speaking can endure the truth. A good man accepts reproof gladly; the worse a man is the more bitterly he resents it." At a banquet the wit of certain people and some words aimed to sting you reached their mark. But remember to avoid the entertainments of the vulgar;
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after drinking their licence becomes too lax, because they want any sense of propriety even when they are sober. You saw one of your friends in a rage because the porter had thrust him out when he was trying to enter the house of some pettifogger or rich man, and you yourself on your friend's account became angry with that lowest kind of a slave. Will you then become angry with a chained watchdog? He, too, after all his barking, will become gentle if you toss him food. Retire a little way and laugh! As it is, the fellow thinks himself a somebody because he guards a threshold beset by a throne of litigants; as it is, the gentleman who reclines within is blissful and blest and considers it the mark of a successful and powerful man to make it difficult to darken his door. He forgets that the hardest door of all to open is the prison's. Make up your mind that there are many things which you must bear. Is any one surprised that he is cold in winter? That he is sick at sea? That he is jolted about on the highroad? The mind will meet bravely everything for which it has been prepared. Because you were given a less honourable place at the table, you began to get angry at your host, at the writer of the invitation, at the man himself who was preferred above you. Madman! what difference does it make on what part of the couch you recline? Can a cushion add to either your honour or your disgrace? You did not look with fair eyes upon a certain man because he spoke ill of your talent. Do you accept this as a principle? Then Ennius, whose poetry you do not like, would hate you, and Hortensius, if you disapproved of his speeches, would proclaim animosity to you, and Cicero, if you made fun of his poetry, would be your
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enemy. But when you are a candidate, you are willing to put up calmly -with the votes! Some one, perhaps, has offered you an insult; was it any greater than the one Diogenes, the Stoic philosopher, suffered, who at the very time he was discoursing upon anger was spat upon by a shameless youth. Yet he bore this calmly and wisely. Really, I am not angry," he said, "but nevertheless am not sure but that I ought to be angry." Yet how much better the course of our own Cato! For when he was pleading a case, Lentulus, that factious and unruly man who lingers in the memory of our fathers, gathering as much thick saliva as he could, spat it full upon the middle of Cato's forehead. But he wiped it off his face and said, "To all who affirm that you have no cheek,/a Lentulus, I'll swear that they are mistaken." We have now succeeded, Novatus, in bringing composure to the mind; it either does not feel anger, or is superior to it. Let us now see how we may allay the anger of others. For we wish not merely to be healed ourselves, but also to heal. We shall not venture to soothe the first burst of anger with words. It is both deaf and mad; we must give it room. Remedies are effective when the malady subsides. We do not tamper with the eyes when they are swollen - for in their stiff condition we are likely to irritate them by moving them -nor with other affected parts while they are inflamed. Rest is the cure in the first stages of illness. "How little," you say, "is your remedy worth, if it quiets anger when it is subsiding of its own accord!" In the first place, it makes it subside all the more quickly; in the second, it prevents its recurrence;
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it will baffle, also, even the first outburst which it makes no effort to soothe, for it will remove all the weapons of revenge; it will feign anger in order that, posing thus as a helper and comrade of our resentment, it may have more influence in counsel; it will contrive delays, and will postpone immediate punishment by looking about for a heavier one. It will employ every artifice to give respite to the madness. If the victim grows violent, it will enforce on him a sense of shame or fear that he cannot resist; if calmer, it will introduce conversation that is either interesting or novel, and will divert him by stirring his desire for knowledge. There is a story that once a physician had to cure the daughter of a king, and yet could not without using the knife. And so, while he was gently dressing her swollen breast, be inserted a lance concealed in a sponge. The girl would have fought against the remedy openly applied, but because sbe did not expect it, she endured the pain. Some matters are cured only by deception. To one man you will say, "See to it that you do not by your anger give pleasure to your foes"; to another, "See to it that you do not lose your greatness of mind

and the reputation you have in the eyes of many for strength. By heavens, I myself am indignant and I angry beyond measure, but we must await our time.

He shall pay the penalty; keep that well in mind. When you can, you will make him pay for the delay as well." To reprove a man when he is angry and in turn to become angry at him serve only to increase his anger. You will approach him with various appeals and persuasively, unless you happen to be an important enough person to be able to quell his anger by the same tactics the
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ON ANGER, III. xi. 2-xli. 2

deified Augustus used when he was dining with Vedius Pollio./a When one of his slaves had broken a crystal cup, Vedius ordered him to be seized and doomed him to die, but in an extraordinary way he ordered him to be thrown to the huge lampreys, which he kept in a fish-pond. Who would not suppose that he did this merely for display? It was really out of cruelty. The lad slipped from his captors and fled to Caesar's feet, begging only that he might die some other way - anything but being eaten. Caesar, shocked by such an innovation in cruelty, ordered that the boy be pardoned, and, besides, that all the crystal cups be broken before his eyes and that the fish-pond be filled up. It was so that it befitted Caesar to rebuke a friend; he employed his power rightly: "Do you order men to be hurried from a banquet to death, and to be torn to pieces bytortures of an unheard-of kind? If your cup was broken, is a man to have his bowels torn asunder? Will you vaunt yourself so much as to order a man to be led to death in the very presence of Caesar?" Thus if any man's power is so great that he can assail anger from an eminent position, let him deal with it harshly, but only such anger as that I have illustrated - fierce, inhuman, and bloodthirsty, and now quite incurable unless it is made to fear something more powerful. Let us give to the soul that peace wbich is afforded by constant meditation on wholesome instruction, by noble deeds, and a mind intent upon the desire for only what is honourable. Let us satisfy our conscience; for reputation let us strive not at all. Let even a bad name attend us, provided that we are really well-deserving. "But the populace," you
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say, admires spirited action, and the bold are held in honour - while quiet people are considered ineffective." Perhaps so, at first sight. But when these have proved by the even tenor of their lives that they seek, not inaction, but peace of mind, that same public will reverence and respect them. Consequently this hideous and ruinous passion serves not a single useful end, but, on the contrary, evil of every sort, the sword, and flame. Trampling under foot every scruple, it stains the hands with murder, it scatters abroad the limbs of children, it suffers no place to be free from crime, with no thought of glory, with no fear of disgrace, it is incurable when once, from anger, it has hardened into hate. Let us be freed from this evil, let us clear it from our minds and tear it up by the roots, for if there should linger the smallest traces, it will grow again; and let us not try to regulate our anger, but be rid of it altogether -for what regulation can there be of any evil thing? Moreover, we can do it, if only we shall make the effort. And nothing will help us so much as pondering our mortality. Let each man say to himself and to his fellow-mortal: "Why do we, as if born to live for ever, take delight in proclaiming our wrath and in wasting the little span of life? Why do we delight to employ for somebody's distress and torture the days that we might devote to virtuous pleasure? Your fortunes admit no squandering and you have no spare time to waste. Why do we rush into the fray? Why do we invite trouble for ourselves? Why do we, forgetting our weakness, take up the huge burden of hate, and, easily broken as we are, rise up to break? Soon a fever or some other bodily ill will stay that war of hatred, which
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ON ANGER, III. xlii. 3-xliii. 3

we now wage with such unrelenting purpose. Soon death {**Prospero+**} will step in and part the fiercest pair of fighters. Why do we run riot and perturb life with our uproar? Fate looms above our

heads, and scores up to our account the days as they go by, and draws ever nearer and nearer. That hour which you appoint for the death of another is perchance near your own."

Why do you not rather gather up your brief life and render it a peaceful one to yourself and all others? Why do you not rather make yourself beloved by all while you live, and regretted by all when you die? Why do vou long to drag down the man who deals with you from too lofty a height? Why do you try with all your might to crush the man who rails against you, a low and contemptible fellow, but sharp-tongued and troublesome to his betters? Why are you angry with your slave, you with your master, you with your patron,you with your client? Wait a little. Behold, death comes, who will make you equals. At the morning performances in the arena we often see a battle between a bull and a bear tied together, and when they have harried each other, an appointed slayer awaits them. Their fate is ours; we harass some one bound closely to us, and yet the end, all too soon, threatens the victor and the vanquished. Rather let us spend the little time that is left in repose and peace! Let no man loathe us when we lie a corpse! A cry of fire in the neighbourhood often ends a fight, and the arrival of a wild beast rescues a traveller from the brigand. We have no time to struggle with lesser ills when a more threatening fear appears. Why do we concern ourselves with combat and with snares? Can you wish for the victim of your wrath a greater ill than death? Even
<Ess1-353>

ON ANGER, III. xliii. 3-5

though you do not move a finger, he will die. You waste your pains if you wish to do what needs must be. "I do not wish," you say, "to kill him at all, but to punish him with exile, with public disgrace, with material loss." But I am more indulgent to the man who would give his enemy a wound than to the one who would give him a blister; for the latter has not only an evil mind, but a petty mind as well. Whether your thoughts run on tortures severe or slight, how short is the time in which either your victim can writhe under your torments, or you derive a wicked joy from another's pain! Soon shall we spew forth this frail spirit. Meanwhile, so long as we draw breath, so long as we live among men, let us cherish humanity. Let us not cause fear to any man, nor danger; let us scorn losses, wrongs, abuse, and taunts, and let us endure with heroic mind our short-lived ills. While we are looking back, as they say, and turning around, straightway death will be upon us.
<Ess1-355>

TO THE EMPEROR NERO
ON **MERCY**+ {DE CLEMENTIA}
BOOK I

I HAVE undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of mercy, in order to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror, and thus reveal you to yourself as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures. For, though the true profit of virtuous deeds lies in the doing, and there is no fitting reward for the virtues apart from the virtues themselves, still it is a pleasure to subject a good conscience to a round of inspection, then to cast one's eyes upon this vast throng - discordant, factious, and unruly, ready to run riot alike for the destruction of itself and others if it should break its yoke - and finally to commune with oneself thus. "Have I of all mortals found favour with Heaven and been chosen to serve on earth as vicar of the gods? I am the arbiter of life and death for the nations; it rests in my power what each man's lot and state shall be; by my lips Fortune proclaims what gift she would bestow on each human being; from my utterance peoples and cities gather reasons for rejoicing; without my favour and grace no part of the wide world can prosper; all those many thousands of swords
<Ess1-357>

ON MERCY, I. i. 2-5

which my peace restrains will be drawn at my nod; what nations shall be utterly destroyed, which banished, which shall receive the gift of liberty, which have it taken from them, what kings shall become slaves and whose heads shall be crowned with royal honour, what cities shall fall and

which shall rise this it is mine to decree. With all things thus at my disposal, I have been moved neither by anger nor youthful impulse to unjust punishment, nor by the foolhardiness and obstinacy of men which have often wrung patience from even the serenest souls, nor yet by that vainglory which employs terror for the display of might - a dread but all too common use of great and lordly power. With me the sword is hidden, nay, is sheathed; I am sparing to the utmost of even the meanest blood; no man fails to find favour at my hands though be lack all else but the name of man. Sternness I keep hidden, but mercy ever ready at hand. I so hold guard over myself as though I were about to render an account to those laws which I have summoned from decay and darkness into the light of day. I have been moved to pity by the fresh youth of one, by the extreme old age of another; one I have pardoned for his high position, another for his humble state; whenever I found no excuse for pity, for my own sake I have spared./a To-day, if the immortal gods should require a reckoning from me, I am ready to give full tale of the human race."

This pronouncement, Caesar, you may boldly make, that whatever has passed into your trust and guardianship is still kept safe, that through you the state suffers no loss, either from violence or from fraud. It is the rarest praise, hitherto denied to all
<Ess1-359>

ON MERCY, I. 1. 5-8

other princes, that you have coveted for yourself innocence of wrong. Nor has the effort been in vain, and that unparalleled goodness of yours has not found men ungrateful or grudging in their appraisement. Thanks are rendered to you; no human being has ever been so dear to another as you are to the people of Rome - its great and lasting blessing. But it is a mighty burden that you have taken upon yourself; no one to-day talks of the deified Augustus or the early years of Tiberius Caesar, or seeks for any model he would have you copy other than yourself; the standard for your principate is the foretaste you have given. This would have indeed been difficult if that goodness of yours were not innate but only assumed for the moment. For no one can wear a mask long; the false quickly lapses back into its own nature; but whatever has truth for its foundation, and whatever springs, so to speak, from out the solid earth, grows by the mere passing of time into something larger and better. Great was the hazard that the Roman people faced so long as it was uncertain what course those noble talents of yours would take; to-day the prayers of the state are assured, for there is no danger that you will be seized by sudden forgetfulness of yourself. Over-much prosperity, it is true, makes men greedy, and desires are never so well controlled as to cease at the point of attainment; the ascent is from great to greater, and men embrace the wildest hopes when once they have gained what they did not hope for; and yet to-day your subjects one and all are constrained to confess that they are happy, and, too, that nothing further can be added to their blessings, except that these may last. Many
<Ess1-361>

ON MERCY, I. i. 8-ii. 2

facts force them to this confession, which more than any other a man is loath to make: a security deep and abounding, and justice enthroned above all injustice; before their eyes hovers the fairest vision of a state which lacks no element of complete liberty except the license of self-destruction. Above all, however, alike to the highest and the lowest, extends the same admiration for your quality of mercy; for although of other blessings each one experiences or expects a larger or smaller measure in proportion to his lot, yet from mercy men all hope to have the same; nor is there any man so wholly satisfied with his own innocence as not to rejoice that mercy stands in sight, waiting for human errors.

I know, however, that there are some who think that mercy upholds the worst class of men, since it is superfluous unless there has been some crime, and since it alone of all the virtues finds no exercise among the guiltless. But, first of all, just as medicine is used by the sick, yet is held in honour by the healthy, so with mercy - though it is those who deserve punishment that invoke it, yet even the guiltless cherish it. Again, this virtue has scope even in the person of the guiltless, because at times fortune takes the place of guilt; and not only does mercy come to the rescue of innocence, but often of righteousness also, inasmuch as, from the state of the times,/a there arise certain acts which, while praised, may yet be punished. Then, too, there are a great many people who might be turned back to the path of virtue if <they are released from punishment>.

Nevertheless, pardoning ought not to be too common; for when the distinction between the bad and the good is removed, the result is confusion and an epidemic of
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a Stoicism produced many "**conscientious_objectors+**" who were high-minded, yet futile, opponents of imperial rule.
<Ess1-363>

ON MERCY, I. ii. 2-iii. 3

vice. Therefore a wise moderation should be exercised which will be capable of distinguishing between curable and hopeless characters. Neither should we have indiscriminate and general mercy, nor yet preclude it; for it is as much a cruelty to pardon all as to pardon none. We should maintain the mean; but since a perfect balance is difficult, if anything is to disturb the equipoise it should turn the scale toward the kindlier side.

But these matters will be more fitly discussed in their proper place. Here I shall divide this subject as a whole into three parts. The first will treat of the remission of punishment; the second will aim to show the nature and aspect of mercy; for since there are certain vices which counterfeit virtues, they cannot be separated unless you stamp them with marks by which they may be known apart. In the third place I shall inquire how the mind is led to adopt this virtue, and how it establishes it and by practice makes it its own. That no one of all the virtues is more seemly for a man, since none is more human, is a necessary conviction not only for those of us who maintain that man is a **social_creature+**, begotten for the common good,/a but also for those who give man over to pleasure,/b whose words and deeds all look to their own advantage. For if a man seeks calm and quiet, he finds this virtue, which loves peace and stays the hand, forthwith suited to his bent. Yet of all men none is better graced by mercy than a king or a prince. For great power confers grace and glory only when it is potent for benefit; it is surely a baneful might that is strong only for harm. He alone has firm and well-grounded greatness whom
<Ess1-365>

ON MERCY, I. iii. 3-5

all men know to be as much their friend as he is their superior; whose concern they daily find to be vigilant for the safety of each and all; upon whose approach they do not flee as if some monster or deadly beast had leaped from his lair, but rush eagerly forward as toward a bright and beneficent star. In his defence they are ready on the instant to throw themselves before the swords of assassins, and to lay their bodies beneath his feet if his path to safety must be paved with slaughtered men; his sleep they guard by nightly vigils, his person they defend with an encircling barrier, against assailing dangers they make themselves a rampart. Not without reason do cities and peoples show this accord in giving such protection and love to their kings, and in flinging themselves and all they have into the breach whenever the safety of their ruler craves it. Nor is it self-depreciation or madness when many thousands meet the steel for the sake of one man, and with many deaths ransom the single life, it may be, of a feeble dotard.

The whole body is the servant of the mind, and though the former is so much larger and so much more showy, while the unsubstantial soul remains invisible not knowing where its secret habitation lies, yet the hands, the feet, and the eyes are in its employ; the outer skin is its defence; at its bidding we lie idle, or restlessly run to and fro; when it commands, if it is a grasping tyrant, we search the sea for gain; if covetous of fame, ere now we have thrust a right hand into the flame, or plunged willingly into a chasm. In the same way this vast throng, encircling the life of one man, is ruled by his spirit, guided by his
<Ess1-367>

ON MERCY, I. iii. 5-iv. 3

reason, and would crush and cripple itself with its own power if it were not upheld by wisdom.

It is, therefore, their own safety that men love, when for one man they lead ten legions at a time into battle when they rush to the forefront and expose their breasts to wounds that they may save the standards of their emperor from defeat. For he is the bond by which the commonwealth is united, the breath of life which these many thousands draw, who in their own strength would be

only a burden to themselves and the prey of others if the great mind of the empire should be withdrawn.

If safe their king, one mind to all;
Bereft of him, they troth recall./a

Such a calamity would be the destruction of the Roman peace, such a calamity will force the fortune of a mighty people to its downfall. Just so long will this people be free from that danger as it shall know how to submit to the rein; but if ever it shall tear away the rein, or shall not suffer it to be replaced if shaken loose by some mishap, then this unity and this fabric of mightiest empire will fly into many parts, and the end of this city's rule will be one with the end of her obedience. Therefore it is not strange that kings and princes and guardians of the public order, whatever different name they bear, are held more dear even than those bound to us by private ties; for if men of sense put public**interests+** above private, it follows that he too is dearer upon whom the whole state centres. At an earlier day, in fact, Caesar so clothed himself with the powers of state that neither one could be withdrawn without the destruction of both. For while a Caesar needs power, the state also needs a head.

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a Vergil, Georgics, iv. 212, where he is speaking of **bees+** and their devotion to their "king."
<Ess1-369>

ON MERCY, I. v. 1-4

My discourse seems to have withdrawn somewhat far from its purpose, but, in very truth, it bears closely upon the real issue. For if - and this is what thus far it is establishing - you are the soul of the state and the state your body, you see, I think, how requisite is mercy; for you are merciful to yourself when you are seemingly merciful to another. And so even reprobate citizens should have mercy as being the weak members of the body, and if there should ever be need to let blood, the hand must be held under control to keep it from cutting deeper than may be necessary. The quality of mercy, then, as I was saying, is indeed for all men in accordance with nature, but in rulers it has an especial comeliness inasmuch as with them it finds more to save, and exhibits itself amid ampler opportunities. For how small the harm the cruelty of a private citizen can do! But when princes rage there is war. Though, moreover, the virtues are at harmony with each other, and no one of them is better or more noble than another, yet to certain people a certain virtue will be more suited. Greatness of soul is a virtue that is seemly for every human being, even for him who is the lowliest of the lowly.

For what is greater or braver than to beat down misfortune? Yet thls greatness of soul has freer play under circumstances of good fortune, and is shown to better advantage upon the judge's bench than on the floor.

Every house that mercy enters she will render peaceful and happy, but in the palace she is more wonderful, in that she is rarer. For what is more remarkable than that he whose anger nothing can withstand, to whose sentence, too heavy though it be, even the victims bow the head, whom, if he is very
<Ess1-371>

ON MERCY, I. v. 4-vi. i

greatly incensed, no one will venture to gainsay, nay, even to entreat -that this man should lay a restraining hand upon himself, and use his power to better and more peaceful ends when he reflects, "Any one can violate the law to kill, none but I, to save"? A lofty spirit befits a lofty station, and if it does not rise to thxe lhevel of its station and even stand above it, the other, too, is dragged downward to the ground. Moreover, the peculiar marks of a lofty spirit are mildness and composure, and the lofty disregard of injustice and wrongs. It is for **woman+** to rage in **anger+**, for wild beasts doubtless - and yet not even the noble sort of these - to bite and worry their prostrate victims. Elephants and lions pass by what they have stricken down; it is the ignoble beast that is relentless. Cruel and inexorable anger is not seemly for a king, for thus he does not rise much above the other man, toward whose own level he descends by being angry at him. But if he grants life, if he grants position to those who have imperilled and deserve to lose them, he does what none but a sovereign may; for one may take the life even of a superior, but not give it ever except to an inferior. To save life is the peculiar privilege of exalted station, which never has a

right to greater admiration than when it has the good fortune to have the same power as the gods, by whose kindness we all, the evil as well as the good, are brought forth into the light. Let a prince, therefore, appropriating to himself the spirit of the gods, look with pleasure upon one class of his citizens because they are useful and good; others let him leave to make up the count; let him be glad that some of them live, some let him merely endure.

Consider this city, in which the throng that streams
<Ess1-373>

ON MERCY, I. vi. 1-vii. 1

ceaselessly through its widest streets is crushed to pieces whenever anything gets in the way to check its course as it streams like a rushing torrent, this city in which the seating space of three theatres/a is required at one time, in which is consumed all the produce of the plough from every land; consider how great would be the loneliness and the desolation of it if none should be left but those whom a strict judge would acquit. How few prosecutors there are who would escape conviction under the very law which they cite for the prosecution; {**Lear+**!} how few accusers are free from blame. And, I am inclined to think, no one is more reluctant to grant pardon than he who again and again has had reason to seek it. We have all sinned {**common+**} - some in serious, some in trivial things; some from deliberate intention some by chance impulse, or because we were led astray by the wickedness of others; some of us have not stood strongly enough by good resolutions, and have lost our innocence against our will and though still clinging to it; and not only have we done wrong, but we shall go on doing wrong to the very end of life. Even if there is any one who has so thoroughly cleansed his mind that nothing can any more confound him and betray him, yet it is by sinning that he has reached the sinless state./b

Since I have made mention of the gods, I shall do very well to establish this as the standard after which a prince should model himself -that he should wish so to be to his subjects, as he would wish the gods to be to himself. Is it, then, desirable to have deities that cannot be moved to show mercy to our sins and mistakes? Is it desirable to have them our enenlies even to the point of our complete destruction? And

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b i.e., of the ideal wise man of the Stoics, so rarely produced. The doctrine that virtue is not merely the greatest but the only good allowed no gradation of goodness or badness, and frankly recognized the almost universal **depravity+** of mankind. Seneca, with his humane tendencies gives passionate emphasis to this beliefm making it the basis of a plea for mercy and kindness.
<Ess1-375>

ON MERCY, I. vii. 1-viii. 1

what king will escape the danger of having the soothsayers gather up his riven limbs?/a But if the gods, merciful and just, do not instantly avenge with the thunderbolt the shortcomings of the mighty, how much more just is it for a man, set over men, to exercise his power in gentle spirit and to ask himself which condition of the world is more pleasing to the eye and more lovely - when the day is calm and clear, or when all nature quakes with crash upon crash of thunder, and hither and yonder the lightnings flash? And yet the aspect of a quiet and well- ordered empire is not different from that of a calm and shining sky. A reign that is cruel is stormy and overcast with gloom, and, while men tremble and grow pale at the sudden uproar, even he who is the cause of all the turmoil does not fail to shudder. One in private life, if he stubbornly seeks revenge, is more easily pardoned; for it is possible for him to receive an **injury+**, and his resentment springs from a sense of wrong; besides, he is afraid of being scorned, and, when one is injured, the failure to make requital seems a show of weakness, not of mercy. But the man for whom vengeance is easy, by disregarding it, gains assured praise for clemency. Those placed in lowly station are more free to use force, to quarrel, to rush into a brawl, and to indulge their wrath; when the odds are matched, blows fall light; but in a king, even loud speech and unbridled words ill accord with his majesty. You think that it is a serious matter to deprive kings of the right of free speech, which belongs to the humblest man. "That," you say, "is servitude, not sovereignty." What? are you not aware that the sovereignty is ours, the servitude yours? {**HenV+**} Far
<Ess1-377>

ON MERCY, I. viii. 1-5

different is the position of those who escape notice in a crowd that they do not overtop, whose virtues must struggle long in order to be seen, whose vices keep under the cover of obscurity; but the words and deeds of such as you are caught up by rumour, and, consequently, none should be more concerned about the character of their reputation than those who, no matter what reputation they may deserve, are sure to have a great one. How many things there are which you may not do, which we, thanks to you, may do! It is posible for me to walk alone without fear in any part of the city I please, though no companion attends me, though I have no sword at my house, none at my side; you, amid the peace you create, must live armed. You cannot escape from your lot; it besets you, and, whenever you leave the heights, it pursues you with its magnificence. In this lies the**servitude+** of supreme greatness - that it cannot become less great; but you share with the gods that inevitable condition. For even they are held in bondage by heaven, and it is no more lawful for them to leave the heights than it is safe for you; you are nailed to your pinnacle. Our movements are noticed by few; we may come forth and retire and change our dress without the world being aware; you can no more hide yourself than the sun. A flood of light surrounds you; towards it every one turns his eyes. Think you to "come forth"? Nay, you rise./a You cannot speak but that all the nations of the earth hear your voice; you cannot be angry without causing everything to tremble, because you cannot strike any one down without shaking all that is around him. As the lightning's stroke is dangerous for the few, though feared by all, so the punishment born of
<Ess1-379>

ON MERCY, I. viii. 5-ix. 2

great power I causes wider terror than harm, and not without reason; for when the doer is omnipotent, men consider not how much he has done, but how much he is likely to do. Consider, too, that whereas private citizens, by enduring the wrongs already received, lie more open to receiving others, yet kings by clemency gain a security more assured, because repeated punishment, while it crushes the hatred of a few, stirs the hatred of all. The inclination to vent one's rage should be less strong than the provocation for it; otherwise, just as trees that have been trimmed throw out again countless branches, and as many kinds of plants are cut back to make them grow thicker, so the cruelty of a king by removing his enemies increases their number; for the parents and children of those who have been killed, their relatives too and their friends, step into the place of each single victim.

By an example from your own family I wish to -remind you how true this is. The deified Augustus was a mild prince if one should undertake to judge him from the time of his principate; but when he shared the state with others,/a he wielded the sword.

When he was at your present age, having just passed his eighteenth year,/b he had already buried his dagger in the bosom of friends; he had already in stealth aimed a blow at the side of the consul, Mark Antony; he had already been a partner in proscription. But when he had passed his fortieth year and was staying in Gaul,/c the information was brought to him that Lucius Cinna/d a dull-witted man, was concocting a plot against him. He was told where Cornelius Cinna, son-in-law of Pompey, was the father of the conspirator.
<Ess1-381>

ON MERCY, I. ix. 2-6

and when and how he meant to attack him; one of the accomplices gave the information. Augustus resolved to revenge himself upon the fellow, and ordered a council of his friends to be called. He spent a restless night, reflecting that it was a young man of noble birth, blameless but for this act, the grandson of Gnaeus Pompeius, who was to be condemned. He could not now bear to kill one man, he to whom Mark Antony had dictated the edict of proscription while they dined. He moaned, and now and then would burst forth into fitful and inconsistent speech: "What then? shall I let my murderer walk about in unconcern while I am filled with fear? What! Shall he not pay the penalty who, sought in vain as my life has been in so many civil wars, saved unhurt in so many battles of fleets and armies, now that peace prevails on land and sea, is determining not to murder but to immolate me?" (for the plan was to attack him while offering sacrifice). Again, after an

interval of silence, in louder tone he would express much greater indignation at himself than at Cinna: "Why do you live on if so many are concerned to have you die? What end will there be of punishments, and of bloodshed? I am the obvious victim for whom young men of noble birth should whet their swords. If so many must perish in order that I may not, my life is not worth the price." At length Livia, his wife, broke in and said: "Will you take a woman's advice? Follow the practice of physicians, who when the usual remedies do not work try just the opposite. So far you have accomplished nothing by severity. Salvidienus/a was followed by Lepidus, Lepidus by Murena, Murena by Caepio, Caepio by Egnatius,/b, to say nothing of the
<Ess1-383>

ON MERCY, I. ix. 6-10

others whose monstrous daring makes one ashamed. Try now how mercy will work: pardon Lucius Cinna. He has been arrested; now he cannot do you harm, but he can help your reputation." Happy to have found a supporter, he thanked his wife, then ordered that the request to the friends who had been asked to the conference be at once countermanded, and summoned only Cinna to his presence. Having sent every one else from the room, he ordered a second chair to be placed for Cinna and said: "My first request of you is, that you will not interrupt me while I am talking, that you will not in the course of my words utter a protest; you will be given free opportunity to speak. Cinna, though I found you in the camp of the enemy, not made, but born, my deadly foe, I saved you, I allowed you to keep the whole of your father's estate. Today you are so prosperous, so rich, that your conquerors envy you, the conquered. When you sought holy office, I gave it to you, passing over many whose fathers had fought under me. Though such is the service that I have done you, you have determined to kill me." When at these words Cinna cried out that he was far from such madness, he said: "You are not keeping faith, Cinna; it was agreed that you were not to interrupt. You are making ready, I say, to kill me." He mentioned, further, the place, his confederates, the plan of the plot, the one who had been entrusted with the dagger. And when he saw that Cinna had dropped his eyes, silent now, not because of his compact, but because of his conscience, he said: "What is your purpose in this? Is it that you yourself may become the prince? On my word,the Roman people are hard put to it if nothing stands in the <Ess1-385>

ON MERCY, I. ix. 10-x. 1

way of your ruling except me. You cannot guard your own house; just lately the influence of a mere freedman defeated you in a private suit; plainly, nothing can be easier for you than to take action against Caesar! Tell me, if I alone block your hopes, will Paulus and Fabius Maximus and the Cossi and the Servilii and the great line of nobles, who are not the representatives of empty names, but add distinction to their pedigree - will these put up with you?" Not to fill up a great part of my book in repeating all his words -for he is known to have talked more than two hours, lengthening out this ordeal with which alone he intended to be content - at last he said: "Cinna, a second time I grant you your life; the first time you were an open enemy, now, a plotter and a parricide. From this day let there be a beginning of friendship between us; let us put to the test which one of us acts in better faith - I in granting you your life, or you in owing it to me." Later he, unsolicited, bestowed upon him the consulship, chiding him because he did not boldly stand for the office. He found Cinna most friendly and loyal, and became his sole heir. No one plotted against him further.

Your great-great-grandfather spared the vanquished; for if he had not spared them, whom would he have had to rule? Sallustius and a Cocceius and a Deillius and the whole inner circle of his court he recruited from the camp of his opponents; and now it was his own mercifulness that gave him a Domitius, a Messala, an Asinius, a Cicero, and all the flower of the state. What a long time was granted even Lepidus to die! For many
<Ess1-387>

ON MERCY, I. x. 1-xi. 1

years he suffered him to retain the insignia of a ruler, and only after the other's death did he permit the office of chief pontiff to be transferred to himself; for he preferred to have it called an honour rather than a spoil. This mercifulness led him on to safety and security, this made him popular and

beloved, although the necks of the Roman people had not yet been humbled when he laid hand upon them; and today this preserves for him a reputation which is scareely within the power of rulers even while they live. A god we believe him to be, but not because we are bidden; that Augustus was a good prince, that he well deserved the name of father, this we confess for no other reason than because he did not avenge with cruelty even the personal insults which usually sting a prince more than wrongs, because when he was the victim of lampoons he smiled, because he seemed to suffer punishment when he was exacting it, because he was so far from killing the various men whom he had convicted of intriguing with his daughter/a that he banished them for their greater safety, and gave them their credentials. Not merely to grant deliverance, but to guarantee it, when you know that there will be many to take up your quarrel and do you the favour of shedding an enemy's blood - this is really to forgive. Such was Augustus when he was old, or just upon the verge of old age. In youth he was hot-headed, flared up with anger, and did many things which he looked back upon with regret. To compare the mildness of the deified Augustus with yours no one will dare, even if the years of youth shall be brought into competition with an old age
<Ess1-389>

ON MERCY, I. xi. 1-xii. 1

that was more than ripe. Granted that he was restrained and merciful -yes, to be sure, but it was after Actium's waters had been stained a with Roman blood, after his own and an enemy's fleet had been wrecked off Sicily,/b after the holocaust of Perusia/c and the proscriptions. I, surely, do not call weariness of cruelty merey. True mercy, Caesar, is this which you display, which arises from no regret for violence, that bears no stain and never shed a compatriot's blood. In a position of unlimited power this is in the truest sense self-control and an all-embracing love of the human race even as of oneself - not to be perverted by any low desire, or by hastiness of nature, or by the precedent of earlier princes into testing by experiment what licence one may employ against fellow-citizens, but rather to dull the edge of supreme power. Your gift, Caesar, is a state unstained by blood, and your prideful boast that in the whole world you have shed not a drop of human blood is the more significant and wonderful because no one ever had the sword put into his hands at an earlier age.

Mercy, then, makes rulers not only more honoured, but safer, and is at the same time the glory of sovereign power and its surest protection. For why is it that kings have grown old and have handed on their thrones to children and grandchildren, while tyrants' sway is accursed and short? What difference is there between a tyrant and a king (for they are alike in the mere outward show of fortune and extent of power), except that tyrants are cruel to serve their pleasure, kings only for a reason and by necessity? "What then?" you say; "do not kings also often <Ess1-391>

ON MERCY, I. xii. 1-4

kill?" Yes, but only when they are induced to do so for the good of the state. Tyrants take delight in cruelty. But the difference between a tyrant and a king is one of deeds, not of name; for while the elder Dionysius a may justly and deservedly be counted better than many kings, what keeps Lucius Sulla from being styled a tyrant, whose killing was stopped only by a dearth of foes? Though he abdicated the dictatorship and returned to private life, yet what tyrant ever drank so greedily of human blood as he, who ordered seven thousand Roman citizens to be butchered at one time, and who, as he sat nearby at the temple of Bellona and heard the mingled cry of the many thousands moaning beneath the sword, said to the terror-stricken senate, "Let us attend to business, Gentlemen of the Senate; only a few seditious persons are being killed by my order"? This was no lie; to Sulla they seemed a few. But more about Sulla by and by, when we shall take up the question of the sort of anger we should have for enemies, particularly if fellow-countrymen have broken away from the body politic and passed over into the category of enemies. Meanwhile, as I was saying, it is mercy that makes the distinction between a king and a tyrant as great as it is, though both are equally fenced about with arms; but the one uses the arms which he has to fortify good-will, the other to curb great hatred by great fear, and yet the very hands to which he has entrusted himself he cannot view without concern. Conflicting causes force him to conflicting courses; for since he is hated because he is feared, he wishes to be feared
<Ess1-393>

ON MERCY, I. xii. 4-xiii. 2

because he is hated, and not knowing what frenzy is engendered when hatred grows too great, he takes as a motto that accursed verse which has driven many to their fall:

Let them hate, if only they fear./a

Now fear in moderation restrains men's passions, but the fear that is constant and sharp and brings desperation arouses the sluggish to boldness, and urges them to stop at nothing. In the same way, a string of feathers may keep wild beasts hemmed in, but let a horseman come upon them from behind with javelins, and they will try to escape through the very objects that had made them run, and will trample down their fear. No courage is so bold as that forced by utter desperation. Fear should leave some sense of security, and hold out much more of hope than of peril; otherwise, if an inoffensive man is made to fear the same peril as others, he takes pleasure in rushing into peril and making an end of a life that is forfeit.

A king that is peaceable and gentle finds his guards trusty, since he employs them for the common safety, and the soldier, seeing that he is giving his service for the security of the state, is proud and willing to undergo any hardship as a protector of the father of his country; but he that is harsh and bloodthirsty inevitably gets the ill-will of his own henchmen. It is impossible for any one to hold the good-will and loyalty of servitors whom he uses, like the rack and the axe, as instruments of torture and death, to whom he flings men as he would to wild beasts; no prisoner at the bar is so troubled and anxious as he, seeing that he is in fear of men and gods, the witnesses and the avengers of crimes, yet has reached a point where

<Ess1-395>

ON MERCY, I. xiii. 2-5

he has not the power to change his conduct. For added to all the rest, this is still cruelty's greatest curse - that one must persist in it, and no return to better things is open; for crime must be safeguarded by crime. {**Macbeth**+} But what creature is more unhappy than the man who now cannot help being wicked? A wretch to be pitied, at least by himself! for that others should pity him would be a crime - a man who has utilized his power for murder and pillage, who has caused mistrust of all his dealings whether at home or abroad, who resorts to the sword because he fears the sword, who trusts neither the loyalty of friends nor the affection of his children; who, when he has surveyed what he has done and what he intends to do, and has laid bare his conscience burdened with crimes and torturings, often fears to die but more often prays for death, more hateful as he is to himself than to his servitors. On the other hand, he whose care embraces all, who, while guarding here with greater vigilance, there with less, yet fosters each and every part of the state as a portion of himself; who is inclined to the milder course even if it would profit him to punish, showing thus how loath he is to turn his hand to harsh correction; whose mind is free from all hostility, from all brutality; who so covets the approbation of his countrymen upon his acts as ruler that he wields his power with mildness and for their good; who thinks himself aboundingly happy if he can make the public sharers in his own good fortune; who is affable in speech, easy of approach and access, lovable in countenance, which most of all wins the affection of the masses, well-disposed to just petitions and even to the unjust not harsh - such a one the whole state loves, defends,

<Ess1-397>

ON MERCY, I. xiii. 5-xlv. 3

and reveres. What people say of such a man is the same in secret as in public. They are eager to rear up sons, and the childlessness once imposed by public ills is now relaxed; no one doubts that his children will have cause to thank him for permitting them to see so happy an age. Such a prince, protected by his own good deeds, needs no bodyguard; the arms he wears are for adornment only. What, then, is his duty? It is that of the good parent who is wont to reprove Ms children sometimes gently, sometimes with threats, who at times admonishes them even by stripes. Does any father in his senses disinherit a son for his first offence? Only when great and repeated wrong-doing has overcome his patience, only when what he fears outweighs what he reprimands, does he resort to the decisive penalty; but first he makes many an effort to reclaim a character that

is still unformed, though inclined now to the more evil side; when the case is hopeless, he tries extreme measures. No one resorts to the exaction of punishment until he has exhausted all the means of correction. This is the duty of a father, and it is also the duty of a prince, whom not in empty flattery we have been led to call "the Father of his Country." For other designations have been granted merely by way of honour; some we have styled "the Great," "the Fortunate," and "the August," and we have heaped upon pretentious greatness all possible titles as a tribute to such men; but to "the Father of his Country" we have given the name in order that he way know that he has been entrusted with a father's power, which is most forbearing in its care for the interests of his children and subordinates his own to theirs. Slow would a father be to sever his own flesh
<Ess1-399>

ON MERCY, I. xiv. 3-xv. 4

and blood; aye, after severing he would yearn to restore them, and while severing he would moan aloud, hesitating often and long; for he comes near to condemning gladly who condemns swiftly, and to punishing unjustly who punishes unduly.

Within my memory the people in the forum stabbed Tricho, a Roman knight, with their writing-styles because he had flogged his son to death; Augustus Caesar's authority barely rescued him from the indignant hands of fathers no less than of sons. Tarius, on the other hand, having detected his son in a plot against his life, when after investigating the case he found him guilty, won the admiration of every one because, satisfying himself with exile - and a luxurious exile - he detained the parricide at Marseilles,/a furnishing him with the same liberal allowance that he had been in the habit of giving him before his guilt; the effect of this generosity was that, in a community where a villain never lacks a defender, no one doubted that the accused man had been justly condemned, since the father who could not hate him had found it possible to condemn him. I will now use this very case to show you an example of a good prince with whom you may compare the good father. When Tarius was ready to open the inquiry on his son, he invited Augustus Caesar to attend the council; Augustus came to the hearth of a private citizen, sat beside him, and took part in the deliberation of another household. He did not say, "Rather, let the man come to my house"; for, if he had, the inquiry would have been conducted by Caesar and not by the father. When the case had been heard and all the evidence had been sifted - what the young fellow said in his defense, and
<Ess1-401>

ON MERCY, I. xv. 4-xvi. 1

what was brought up in accusation against him Caesar requested each man to give his verdict in writing, lest all should vote according to his lead. Then, before the tablets were opened, he solemnly declared that he would accept no bequest from Tarius, who was a rich man. Some will say, "He showed weakness in fearing that he might seem to be trying to clear the field for his own prospects by sentencing the son." I think differently; any one of us might well have had enough faith in his own good conscience to withstand hostile criticism, but princes are bound to give much heed even to report. He solemnly declared that he would not accept a bequest. Tarius did indeed on one and the same day lose a second heir/a also, but Caesar saved the integrity of his vote; and after he had proved that his severity was disinterested - for a prince should always have regard for this - he said that the son ought to be banished to whatever place the father should decide. His sentence was not the sack,/b nor serpents, nor prison, since his thought was not of the man on whom he was passing sentence, but of him for whom he was acting as counsellor. He said that the mildest sort of punishment ought to satisfy a father in the case of a son who was very youthful and had been moved to commit this crime, but in committing it had shown himself faint-hearted - which was next door to being innocent; therefore the son should be banished from the city and from his father's sight. How worthy he was of being asked by parents to share their counsels! How worthy of being recorded a co-heir with the children who were innocent! This is the spirit of mercy that graces the prince; wherever he goes he should make everything more peaceable.
<Ess1-403>

ON MERCY, I. xvi. 1-5

In the eyes of a ruler let no man count for so little that his destruction is not noted; be he what

he may, he is part of the realm. From the forms of lesser power let us draw a parallel for great power. There is more than one kind of power, a prince has power over his subjects, a father over his children, a teacher over his pupils, a tribune or a centurion over his soldiers. Will he not seem the worst sort of father who controls his children by constant whippings for even the most trifling offences? And of teachers, which will reflect more credit upon the liberal studies - the one who will draw the blood of his pupils if their memory is weak, or if the eye is not quick and lags in reading, or the one who chooses rather by kind admonition and a sense of shame to correct, and so to teach, his pupils? Show me a tribune or centurion that is harsh; he will cause deserters, who all the same/a are pardonable. Is it just, I ask, that man should be subjected to severer and harsher rule than dumb beasts? And yet the horse is not plied with the lash and terrified by the horse-breaker who is an expert; for it will grow fearful and obstinate unless it is soothed with caressing hand. The same is true of the hunter, whether he is teaching young dogs to follow the trail, or makes use of those already trained for routing out the game or running it down: he neither employs constant threats (for that will break their spirit, and all their native qualities will be gradually lost in a timidity unworthy of their breed), nor does he allow them to range and roam around without restraint. This applies again to drivers of the more sluggish beasts of burden, which, though they are born to abuse and misery, may be driven to refuse the yoke by too much cruelty. <Ess1-405>

ON MERCY, I. xvii.

No creature is more difficult of temper, none needs to be handled with greater skill, than man, and to none should more mercy be shown. For what is more senseless than to subject man to the foulest treatment at the hands of man, while one will blush to vent his anger on beasts of burden and dogs? Diseases do not make us angry - we try to cure them; yet here too is a disease, but of the mind; it requires gentle treatment, and one to treat it who is anything but hostile to his patient. It is a poor physician that lacks faith in his ability to cure; and he who has been entrusted with the life of all the people ought to act upon the same principle in dealing with those whose mind is diseased; he ought not to be too quick to give up hope or to pronounce the symptoms fatal; he should wrestle with their troubles and stay them; some he should reproach with their malady, some he should dupe by a sugared dose in order to make a quicker and a better cure by using deceptive remedies; the aim of the prince should be not merely to restore the health, but also to leave no shameful scar. No glory redounds to a ruler from cruel punislinient - for who doubts his ability to give it? - but, on the other hand, the greatest glory is his if he holds his power in check {**Prospero+**}, if he rescues many from the wrath of others, if he sacrifices none to his own.

It is praiseworthy to use authority over slaves with moderation. Even in the case of i. human chattel you should consider not how much he can be made to suffer without retaliating, but how much you are permitted to inflict by the principles of equity and right, which require that mercy should be shown even to captives and purchased slaves. <Ess1-407>

ON MERCY, I. xviii. 1-xix. 2

With how much more justice do they require that free, free-born, and reputable men should not be treated as mere chattels, but as those who, outstripped by you in rank, have been committed to your charge to be, not your slaves, but your wards. Even slaves have the right of refuge at the statue of a god; and although the law allows anything in dealing with a slave, yet in dealing with a human being there is an extreme which the right common to all living creatures refuses to allow. Who did not hate Vedius Pollio even more than his own slaves did, because he would fattten his lampreys on human blood, and order those who had for some reason incurred his displeasure to be thrown into his fishpond - or why not say his snake-preserve? The monster! He deserved to die a thousand deaths, whether he threw his slaves as food to lampreys he meant to eat, or whether he kept lampreys only to feed them on such food!

Even as cruel masters are pointed at with scorn throughout the whole city, and are hated and loathed, so with kings; while the wrong they do extends more widely, the infamy and hatred which they incur is handed down to the ages. But how much better not to have been born than to be counted among those born to the public harm!

It will be impossible for one to imagine anything more seemly for a ruler than the quality of mercy, no matter in what manner or with what justice he has been set over other men. We shall admit, of course, that this quality is the more beautiful and wonderful, the greater the power under which it is displayed; and this power need not be harmful if it is adjusted to Nature's law. For

Nature herself
<Ess1-409>

ON MERCY, I. XIX. 2-5

conceived the idea of king, as we may recognize from the case of bees and other creatures; the king/a of the bees has the roomiest cell, placed in the central and safest spot; besides, he does no work, but superintends the work of the others, and if they lose their king, they all scatter; they never tolerate more than one at a time, and they discover the best one by means of a fight/b; moreover the appearance of the king is striking and different from that of the others both in size and beauty. His greatest mark of distinction, however, lies in this: bees are most easily provoked, and, for the size of their bodies, excellent fighters, and where they wound they leave their stings; but the king himself has no sting. Nature did not wish him to be cruel or to seek a revenge that would be so costly, and so she removed his weapon, and left his anger unarmed.

Great kings will find herein a mighty precedent; for it is Nature's way to exercise herself in small matters, and to bestow the tiniest/c proofs of great principles. Shameful were it not to draw a lesson from the ways of the tiny creatures, since, as the mind of man has so much more power to do harm, it ought to show the greater self-control. Would at least that a man were subject to the same law, and that his anger broke off along with his weapon, and that he could not injure more than once or use the strength of ethers to wreak his hatred; for he would soon grow weary of his rage if he had no instrument to satisfy it but himself, and if by giving rein to his violence he ran the risk of death. But even as it is, such a man has no safe course; for he must fear as much as he wishes to be feared, must watch the hands of every person, and count himself <Ess1-411>

ON MERCY, I. xix. 5-8

assailed even when no one is for laying hold on him, and not a moment must he have that is free from dread. Would any one endure to live such a life when, doing no harm to others and consequently fearless, he might exercise beneficently his privilege of power to the happiness of all? For if any one thinks that a king can abide in safety where nothing is safe from the king, he is wrong; for the price of security is an interchange of security. He has no need to rear on high his towering castles, or to wall about steep hills against asceent, or to cut away the sides of mountains, or to encircle himself with rows of walls and turrets; through mercy a king will be assured of safety on an open plain. His one impregnable defence is the love of his countrymen. And what is more glorious than to live a life which all men hope may last, and for which all voice their prayers when there is none to watch them? to excite men's fears, not their hopes, if one's health gives way a little? to have no one hold anything so precious that he would not gladly give it in exchange for his chieftain's safety? Oh, surely a man so fortunate would owe it also to himself -to live/a; to that end he has shown by constant evidences of his goodness, not that the state is his, but that he is the state's. {**Prospero+**} Who would dare to devise any danger for such a man? Who would not wish to shield him if he could, even from the chance of ill - him beneath whose sway justice, peace, chastity, security, and honour flourish, under whom the state abounds in wealth and a store of all good things? Nor does it gaze upon its ruler with other emotion than, did they vouchsafe his the power of beholding them, we should gaze upon the immortal gods - with
<Ess1-413>

ON MERCY, I. xix. 8-xxi. 1

veneration and with worship. But tell me: he who bears himself in a godlike manner, who is beneficent and generous and uses his power for the better end - does he not hold a place second only to the gods? {**Prospero+**} It is well that this should be your aim, this your ideal: to be considered the greatest man, only if at the same time you are considered the best.

A prince usually inflicts punishment for one of two reasons, to avenge either himself or another. I shall first discuss the situation in which he is personally concerned; for moderation is more difficult when vengeance serves the end of **anger+** rather than of discipline. At this point it is needless to caution him to be slow in believing, to ferret out the truth, to befriend innocence, and to remember that to prove this is as much the business of the judge as of the man under trial; for all this concerns justice, not mercy. What I now urge is that, although he has been clearly injured, he

should keep his feelings under control, and, if he can in safety, should remit the punishment; if not, that he should modify it, and be far more willing to forgive wrongs done to himself than to others. For just as the magnanimous man is not be who makes free with what is another's, but he who deprives himself of what he gives to some one else, so I shall not call him merciful who is peaceable when the smart is another's, but him who, though the spur galls himself, does not become restive, who understands that it is magnanimous to brook injuries even where authority is supreme, and that there is nothing more glorious than a prince who, though wronged, remains unavenged.

Vengeance accomplishes usually one of two pur-
<Ess1-415>

ON MERCY, I. xxi. 1-3

poses: if a person has been injured, it gives him either a compensation or immunity for the future. But a prince's fortune is too exalted for him to feel the need of compensation, and his power is too evident to lead him to seek a reputation for power by injury to another. That, I say, is so, when he has been assailed and outraged by his inferiors; for in the case of foes whom he once counted his equals, he has vengeance enough if he sees them beneath Ms heel. A slave, a snake, or an arrow may slay even a king; but no one has saved a life who was not greater than the one whom he saved. Consequently he who has the power to give and to take away life ought to use this great gift of the gods in a noble spirit. If he attains this mastery over those who, as he knows, once occupied a pinnacle that matched his own, upon such especially he has already sated his revenge and accomplished all that genuine punishment required; for that man has lost his life who owes it to another, and whosoever, having been cast down from high estate at his enemy's feet, has awaited the verdict of another upon his life and throne, lives on to the glory of his preserver, and by being saved confers more upon the other's name than if he had been removed from the eyes of men. For he is a lasting spectacle of another's prowess; in a triumph he could have passed quickly out of sight. If, however, it has been possible in safety to leave also his throne in his possession, and to restore him to the height from which he fell, the praise of him who was content to take from a conquered king nothingg but his glory {**Douglas+**} will rise in increasing greatness. This is to triumph even over his own victory, and to attest that he found among
<Ess1-417>

ON MERCY, I. xxi. 4-xxii. 3

the vanquished nothing that was worthy of the victor. To his fellow-countrymen, to the obscure, and to the lowly he should show the greater moderation, as he has the less to gain by crushing them. Some men we should be glad to spare, on some we should scorn to be avenged, and we should recoil from them as from the tiny insects which defile the hand that crushes them; but in the case of those whose names will be upon the lips of the community, whether they are spared or punished, the opportunity for a notable clemency should be made use of. Let us, pass now to the injuries done to others, in the punishment of which these three aims, which the law has had in view, should be kept in view also by the prince: either to reform the man that is punished, or by punishing him to make the rest better, or by removing bad men to let the rest live in greater security. You will more easily reform the culprits themselves by the lighter form of punishment; for he will live more guardedly who has something left to lose. No one is sparing of a ruined reputation; it brings a sort of exemption from punishment to have no room left for punishment. The morals of the state, moreover, are better mended by the sparing use of punitive measures; for sin becomes familiar from the multitude of those who sin, and the official stigma is less weighty if its force is weakened by the very number that it condemns, and severity, which provides the best corrective, loses its potency by repeated application. Good morals are established in the state and vice is wiped out if a prince is patient with vice, not as if he approved of it, but as if unwillingly and with great pain he had resort to chastisement. {**Man_of_Mode+**} The very mercifulness
<Ess1-419>

ON MERCY, I. xxii. 3-xxiv. 1

of the ruler makes men shrink from doing wrong; the punishment which a kindly man decrees seems all the more severe.

You will notice, besides, that the sins repeatedly punished are the sins repeatedly committed. Your father/a within five years had more men sewed up in the sack/b than, by all accounts, there had been victims of the sack throughout all time. Children ventured much less often to incur the supreme sin so long as the crime lay outside the pale of the law. For by supreme wisdom the men of the highest distinction and of the deepest insight into the ways of nature chose rather to ignore the outrage as one incredible and passing the bounds of boldness, than by punishing it to point out the possibility of its being done; and so the crime of parricide began with the law against it, and punishment showed children the way to the deed; filial piety was truly at its lowest ebb after the sack became a more common sight than the cross. In that state in which men are rarely punished a sympathy for uprightness is formed, and encouragement is given to this virtue as to a common good. Let a state think itself blameless, and it will be so; its anger against those who depart from the general sobriety will be greater if it sees that they are few. Believe me, it is dangerous to show a state in how great a majority evil men are. A proposal was once made in the senate to distinguish slaves from free men by their dress; it then became apparent how great would be the impending danger if our slaves should begin to count our number. Be sure that we have a like danger to fear if no man's guilt is pardoned; it will soon become apparent how greatly the worse element of the state preponderates.
<Ess1-421>

ON MERCY, I. xxiv. 1-xxv. 2

Numerous executions are not less discreditable to a prince than are numerous funerals to a physician; the more indulgent the ruler, the better he is obeyed. Man's spirit is by nature refractory, it struggles against opposition and difficulty, and is more ready to follow than to be led; and as well-bred and high-spirited horses are better managed by a loose rein, so a voluntary uprightness follows upon mercy under its own impulse, and the state accounts it/a worthy to be maintained for the state's own sake. By this course, therefore, more good is accomplished.

Cruelty is an evil thing befitting least of all a man, and is unworthy of his spirit that is so kindly; for one to take delight in blood and wounds and, throwing off the man, to change into a creature of the woods, is the madness of a wild beast. For what difference does it make, I beg of you, Alexander, whether you throw Lysimachus/b to a lion, or yourself tear lion to pieces with your teeth? That lion's maw is yours, and yours its savagery. How pleased you would have been had its claws been yours instead, and yours those gaping jaws, big enough to swallow men! We do not require of you that that hand of yours, the surest destruction of familiar friends, should save the life of any man, that your savage spirit, the insatiate curse of nations, should sate itself with anything short of blood and slaughter; we call it now a mercy if to kill a friend the butcher is chosen among mankind. The reason why brutality is most of all abhorred is this: because it transgresses first all ordinary, and then all human, bounds, searches out new kinds of torture, calls ingenuity into play to invent devices by which suffering may be varied and prolonged, and takes
<Ess1-423>

ON MERCY, I. xxv. 2-xxvi. 1

delight in the afflictions of mankind; then indeed the dread disease of that man's/a mind has reached the farthest limit of **insanity**+, when cruelty has changed into pleasure and to kill a human being now becomes a joy. Hot upon the heels of such a man follow loathing, hatred, poison, and the sword; he is assailed by as many perils as there are many men to whom he is himself a peril, and he is beset sometimes by the plots of individuals, at times, indeed, by an uprising of the community. For whole cities are not roused by the trivial, destruction of single individuals; but that which begins to rage widespread and aims at all becomes the mark of every weapon. Tiny snakes pass unnoticed and no organized hunt is made for them; but when one exceeds the usual size and grows into a monster, when it poisons springs with its venom, with its breath scorches and destroys, then, wherever it advances, it is attacked with engines of war. Petty evils may elude us and escape, but we go out against the great ones. So, too, one sick person causes no confusion even in his own household; but when repeated deaths show that a plague prevails, there is a general outcry and flight of the community, and threatening hands are lifted toward the gods themselves. If

a fire is discovered beneath some single roof, the family and the neighbours pour on water; but a widespread conflagration that has now consumed many homes is put down only by the destruction of half the city. The cruelty even of men in private station has been avenged by the hands of slaves despite their certain risk of crucifixion; nations and peoples have set to work to extirpate the cruelty of tyrants, when
<Ess1-425>

ON MERCY, I. xxvi. 1-4

some were suffering from it and others felt its menace. At times the tyrants' own guards have risen up against them, and have practised upon their persons the treachery and disloyalty and brutality and all else that they themselves had taught them. For what can any one expect from him whom he himself has taught to be bad? Wickedness is not obsequious long, nor guilty of crime only to the extent that it is bid. But suppose that cruel rule is safe, what sort of a kingdom has it? Nothing but the bare outlines of captured cities and the terror-stricken countenances of widespread fear. Everywhere is sorrow, panic, and disorder; even pleasures give rise to fear; men are not safe when they go to the festal board, for there the tongue even of the drunkard must award itself with ears, nor to the public shows where the material is sought for accusation and ruin. Provided though they are at huge expense, in regal opulence, and with artists of the choicest reputation, yet whom would games delight in prison?

Ye gods! what curse is this - to kill, to **rage+**, to take delight in the clank of chains and in cutting off the heads of fellow- countrymen, to spill streams of blood wherever one may go and by one's appearance to terrify and repel? What else would living be if lions and bears held sway, if serpents {**Lear+**} and all the creatures that are most destructive were given supremacy over us?

These, devoid of reason and doomed to death by us on the plea of their ferocity, yet spare their kind, and even among wild beasts likeness forms a safeguard; but tyrants do not withhold their fury even from their kin, strangers and friends are treated just alike, and the more they
<Ess1-427>

ON MERCY, I. xxvi. 4-5

indulge their fury, the more violent it becomes. Then from the murder of one and again another it creeps on to the wiping out of nations, and to hurl the firebrand on the roofs of houses and to drive the plough over ancient cities are considered a sign of power, and to order the killing of one or two is believed to be too small a show of royal might; unless at one time a herd of poor wretches stands beneath the blade, **rage+** counts its cruelty forced under control.

True happiness consists in giving safety to many in calling back to life from the very verge of death, and in earning the civic crown/a by showing mercy. No decoration is more worthy of the eminence of a prince or more beautiful than that crown bestowed for saving the lives of fellow-citizens; not trophies torn from a vanquished enemy, nor chariots stained with barbarian blood, nor spoils acquired in war. To save life by crowds and universally, this is a godlike use of power; but to kill in multitudes and without distinction is the power of conflagration and of ruin.
<Ess1-429>

TO\ THE EMPEROR NERO
ON MERCY
BOOK II

I HAVE been especially induced to write on mercy by a single utterance of yours, Nero Caesar, which I remember, when it was made, I heard not without admiration and afterwards repeated to others - a noble, high-minded utterance, showing great gentleness, which unpremeditated and not intended for others' ears suddenly burst from you, and brought into the open your kind-heartedness chafing against your lot. Burrus, your prefect, a rare man, born to serve a prince like you, was about to execute two brigands, and was bringing pressure upon you to record their names and the reasons why you wished their execution; this, often deferred, he was insisting should at last be done. He was reluctant, you were reluctant, and, when he had produced the paper and was handing

it to you, you exclaimed, "Would that I had not learned to write." What an utterance! All nations should have heard it - those who dwell within the Roman empire, and those on its borders who are scarcely assured of their liberty, and those who through strength or courage rise up against it. What an utterance! It should have been spoken
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ON MERCY, II, i. 3-ii. 2

before a gathering of all mankind, that unto it princes and kings might pledge allegiance. What an utterance! Worthy of the universal innocence of mankind, in favour whereof that long past age/a should be renewed. Now assuredly it were fitting that men, thrusting out covetousness from which springs every evil of the heart, should conspire for righteousness and goodness, that piety and uprightness along with honour and temperance should rise again, and that vice, having misused its long reign, should at length give place to an age of happiness and purity.

We are pleased to hope and trust, Caesar, that in large measure this will happen. That kindness of your heart will be recounted, will be diffused little by little throughout the whole body of the empire, and all things will be moulded into your likeness. It is from the head that comes the health of the body; it is through it that all the parts are lively and alert or languid and drooping according as their animating spirit has life or withers. There will be citizens, there will be allies worthy of this goodness, and uprightness will return to the whole world; your hands will everywhere be spared. Permit me to linger longer on this point, but not merely to please your ears; for that is not my way. {**PlainDealer+**} I would rather offend with the truth than please by flattery. What then is my reason? Besides wishing you to be as familiar as possible with your own good deeds and words in order that what is now a natural impulse may become a principle, I reflect upon this, that many striking but odious sayings have made their entry into human life and are bandied about as famous; as for example, "Let them hate if only they fear,"/b and the Greek verse/c similar to it, in
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which a man would have the earth convulsed with flame when once he is dead, and others of this type. And somehow or other gifted men when dealing with a cruel and hateful theme have moulded violent and passionate thoughts into more felicitous phrase; never before have I heard from good and gentle lips an utterance that was full of spirit. What then is the conclusion? Though it be seldom, against your will, and after great reluctance, yet there are times when you must write the sort of thing that made you hate all writing, but you must do it, as you now do, after great reluctance, after much procrastination. And in order that we may not perchance be deceived at times by the plausible name of mercy and led into an opposite quality,a/ let us see what mercy is, what is its nature, and what its limitations.

Mercy means restraining the mind from vengeance when it has the power to take it, or the leniency of a superior towards an inferior in fixing punishment. In the fear that one definition may not be comprehensive enough, and, so to speak, the case/b be lost, it is safer to offer several; and so mercy may also be termed the inclination of the mind towards leniency in exacting punishment. The following definition will encounter objections, however closely it approaches the truth; if we shall say that mercy is the moderation which remits something from the punishment that is deserved and due, it will be objected that no virtue gives to any man less than his due. Everybody, however, understands that the fact of the case is that mercy consists in stopping short of what might have been deservedly proposed.

The ill-informed think that its opposite is strict-
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ON MERCY, II. iv. 1-4

ness; but no virtue is the opposite of a virtue. What then is set over against mercy? It is cruelty, which is nothing else than harshness of mind in exacting punishment. "But," you say, "there are some who do not exact punishment, and yet are cruel, such as those who kill the strangers they meet, not for the sake of gain, but for the sake of killing, and, not content with killing, they torture,

as the notorious Busiris and Procrustes, and the pirates who lash their captives and commit them to the flames alive." This indeed is cruelty; but because it does not result from vengeance - for no injury was suffered and no sin stirs its wrath - for no crime preceded it - it falls outside of our definition; for by the definition the mental excess was limited to the exaction of punishment. That which finds pleasure in torture we may say is not cruelty, but savagery - we may even call it madness; for there are various kinds of madness, and none is more unmistakable than that which reaches the point of murdering and mutilating men. Those, then, that I shall call cruel are those who have a reason for punishing, but do not have moderation in it, like Phalaris, who, they say, tortured men, even though they were not innocent, in a manner that was inhuman and incredible. Avoiding sophistry we may define cruelty to be the inclination of the mind toward the side of harshness. This quality mercy repels and bids it stand afar from her; with strictness she is in harmony.

At this point it is pertinent to ask what pity is. For many commend it as a virtue, and call a pitiful man good. But this too is a mental defect. We ought to avoid both, closely related as they are to strictness and to mercy. For under the guise of
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strictness we fall into cruelty, under the guise of mercy into pity. In the latter case a lighter risk is involved, it is true, but the error is equal in both, since in both we fall short of what is right. Consequently, just as religion does honour to the gods, while superstition wrongs them, so good men will all display mercy and gentleness, but pity they will avoid; for it is the failing of a weak nature that succumbs to the sight of others' ills. And so it is most often seen in the poorest types of persons; there are old women and wretched females who are moved by the tears of the worst criminals, who, if they could, would break open their prison. Pity regards the plight, not the cause of it; mercy is combined with reason.

I am aware that among the ill-informed the Stoic school is unpopular on the ground that it is excessively harsh and not at all likely to give good counsel to princes and kings; the criticism is made that it does not permit a wise man to be pitiful, does not permit him to pardon. Such doctrine, if stated in the abstract, is hateful; for, seemingly, no hope is left to human error, but all failures are brought to punishment. And if this is so, what kind of a theory is it that bids us unlearn the lesson of humanity, and closes the surest refuge against ill- fortune, the haven of mutual help? But the fact is, no school is more kindly and gentle, none more full of love to man and more concerned for the common good, so that it is its avowed object to be of service and assistance, and to regard not merely self- interest, but the interest of each and all. Pity is the sorrow of the mind brought about by the sight of the distress of others, or sadness caused by the ills of others which
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it believes come undeservedly. But no sorrow befalls the wise man; his mind is serene, and nothing can happen to becloud it. Nothing, too, so much befits a man as superiority of mind; but the mind cannot at the same time be superior and sad. Sorrow blunts its powers, dissipates and hampers them; this will not happen to a wise man even in the case of personal calamity, but he will beat back all the rage of fortune and crush it first; he will maintain always the same calm, unshaken appearance, and he could not do this if he were accessible to sadness.

Consider, further, that the wise man uses foresight, and keeps in readiness a plan of action; but what comes from a troubled source is never clear and pure. Sorrow is not adapted to the discernment of fact, to the discovery of expedients, to the avoidance of dangers, or the weighing of justice; he, consequently, will not suffer pity, because there cannot be pity without mental suffering. All else which I would have those who feel pity do, he will do gladly and with a lofty spirit; he will bring relief to another's tears, but will not add his own; to the shipwrecked man he will give a hand, to the exile shelter, to the needy alms; he will not do as most of those who wish to be thought pitiful do - fling insultingly their alms, and scorn those whom they help and shrink from contact with them - but he will give as a man to his fellow-man out of the common store; he will grant to a mother's tears the life of her son, the captive's chains he will order to be broken, he will release the gladiator from his training, he will bury the carcass even of a criminal, but he will do

these things with unruffled mind, and a countenance under control. The wise man, therefore, will not pity, but will succour,
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will benefit, and since he is born to be of help to all and to serve the **common**+ good, he will give to each his share thereof. He will extend a due measure of his goodness even to the unfortunates who deserve to be censured and disciplined; but much more gladly will he come to the rescue of the distressed and those struggling with mishap. Whenever he can, he will parry Fortune's stroke; for in what way will he make better use of his resources or his strength than in restoring what chance has overthrown? And, too, he will not avert his countenance or his sympathy from any one because he has a withered leg, or is emaciated and in rags, and is old and leans upon a staff; but all the worthy he will aid, and will, like a god, look graciously upon the unfortunate. Pity is akin to wretchedness; for it is partly composed of it and partly derived from it. One knows that his eyes are weak if they too are suffused at the sight of another's blear eyes, just as always to laugh when other people laugh is, in faith, not merriment, but a disease, and for one to stretch his jaws too when everybody else yawns is a disease. Pity is a weakness of the mind that is over-much perturbed by suffering, and if anyone requires it from a wise man, that is very much like requiring him to wail and moan at the funerals of strangers.

"But," you ask, "why will he not pardon?" Come then, let us now also decide what pardon is, and we shall perceive that the wise man ought not to grant it. Pardon is the remission of a deserved punishment. Why a wise man ought not to give this is explained more at length by those who make a point of the doctrine; I, to speak briefly as if giving
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another's opinion, explain it thus: "Pardon is given to a man who ought to be punished; but a wise man does nothing which he ought not to do, omits to do nothing which he ought to do; therefore he does not remit a punishment which he ought to exact.

But in a more honourable way he will bestow upon you that which you wish to obtain by pardon; for the wise man will show mercy, be considerate, and rectify; he will do the same that he would do if he pardoned, and yet he will not pardon, since he who pardons admits that he has omitted to do something which he ought to have done. To one man he will give merely a reproof in words, and he will not inflict punishment if he sees that the other's age will permit reformation; another who is clearly suffering from the odium of crime he will order to go free, because he was misled, because wine made him fall; he will let his enemies go unharmed, sometimes even with praise if they were stirred to fight by honourable motives - to maintain their loyalty, a treaty, or their liberty. These are all the operations of mercy, not of forgiveness. Mercy has freedom in decision; it sentences not by the letter of the law, but in accordance with what is fair and good; it may acquit and it may assess the damages at any value it pleases. It does none of these things as if it were doing less than is just, but as if the justest thing were that which it has resolved upon. But to pardon is to fail to punish one whom you judge worthy of punishment; pardon is the remission of punishment that is due. Mercy is superior primarily in this, that it declares that those who are let off did not deserve any different treatment; it is more complete than pardon, more creditable. In my opinion the dispute
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ON MERCY, II. vii. 4-5

is about words, but concerning the fact there is agreement. The wise man will remit many punishments, he will save many whose character though unsound can yet be freed from unsoundness. He will be like the good husbandman who tends, not merely the trees that are straight and tall, but also applies props to those that for some reason have grown crooked in order that they may be straightened; others he will trim, in order that their branching may not hamper their height; some that are weak because set in poor soil he will fertilize; to some suffering from

the shade of the others he will open up the sky. So the wise man will see what method of treatment a given character should have, how the crooked may be made straight... . . .
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