

Aristotle (384 - 322)

Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, was a physician, and it was probably from him that Aristotle developed an interest in physical science. When he was 17 he entered Plato's school at Athens and he remained there until his teacher's death in 348/7. Aristotle had a keen interest in zoology and botany. In 343 Philip of Macedon invited him to become Alexander the Great's (356 - 323) teacher. Aristotle taught Alexander Homer and politics. Aristotle tutored Alexander until he became regent for his father in 340. Aristotle went to Athens soon after Philip's death (335) and founded a school. He developed a library and a museum for zoology. He organized research on a grand scale, including the account of the constitutions of 158 Greek city-states. When Alexander died the Athenians accused Aristotle of "impiety" and he left Athens and retired to Chalcis where he died in 322. His work has had tremendous influence on later thinkers such as St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) and St. Francis de Sales.

Nicomachean Ethics

The purpose of all ethics is the search for that good which everyone aims to get out of living: happiness. Every creature is most happy when fulfilling just the functions for which Nature designed him. Nature designed the human person for reason. Virtues are states of character in which we choose our activities rationally and therefore correctly. Through virtue we can arrive at the state of happiness we all desire. Virtues are acquired through training in good habits and deliberate will and choice. Some of the virtues Aristotle wrote about are: courage, temperance, generosity, prudence/good sense, and good temper. It is through the virtues that we govern our emotions and acts. We cannot allow our passions to drag us into wrong doing. There are external influences which help or hinder us in our advance toward happiness: pleasure, glory and honor, pain and misfortune, friendship, profit, and amusement.

Respond to these questions:

1. What are imperfect friendships? Why are these imperfect?
2. What is perfect friendship? Why is this so rare?
3. Why is amusement not happiness? Does amusement have a place? Explain.
4. Why can a slave never be happy?
5. What is the importance of contemplation and self-sufficiency?
6. Why is contemplation the activity of God?
7. Does Aristotle have it right about happiness? Explain. What would you add or subtract from his explanation?

we should not be surprised, for men are susceptible to corruption and defilement. But such things are not pleasant except to such people, and to them only when they are in that condition. Pleasures then that are admittedly disgraceful should not be called pleasures, except for people of depraved tastes.

But among those that are good, what pleasures or kinds of pleasure deserve to be called the proper pleasures of man? It is plain, I think, from a consideration of his activities; for activities bring pleasures in their train. Whether there is one activity or several that mark the perfect and the happy man, it is the pleasures which complete these activities that are strictly the proper pleasures of man. All other pleasures are so only in a secondary or partial sense, as are all other activities.

Book X

→ CHAPTER 6. Now that we have discussed the virtues, friendship, and pleasure, we have yet to give a brief account of happiness, since happiness, we said, was the end of human life. We shall shorten our account by summing up first our previous remarks.

We said that happiness is not a state of mind; for, if it were, a man who spends his whole life in sleep, living the life of a vegetable, or one who is thoroughly unfortunate, might be called happy. If then we reject this view, if we should rather call happiness an activity of some kind, as we said earlier, and if activities are either necessary and desirable as a means to something else or else desirable in themselves, then clearly we must count happiness among those activities that are desirable in themselves, and not as means to something else; for happiness has no want beyond itself; it is self-sufficient. Now activities are desirable in themselves, if nothing is expected from them beyond the activity. This is the case with good actions, for the practice of nobility and goodness is a thing desirable in itself. It is the case also with pleasant amusements. We do not desire them as means to other things; for they often prove hurtful rather than advantageous to us, making us careless about our persons and our property. Such pastimes are generally the resort of those whom the

world calls happy. Accordingly people who are clever at them are highly popular in the courts of tyrants, for they make themselves pleasant company to the tyrant in the occupations he likes; and what he wants is to pass his time pleasantly. These things are supposed to constitute happiness, because people who hold high positions devote their leisure to them.

But such people are not, I think, a criterion. For a high position is no guarantee of virtue or intelligence, which are the sources from which virtuous activities spring. And if these people, who have never tasted a pure and generous pleasure, take refuge in the pleasures of the body, we must not infer that these pleasures are more desirable; for children too think that the things that they value are the best. It is natural then that, as men and children differ in their estimates of what is valuable, so should good and bad people. As, therefore, we have often remarked, it is the things which are valuable and pleasant to a good man that are really valuable and pleasant. To everybody the activity that harmonizes with his own moral state is most desirable; to the good man, accordingly, activity in accordance with virtue is most desirable.

Happiness then does not lie in amusement. It would be strange indeed to believe that the end of life is amusement, and that we should toil and suffer all our lives for the sake of amusing ourselves. For seemingly we desire everything as a means to something else, except happiness, for happiness is our end. To take great trouble and pains then for the sake of amusement is foolish and utterly childish. However, to amuse oneself in order that one may work is right, as Anacharsis says; for amusement is a kind of relaxation, and since we cannot work forever, we need relaxation.

Relaxation then is not an end. We enjoy it as a means to activity; but the happy life is a life of virtue, and such a life is serious, not one of mere amusement. We call serious things too better than ridiculous and amusing things, and the activity of the better part of man's nature or of the better man always the more serious. Now the activity of the better is necessarily higher and happier. Anyone

If then reason is divine in comparison with the rest of man's nature, a life in accordance with reason is divine in comparison with human life in general. Nor must we follow the advice of those people who say that the thoughts of men should not be too high for humanity or the thoughts of mortals too high for mortality. For a man, as far as in him lies, should make himself immortal, and do all in his power to live in accordance with the highest part of himself. That part, although it is small in size, yet in power and authority is far superior to all the rest. It would seem too to be the true self of everyone, if a man's true self is his supreme or better part. It would be strange then if a man should desire not the life of his own self but that of some other being. A statement we made before belongs here also. What is proper to everyone is by nature best and pleasantest for him. The life which accords with reason then is best and pleasantest for man, for a man's reason more than all else is himself. This life therefore will be the happiest.

CHAPTER 8. But in an inferior sense the life which accords with other kinds of virtue is happy; for the activities of such virtues are human. Our just and brave acts or the virtuous acts of any kind we perform in relation to one another, as when we fulfill our mutual obligations in contracts and services and other fields of conduct and in our emotions—and all these acts are naturally human. Such moral virtues seem actually the outgrowth of our physical organisms and in many respects closely tied up with our emotions. Prudence too is indissolubly linked to moral virtue and it to prudence, since the principles of prudence are dictated by these moral virtues, and moral uprightness is dictated by prudence. And the moral virtues, being inseparably connected with the emotions, must belong to our composite nature, and the virtues of our nature are human. So therefore is the life which accords with these virtues; so too is the happiness that comes with them.

But the happiness that lies in reason is a thing apart. Suffice it to say so much about it; for to describe it in detail would take us beyond

our present limit. It would seem to require few external aids or less than moral virtue does. Granted that both do need the sheer necessities of life and need them equally, even though the statesman's labors have more to do with the body and bodily welfare than the philosopher's, that difference will not be important. But in what more they need for their activities there will be a great difference. The liberal man will want money for the practice of liberality, and the just man to return the services which have been done him; for our wishes, unless they are manifested in acts, will always remain obscure, and people who are not just pretend they wish to act justly. The brave man too will want physical strength if he is to perform any fine deed, and the temperate man an occasion; for otherwise it will be impossible for him or the other to show his character.

Now when the question is asked whether it is the will or the deed that is more essential in moral virtue, since that virtue requires both, palpably both are necessary to perfection. But for deeds, various conditions must be met; and the greater and nobler the deed, the more numerous will the conditions be. But for contemplation of truth, no such conditions need to be met, at least for the activity; rather they would be actual obstacles to thought; however, as a human being living in society, a man will choose to do virtuous deeds. Such conditions then must be fulfilled if he is to live as a man.

But that perfect happiness is an activity of thought will appear from the following consideration also. We think of the gods as happy and blessed. Then what kind of activity should we attribute to them? Just acts? But it would make them ridiculous to suppose they draw up contracts, return deposits, and so on. Brave acts? Do the gods face dangers and alarms for honor's sake? Or liberal acts? But to whom should they give money? To suppose they have a currency or anything of the kind would be absurd. Or what would their temperate acts be? Surely to commend the gods for temperance is to degrade them; they are free from cheap desires. We may go through the whole category of virtues, and whatever bears on moral action is petty and unworthy of the gods.

Yet the gods are universally conceived as living and therefore as active; we certainly do not imagine they sleep like Endymion.⁴ If then one who is living is neither to act nor to produce, what is left him but thought? Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in bliss, will be contemplation. If so, then the human activity which comes closest to it will be most like happiness. It is evidence of this that the other animals, who have no share in such activity, are without this happiness. For the whole life of the gods is happy and blessed, and the life of men is blessed in as far as it resembles their contemplative activity. But no other animal is happy, for none of them thinks.

We conclude then that happiness reaches as far as the power of thought does, and that the greater a person's power of thought, the greater will be his happiness; not as something accidental but in virtue of his thinking, for that is noble in itself. Hence happiness must be a form of contemplation.

CHAPTER 9. Man, nevertheless, being human, needs some external prosperity. His nature alone is not sufficient to support his thinking; it needs bodily health, food, and care of every kind. We must not however suppose that, because one cannot be happy without some external goods, a great variety of such goods is necessary for happiness. For neither self-sufficiency nor moral action demands excess of such things. We can do noble deeds without being lords of land and sea, for moderate means will enable a person to act virtuously. We may readily see this is so; for private persons are known to do good acts not less but actually more than their rulers. It is enough to have just as much as is needed for virtue. The man who lives in the active exercise of virtue will be happy. . . .

The opinions of philosophers seem to accord with our theories and such opinions possess a sort of authority. However, it is the facts of life that are the tests of truth in practical matters, for they are our

⁴ Endymion was the beautiful shepherd boy whom the goddess Artemis kept sleeping in a cave.

final authority. We should then consider the theories we have been advancing in the light of the facts of life, accept them if they harmonize with those facts, and discard them as empty theories if they run contrary to them.

A man whose activity is governed by reason and who cultivates his reason is in the best, that is, the most rational state of mind and is also, as it seems, the most beloved of the gods. For if the gods have any care for human affairs, as it is believed they do, it would be only reasonable for them to delight in what is best and nearest akin to them, that is, in reason, and to reward with kindness those who love and honor it most, as loving what is dear to themselves and acting rightly and nobly. Obviously these are the characteristics above all of a philosopher. He will therefore be the most beloved of the gods, and in that undoubtedly he will be the most happy. If so, it is another reason for thinking a philosopher the happiest of men.

CHAPTER 10. If now our account of these subjects, of the virtues, and of friendship and pleasure too has been adequate, shall we regard our purpose as achieved? Or are we to say, in the old phrase, that in practical matters the end is not to examine and learn about them but to act? It is not enough to know what virtue is; we must strive to have and use it, and try whatever ways we may to become good.

If theories were enough in themselves to make men good, they would deserve any number of handsome rewards, as Theognis said, and we should have seen to providing them. But as a matter of fact, though they have the power to encourage and stimulate the youths who are generous-minded, and can bring a soul that is magnanimous and a lover of honor under the spell of virtue, they are impotent to inspire the mass of men to upright action. Such men are not naturally influenced by honor but by fear and refrain from evil not in dread of disgrace but of punishment. For they live by feelings, pursue their own pleasures and the means of getting these pleasures, and shun the opposite pains. But of what is noble and truly pleasant

can enjoy bodily pleasures. A slave can enjoy them as much as the best of men. But no one would grant that a slave can be happy without granting him a man's life,² for happiness consists not in the amusements I have been speaking of, but in virtuous activities, as we have already said.

CHAPTER 7. If happiness consists of virtuous activity, it must be the activity of the highest virtue, or in other words, of the best part of our nature. Whether it is reason or something else that seems to exercise rule and authority over us by natural right and to reach up to things noble and divine—because it is itself either divine or the most divine part of us—the activity of this part in accordance with its proper virtue will be perfect happiness.

This, we have already stated,³ is an activity of thought or contemplation. Such a view would agree with our previous arguments and with the truth itself; for thought is the highest of our activities, as reason is the highest of our faculties, and the objects with which reason is concerned are the highest that can be known. Thought is also the most continuous, for it can more easily be continuous than any kind of action. We consider pleasure too an essential element of happiness; and we know there is no virtuous activity so pleasant as the activity of wisdom or philosophic reflection. Certainly philosophy is thought to offer pleasures of wonderful purity and certaintly; and it is reasonable to suppose that people who know pass their time more pleasantly than people who are only searching.

Self-sufficiency too, of which we hear, is particularly a characteristic of thought activity. For while a philosopher, a just man, and everyone else needs the necessities of life, after they are adequately provided with these things a just man still needs people to whom and with whom he may do justice, and a temperate man, a brave man, and everyone else needs others too. But the philosopher can content-

² That is, the life of a free Athenian citizen.

³ The reference is not clear, but the general drift of Aristotle's argument in Book **7** has tended to show the intellectual nature of happiness.

plate truth by himself, and the wiser he is, the better he can do so. It is perhaps better for him to have fellow workers; nevertheless he is of all the most self-sufficient. It would seem too that this activity is the only one loved for its own sake, since it has no result but thinking; whereas from all practical action we gain something more or less besides the action itself.

Again, happiness seemingly requires leisure; for the object of our labor is to gain leisure, as the object of war is to enjoy peace. Now the activity of the practical virtues is displayed in politics or war, but actions of this sort seem the contrary of leisurely. This is entirely true of military action, and nobody desires war or prepares to go to war for its own sake. A man would be regarded as absolutely blood-thirsty if he were to make enemies of his friends for the mere sake of fighting and killing. But the activity of the statesman too is far from leisurely. Its aim is to secure something beyond and apart from mere politics, namely, power and honor, or at least the happiness of the statesman himself and his fellow citizens. This happiness is different from political activity and they search for it as something different.

If then political and military actions are distinguished among virtuous actions for nobility and grandeur, but if they allow no room for leisure and aim at some other end and are not desired for their own sakes; if too the activity of reason is superior in seriousness and aims at no end beyond itself and has its own pleasure, and if this pleasure intensifies the activity; and if whatever self-sufficiency and power of leisure and absence of fatigue as are possible to man and all other attributes of felicity are found in this activity, then this will be the supreme happiness for man, provided he is allowed a perfect length of life for it, since in happiness there is no imperfection. But such a life would be too lofty for man. He will live it not in virtue of his humanity but in virtue of a divine element within him. And the superiority of this activity to the activity of any other virtue is proportionate to the superiority of the divine element in man to his composite or material nature.

excitable nature also require constant outlet, for their temperament constantly frets their bodies away, and they are always in a state of restless desire. Now pain is extinguished either by the pleasure which is its opposite or by any other pleasure, if it be strong. This is why excitable people fall into licentiousness and wickedness.

Such pleasures, on the other hand, as involve no pains do not lead to excess; they are naturally and not merely incidentally pleasant. By "incidental pleasures" I mean those that are curative in their effects; for we are cured by the action of some part of our nature that remains healthy, and the process of cure is pleasant. By "natural pleasures" I mean those that stimulate the action of our nature in health.

The same thing is never always pleasant to us, for our nature is not simple, but there exists in us a sort of second nature, as we are mortal beings. Thus, when one element is active, it acts against the nature of the other; and when the two elements are in equilibrium, the action seems neither painful nor pleasant. If there were a being whose nature was simple, the same action would always be entirely pleasant to him. That is how God enjoys one simple pleasure everlasting; for there is an activity not only of motion but of rest, and pleasure is found more in rest than in motion. But change, the poet¹⁴ says, is "the sweetest thing in the world," because of the badness of our nature. For as the bad man is fond of change, so too the nature which calls for change is bad; it is not simple or good.

We have now discussed self-control and the lack of it, pleasures and pains, their nature and the reason why some of them are good and others bad. We have next to discuss friendship.

¹⁴ Euripides. *Orestes*, v. 234.

BOOK VIII

Friendships are necessary and natural for men. They imply some likeness between the persons involved. The motives for a friendship may be its utility or its pleasantness for ourselves, or our love of our friend for his own sake and our desire for his welfare. Friendships of utility or pleasure and friendships between bad men will be less permanent than the true friendships of good men. Too much inequality between persons makes friendship impossible.

CHAPTER 1. It will be natural to discuss friendship next, for friendship is a kind of virtue or implies virtue. It is also indispensable to life. For without friends no one would choose to live, even though he possessed every other good. It even seems that people who are rich and hold official and powerful positions have the greatest need of friends; for what is the good of this sort of prosperity without some opportunity for generosity, which is never so freely or so admirably displayed as toward friends? Or how can prosperity be preserved in safety and security without friends? The greater a person's importance, the more liable it is to disaster. And in poverty and other misfortunes our friends are our only refuge. Again, when we are young, friends are a help to us, in saving us from error, and when we grow old, in taking care of us and doing the things for us we are too feeble to do for ourselves. When we are all in the prime of life, they prompt us to noble actions, as the line runs

"Two going together,"¹

for two people are better than one both in thought and in action.

¹ *Iliad*, X, Classics Club edition, p. 149. Diomed is expressing his desire for a companion in invading the Trojan camp.

Friendship or love seems the natural instinct of a parent toward a child, and of a child toward a parent, not only among men but among birds and animals generally. It is felt by creatures of the same race toward one another, especially by men. For this reason we praise the lovers of their fellow men. In traveling we observe how near and dear every man is to his fellow man.

Again, it seems that friendship is the bond which holds states together, and that lawmakers set more store by it than by justice; for harmony is something like friendship, and it is harmony that they especially try to promote, and discord that they try to expel, as the enemy of the state. When people are friends there is no need of justice between them; but when they are just, they yet need friendship too. Indeed justice, in its supreme form, assumes the character of friendship.

Nor is friendship indispensable only; it is also noble. We praise those who love their friends, and to have many friends is thought to be a fine thing. Some people hold that to be a friend is the same thing as to be a good man.

CHAPTER 2. The subject of friendship gives room for a good many differences of opinion. Some define it as a sort of likeness, and say people are friends because they are like each other. Hence the sayings, "Like seeks like," "Birds of a feather," and so on. Others, on the contrary, say "Two of a trade never agree."² So philosophical thinkers indulge in more profound physical speculations on the subject; Euripides asserting that

"the parched Earth loves the rain,
And the great Heaven rain-laden loves to fall
Earthwards."³

Heracitus⁴ declares that "contending things draw together," that

² The Greek allusion is to the proverbial quarrelsomeness of two potters.

³ The play from which these lines are taken is unknown.

⁴ On Heracitus of Ephesus, one of the most famous of the early Greek poet-philosophers. See p. 22, n. 17.

"harmony most beautiful is formed of discords," and that "all things are by strife engendered." Others, among whom is Empedocles, take the opposite view and insist that "like desires like." . . .

It is possible, I think to shed light on the subject of friendship, by determining what is lovable or an object of love. For plainly not everything is loved, but only that which is lovable, which is what is good or pleasant or useful. A thing too is useful if it is a means of gaining something good or pleasant. If so, it follows that it is the good and the pleasant that are lovable because they are ends.

We may ask, then, do we love what is good in itself, or what is good for us? For there is sometimes a difference between them. The same question may be asked in regard to what is pleasant. It is said that everyone loves what is good for himself, and that, while the good is lovable in an absolute sense, it is what is good for each individual that is lovable in his eyes. It may even be said that a man loves not what is good for him but what seems good. But this will make no difference; for in that case, what is lovable will be what seems lovable.

Now there are three motives for love. We do not, it must be noted, apply the term "love" to our feeling for lifeless things. The reason is (1) that they are incapable of returning our affection, and (2) that we do not wish their good; for it would, of course, be ridiculous to wish good to the wine. If we wish it at all, it is only in the sense of wishing the wine to keep well, so that we may enjoy it ourselves. But everyone knows that we ought to wish our friend's good for his sake. If we wish people good in this sense, we call it good will, unless our good wishes are returned; reciprocal good will we call friendship.

We must add too that the good will must not be unknown. A person often wishes well to people whom he has not seen, but whom he supposes to be good or useful; and it is possible that one of these persons may entertain the same feeling toward him. Such people, then, it is clear, wish well to one another; but they cannot properly be called friends, so long as their feeling is unknown to each other.

If they are to be friends, they must feel good will to each other and wish each other's good for one of the motives aforesaid, and each of them must know that the other wishes him well.

CHAPTER 3. Now as the reasons for friendship differ in kind, so accordingly do the corresponding kinds of affection and friendship. The kinds of friendship therefore are three, being equal in number to the things which are lovable or the objects of friendship, for every such object may arouse a reciprocal affection between two persons.

People who love each other wish each other's good up to the point on which their love is fixed. Accordingly, those who love each other for reasons of utility do not love each other for themselves, but only as far as they get some benefit from one another. So with those who love for pleasure's sake. They are fond of witty people, not for their character, but because they are pleasant to them. People then who love for utility's sake are moved to affection by what is good for themselves, and people who love for pleasure, by what is pleasant to themselves. They love a person not for what he is in himself, but only for being useful or pleasant to them. Such friendships then are friendships incidentally only; for the person loved is not loved for being what he is, but merely for being a source of some good or pleasure. Such friendships accordingly are easily dissolved, if the parties do not continue always the same; for they cease loving once they cease to be pleasant or useful to each other.

Now utility is not a permanent quality; it varies at different times. Hence when the reason for the friendship disappears, the friendship of itself is dissolved, since it depended on that reason. Friendship of this kind seems to arise especially among old people, for in old age we look for profit rather than pleasure, and also among those in the prime of life or youth who have an eye to their own interest. Friends of this kind do not generally live together; for sometimes they are not even congenial. Nor do they want such companionship, except when they are of use to one another, since the pleasure they give

each other goes no further than the hopes they entertain of getting benefit from it. Among these friendships we may count the friendship which exists between host and guest.

The friendship of the young is based apparently on pleasure; for they live by emotion and are inclined to pursue most the pleasure of the moment. But as their age increases, their pleasures alter with it. They are therefore quick at making friendships and quick at abandoning them; for their friendships shift with the object that pleases them, and their pleasure is liable to sudden change. Young people are amorous too, amorousness being generally a matter of emotion and pleasure. Hence they fall in love and soon afterwards fall out of love, passing from one condition to another many times in a single day. But amorous people wish to spend their days and lives together, since thus they attain the object of their friendship.

CHAPTER 4. Perfect friendship is the friendship of people who are good and alike in virtue; for they are alike in wishing each other's good, inasmuch as they are good and good in themselves. Those who wish the good of their friends for their friends' sake are in the truest sense friends, since their friendship is the consequence of their own character, and not an accident. Their friendship therefore lasts as long as their goodness, and goodness is a permanent quality. So each of them is good in an absolute sense, and good in relation to his friend. For good men are not only good in an absolute sense, but helpful to each other. They are pleasant too; for the good are pleasant in an absolute sense, and pleasant to one another. For everybody finds pleasure in actions proper to him and in others like him, and all good people act alike or nearly alike.

Such a friendship is naturally permanent, for it unites in itself all the right conditions of friendship. For the aim of all friendship is good or pleasure, either absolute or relative to the person who feels the affection; and it is founded on a certain similarity. In the friendship of good men all the conditions just described are realized in the friends themselves; other friendships bear only a resemblance to the

perfect friendship. That which is good in an absolute sense is pleasant also in an absolute sense. They are too the most lovable objects of affection, and for this reason love and friendship in this highest and best sense are found most among such men.

Friendships of this kind are likely to be rare; for such people are few. Such friendships require time and familiarity too; for, as the adage puts it, men cannot know one another until they have eaten salt together; nor can they admit one another to friendship, or be friends at all, until each has been proved lovable and trustworthy by the other. People who are quick to treat one another as friends wish to be friends but are not so really, unless they are lovable and know each other to be so; for the wish to be friends may arise in a minute, but not friendship.

CHAPTER 5. This kind of friendship then is perfect as regards durability and in all other respects; and each friend receives from the other in every way the same or nearly the same treatment as he gives, which is as it ought to be. Friendship based on pleasure has a certain resemblance to it, for the good too are pleasant to one another. So also with friendship based on utility, for the good are useful too to one another. Here likewise friendships are most permanent when the two persons get the same thing, such as pleasure, from one another; and not only the same thing, but from the same source, as happens between two wits, though not between a lover and his beloved. For these do not find pleasure in the same things; the pleasure of one is in beholding the object of his love, and of the other in being courted by his lover.⁵ Then when beauty passes away, the friendship sometimes passes away too; for the lover then finds no pleasure in the sight of his beloved, and the beloved is no more courted by his lover. On the other hand, lovers often remain friends, if their characters are similar, and familiarity has taught them to

⁵ The reader must remember that in the time of Plato and Aristotle, the only love that was considered dignified in Athens and worth taking seriously was that between two men, not between man and woman. See on this subject the *Symposium* of Plato, Classics Club edition, pp. 159-216.

love each other's character. But those who give and receive not pleasure but profit are both less true and less constant friends. Friendships based on utility are dissolved as soon as the advantage comes to an end, for in them there is no love of a person, but only a love of profit.

For pleasure or profit then it is possible that even bad men may be friends to one another, and good people to bad, and one who is neither good nor bad to any sort of person; but clearly none but the good can be friends for the friend's own sake, since bad people do not delight in one another unless to gain something thereby.

It is only, too, the friendship of good men that cannot be destroyed by slander. For it is not easy to believe what anyone says about a person whom we have tested ourselves for many years, and found to be good. In the friendship of the good too there is confidence, and the assurance that neither of the two friends will do injury to the other, and whatever else is required by true friendship. But in other friendships there is no protection against slander and injury. . . .

CHAPTER 7. . . . Among austere and elderly people friendship arises less easily, because they are less good-tempered and less fond of society, and those are the qualities that seem to be the principal element in and causes of friendship. This is why the young form friendships quickly, but old men do not, for they do not make friends with anyone who is not delightful to them; nor do austere people. Such people, it is true, wish each other well; they desire one another's good, and help one another as needed. But they are not really friends, since they do not fulfill the principal condition of friendship by spending their time together and delighting in each other's society.

It is as impossible to be friends with a great number of people in the perfect sense of friendship as it is to be in love with a great number of people at once. For perfect friendship is in some sense an excess, and such excess of feeling is natural toward one individual, but it is not easy for a great number of people to give intense pleasure