9.10 | *Virtue and Vice*

The main contributions to the theory of virtue and vice come down to us from the ancient Greeks. The Roman moralists borrowed from the Greeks and translated the basic terms into Latin, including the names of the particular virtues and vices. The Christian theologians also borrowed from the Greeks, but they contributed elaborations of their own and added to the list of virtues the three—faith, hope, and charity—which are specifically theological rather than moral virtues. Modern secular writers have placed much less emphasis on virtue and vice in their discussion of moral problems and in their consideration of what is good and bad or right and wrong; and when they have used the terms, their use has seldom reflected the main points in the analysis of virtue and vice given to us by the Greeks.

The reader will find in the quotations from Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek writers an analysis that includes a conception of virtue and vice as habits or habitual dispositions, respectively good and bad; an elaborate classification of particular virtues or aspects of virtue; a division of the virtues into moral and intellectual virtues; an indication of which among all the virtues are cardinal or pivotal in the pursuit of happiness; a consideration of the way in which virtue is acquired, involving a dispute over the question whether virtue (more specifically, moral virtue) can be taught; an examination of the development of good or bad moral character in terms of virtue and vice; an assertion of the indispensability of moral virtue for the achievement of happiness; and—most difficult and subtle of all—apparently opposite views on the question whether there are many particular virtues, some of which a person may possess and some of which a person may lack, or only many different aspects of virtue, all of which a person must possess in order to be genuinely virtuous.

On all of these points in the theory of virtue and vice, other relevant discussions will be found in Section 8.2 on HABIT, Section 9.6 on GOOD AND EVIL, Section 9.7 on RIGHT AND WRONG, Section 9.8 on HAPPINESS, and Section 9.9 on DUTY: MORAL OBLIGATION. The treatment of particular virtues or of particular aspects of virtue, both moral and intellectual, will be found in Section 9.11 on COURAGE AND COWARDICE, Section 9.12 on TEMPERANCE AND INTEMPERANCE, Section 9.13 on PRUDENCE, Section 9.14 on HONESTY, and Section 9.15 on WISDOM AND FOLLY. Though not explicitly mentioned in the title of Section 9.7, justice and injustice are treated there.

In addition, since moral virtue is discussed as involving reason's control over the emotions or its moderation of the passions, the reader is referred to Chapter 4 on EMOTION. In that chapter the reader will find, in Sections 4.8 through 4.11, the treatment of such subjects as pity, envy, greed, avarice, jealousy, pride, and humility, which are often regarded as vices or sins.

The quotations below include the presentations by the poets, biographers, historians, and essayists of outstanding examples of human virtue and vice. They also include considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of virtue in the arena of politics, as well as what is involved in being a virtuous ruler and a virtuous citizen. For other discussions of these matters, the reader is referred to Section 10.2 on THE REALM OF POLITICS and Section 10.5 on CITIZENSHP.

Finally, the reader's attention must be called to a highly restricted use of the word "virtue" that has come to the fore in modern literature—the use in which it is identified

with chastity, sexual purity, or conformity to the sexual *mores* of the tribe. The reader will thus find passages in which that is all that is meant when men or women—and, regrettably, mainly women—are called virtuous.

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1 *Penelope.* The hard man and his cruelties will be cursed behind his back, and mocked in death. But one whose heart and ways are kind—of him strangers will bear report to the wide world, and distant men will praise him.

Homer, *Odyssey,* XIX, 330

2 *Phaedra.* Our lives are worse than the mind's quality
would warrant. There are many who know virtue. We know the good, we apprehend it clearly. But we can't bring it to achievement. Some are betrayed by their own laziness, and others value some other pleasure above virtue.

Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 377

3 *Chorus.* Many are the natures of men,
Various their manners of living,
Yet a straight path is always the right one;
And lessons deeply taught
Lead man to paths of righteousness;
Reverence, I say, is wisdom
And by its grace transfigures—
So that we seek virtue
With a right judgment.
From all of this springs honor
Bringing ageless glory into
Man's life. Oh, a mighty quest
Is the hunting out of virtue—
Which for womankind
Must be a love in quietness,
But, for men, infinite are the ways
To order and augment
The state.

Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 558

4 *Nicias.* Every man is good in that in which he is wise, and bad in that in which he is unwise.

Plato, *Laches,* 194B

5 *Protagoras.* No one would instruct, no one would rebuke, or be angry with those whose calamities they suppose to be due to nature or chance; they do not try to punish or to prevent them from being what they are; they do but pity them. Who is so foolish as to chastise or instruct the ugly, or the diminutive, or the feeble? And for this reason. Because he knows that good and evil of this kind is the work of nature and of chance; whereas if a man is wanting in those good qualities which are attained by study and exercise and teaching, and has only the contrary evil qualities, other men are angry with him, and punish and reprove him —of these evil qualities one is impiety, another injustice, and they may be described generally as the very opposite of political virtue. In such cases any man will be angry with another, and reprimand him—clearly because he thinks that by study and learning, the virtue in which the other is deficient may be acquired.

Plato, *Protagoras,* 323B

6 Then, I [Socrates] said, these, Hippias and Prodicus, are our premisses; and I would beg Protagoras to explain to us how he can be right in what he said at first. I do not mean in what he said quite at first, for his first statement, as you may remember, was that whereas there were five parts of virtue none of them was like any other of them; each of them had a separate function. To this, however, I am not referring, but to the assertion which he afterwards made that of the five virtues four were nearly akin to each other, but that the fifth, which was courage, differed greatly from the others. And of this he gave me the following proof. He said: You will find, Socrates, that some of the most impious, and unrighteous, and intemperate, and ignorant of men are among the most courageous; which proves that courage is very different from the other parts of virtue. I was surprised at his saying this at the time, and I am still more surprised now that I have discussed the matter with you. So I asked him whether by the brave he meant the confident. Yes, he replied, and the impetuous or goers. (You may remember, Protagoras, that this was your answer.)

He [Protagoras] assented.

Well then, I said, tell us against what are the courageous ready to go—against the same dangers as the cowards?

No, he answered.

Then against something different?

Yes, he said.

Then do cowards go where there is safety, and the courageous where there is danger?

Yes, Socrates, so men say.

Very true, I said. But I want to know against what do you say that the courageous are ready to go—against dangers, believing them to be dangers, or not against dangers?

No, said he; the former case has been proved by you in the previous argument to be impossible.

That, again, I replied, is quite true. And if this has been rightly proven, then no one goes to meet what he thinks to be dangers, since the want of

self-control, which makes men rush into dangers, has been shown to be ignorance.

He assented.

And yet the courageous man and the coward alike go to meet that about which they are confident; so that, in this point of view, the cowardly and the courageous go to meet the same things.

And yet, Socrates, said Protagoras, that to which the coward goes is the opposite of that to which the courageous goes; the one, for example, is ready to go to battle, and the other is not ready.

And is going to battle honourable or disgraceful? I said.

Honourable, he replied.

And if honourable, then already admitted by us to be good; for all honourable actions we have admitted to be good.

That is true; and to that opinion I shall always adhere.

True, I said. But which of the two are they who, as you say, are unwilling to go to war, which is a good and honourable thing?

The cowards, he replied.

And what is good and honourable, I said, is also pleasant?

It has certainly been acknowledged to be so, he replied.

And do the cowards knowingly refuse to go to the nobler, and pleasanter, and better?

The admission of that, he replied, would belie our former admissions.

But does not the courageous man also go to meet the better, and pleasanter, and nobler?

That must be admitted.

And the courageous man has no base fear or base confidence?

True, he replied.

And if not base, then honourable?

He admitted this.

And if honourable, then good?

Yes.

But the fear and confidence of the coward or foolhardy or madman, on the contrary, are base?

He assented.

And these base fears and confidences originate in ignorance and uninstructedness?

True, he said.

Then, as to the motive from which the cowards act, do you call it cowardice or courage?

I should say cowardice, he replied.

And have they not been shown to be cowards through their ignorance of dangers?

Assuredly, he said.

And because of that ignorance they are cowards?

He assented.

And the reason why they are cowards is admitted by you to be cowardice?

He again assented.

Then the ignorance of what is and is not dangerous is cowardice?

He nodded assent.

But surely courage, I said, is opposed to cowardice?

Yes.

Then the wisdom which knows what are and are not dangers is opposed to the ignorance of them?

To that again he nodded assent.

And the ignorance of them is cowardice?

To that he very reluctantly nodded assent.

And the knowledge of that which is and is not dangerous is courage, and is opposed to the ignorance of these things?

At this point he would no longer nod assent, but was silent.

And why, I said, do you neither assent nor dissent, Protagoras?

Finish the argument by yourself, he said.

I only want to ask one more question, I said. I want to know whether you still think that there are men who are most ignorant and yet most courageous?

You seem to have a great ambition to make me answer, Socrates, and therefore I will gratify you, and say, that this appears to me to be impossible consistently with the argument.

My only object, I said, in continuing the discussion, has been the desire to ascertain the nature and relations of virtue; for if this were clear, I am very sure that the other controversy which has been carried on at great length by both of us—you affirming and I denying that virtue can be taught—would also become clear. The result of our discussion appears to me to be singular. For if the argument had a human voice, that voice would be heard laughing at us and saying: "Protagoras and Socrates, you are strange beings; there are you, Socrates, who were saying that virtue cannot be taught, contradicting yourself now by your attempt to prove that all things are knowledge, including justice, and temperance, and courage,—which tends to show that virtue can certainly be taught; for if virtue were other than knowledge, as Protagoras attempted to prove, then clearly virtue cannot be taught; but if virtue is entirely knowledge, as you are seeking to show, then I cannot but suppose that virtue is capable of being taught. Protagoras, on the other hand, who started by saying that it might be taught, is now eager to prove it to be anything rather than knowledge; and if this is true, it must be quite incapable of being taught." Now I, Protagoras, perceiving this terrible confusion of our ideas, have a great desire that they should be cleared up. And I should like to carry on the discussion until we ascertain what virtue is, and whether capable of being taught or not.

Plato, *Protagoras,* 359A

7 *Socrates.* Seeing then that men become good and useful to states, not only because they have knowledge, but because they have right opinion, and

that neither knowledge nor right opinion is given to man by nature or acquired by him—(do you imagine either of them to be given by nature?

Meno. Not I.)

Soc. Then if they are not given by nature, neither are the good by nature good?

Men. Certainly not.

Soc. And nature being excluded, then came the question whether virtue is acquired by teaching?

Men. Yes.

Soc. If virtue was wisdom [or knowledge], then, as we thought, it was taught?

Men. Yes.

Soc. And if it was taught it was wisdom?

Men. Certainly.

Soc. And if there were teachers, it might be taught; and if there were no teachers, not?

Men. True.

Soc. But surely we acknowledge that there were no teachers of virtue?

Men. Yes.

Soc. Then we acknowledged that it was not taught, and was not wisdom?

Men. Certainly.

Soc. And yet we admitted that it was a good?

Men. Yes.

Soc. And the right guide is useful and good?

Men. Certainly.

Soc. And the only right guides are knowledge and true opinion—these are the guides of man; for things which happen by chance are not under the guidance of man: but the guides of man are true opinion and knowledge.

Men. I think so too.

Soc. But if virtue is not taught, neither is virtue knowledge.

Men. Clearly not.

Soc. Then of two good and useful things, one, which is knowledge, has been set aside, and cannot be supposed to be our guide in political life.

Men. I think not.

Soc. And therefore not by any wisdom, and not because they were wise, did Themistocles and those others of whom Anytus spoke govern states. This was the reason why they were unable to make others like themselves—because their virtue was not grounded on knowledge.

Men. That is probably true, Socrates.

Soc. But if not by knowledge, the only alternative which remains is that statesmen must have guided states by right opinion, which is in politics what divination is in religion; for diviners and also prophets say many things truly, but they know not what they say.

Men. So I believe.

Soc. And may we not, Meno, truly call those men "divine" who, having no understanding, yet succeed in many a grand deed and word?

Men. Certainly.

Soc. Then we shall also be right in calling divine those whom we were just now speaking of as diviners and prophets, including the whole tribe of poets. Yes, and statesmen above all may be said to be divine and illumined, being inspired and possessed of God, in which condition they say many grand things, not knowing what they say.

Men. Yes.

Soc. And the women too, Meno, call good men divine—do they not? and the Spartans, when they praise a good man, say "that he is a divine man."

Men. And I think, Socrates, that they are right; although very likely our friend Anytus may take offence at the word.

Soc. I do not care; as for Anytus, there will be another opportunity of talking with him. To sum up our enquiry—the result seems to be, if we are at all right in our view, that virtue is neither natural nor acquired, but an instinct given by God to the virtuous. Nor is the instinct accompanied by reason, unless there may be supposed to be among statesmen some one who is capable of educating statesmen. And if there be such an one, he may be said to be among the living what Homer says that Tiresias was among the dead, "he alone has understanding; but the rest are flitting shades"; and he and his virtue in like manner will be a reality among shadows.

Men. That is excellent, Socrates.

Soc. Then, Meno, the conclusion is that virtue comes to the virtuous by the gift of God. But we shall never know the certain truth until, before asking how virtue is given, we enquire into the actual nature of virtue.

Plato, *Meno,* 98B

8 *Socrates.* Daily to discourse about virtue . . . is the greatest good of man, and . . . the unexamined life is not worth living.

Plato, *Apology,* 38A

9 *Socrates.* Virtue is one, but . . . the forms of vice are innumerable.

Plato, *Republic,* IV, 445B

10 Virtue is free, and as a man honours or dishonours her he will have more or less of her; the responsibility is with the chooser.

Plato, *Republic,* X, 617B

11 Some of the virtues are intellectual and others moral, philosophic wisdom and understanding and practical wisdom being intellectual, liberality and temperance moral. For in speaking about a man's character we do not say that he is wise or has understanding but that he is good-tempered or temperate; yet we praise the wise man also with respect to his state of mind; and of states of mind we call those which merit praise virtues.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* 1103a4

12 The question might be asked, what we mean by saying that we must become just by doing just

acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts; for if men do just and temperate acts, they are already just and temperate, exactly as, if they do what is in accordance with the laws of grammar and of music, they are grammarians and musicians.

Or is this not true even of the arts? It is possible to do something that is in accordance with the laws of grammar, either by chance or at the suggestion of another. A man will be a grammarian, then, only when he has both done something grammatical and done it grammatically; and this means doing it in accordance with the grammatical knowledge in himself.

Again, the case of the arts and that of the virtues are not similar; for the products of the arts have their goodness in themselves, so that it is enough that they should have a certain character, but if the acts that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately. The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. These are not reckoned in as conditions of the possession of the arts, except the bare knowledge; but as a condition of the possession of the virtues knowledge has little or no weight, while the other conditions count not for a little but for everything, i.e. the very conditions which result from often doing just and temperate acts.

Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them *as* just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* $1105^{a}17$

13 Virtue . . . is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of its substance and the definition which states its essence virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* $1106^{b}36$

14 There are three kinds of disposition . . . two of them vices, involving excess and deficiency respectively, and one a virtue, viz. the mean, and all are in a sense opposed to all; for the extreme states are contrary both to the intermediate state and to each other, and the intermediate to the extremes; as the equal is greater relatively to the less, less relatively to the greater, so the middle states are excessive relatively to the deficiencies, deficient relatively to the excesses, both in passions and in actions. For the brave man appears rash relatively to the coward, and cowardly relatively to the rash man; and similarly the temperate man appears self-indulgent relatively to the insensible man, insensible relatively to the self-indulgent, and the liberal man prodigal relatively to the mean man, mean relatively to the prodigal. Hence also the people at the extremes push the intermediate man each over to the other, and the brave man is called rash by the coward, cowardly by the rash man, and correspondingly in the other cases.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* $1108^{b}11$

15 With regard to the virtues in general we have stated their genus in outline, viz. that they are means and that they are states of character, and that they tend, and by their own nature, to the doing of the acts by which they are produced, and that they are in our power and voluntary, and act as the right rule prescribes. But actions and states of character are not voluntary in the same way; for we are masters of our actions from the beginning right to the end, if we know the particular facts, but though we control the beginning of our states of character the gradual progress is not obvious any more than it is in illnesses; because it was in our power, however, to act in this way or not in this way, therefore the states are voluntary.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* $1114^{b}26$

16 We said . . . that it [happiness] is not a disposition; for if it were it might belong to some one who was asleep throughout his life, living the life of a plant, or, again, to some one who was suffering the greatest misfortunes. If these implications are unacceptable, and we must rather class happiness as an activity, as we have said before, and if some activities are necessary, and desirable for the sake of something else, while others are so in themselves, evidently happiness must be placed among those desirable in themselves, not among those desirable for the sake of something else; for happiness does not lack anything, but is self-sufficient. Now those activities are desirable in themselves from which nothing is sought beyond the activity. And of this nature virtuous actions are thought to be; for to do noble and good deeds is a thing desirable for its own sake.

Pleasant amusements also are thought to be of this nature; we choose them not for the sake of other things; for we are injured rather than bene-

fited by them, since we are led to neglect our bodies and our property. But most of the people who are deemed happy take refuge in such pastimes, which is the reason why those who are ready-witted at them are highly esteemed at the courts of tyrants; they make themselves pleasant companions in the tyrants' favourite pursuits, and that is the sort of man they want. Now these things are thought to be of the nature of happiness because people in despotic positions spend their leisure in them, but perhaps such people prove nothing; for virtue and reason, from which good activities flow, do not depend on despotic position; nor, if these people, who have never tasted pure and generous pleasure, take refuge in the bodily pleasures, should these for that reason be thought more desirable; for boys, too, think the things that are valued among themselves are the best. It is to be expected, then, that, as different things seem valuable to boys and to men, so they should to bad men and to good. Now . . . those things are both valuable and pleasant which are such to the good man; and to each man the activity in accordance with his own disposition is most desirable, and, therefore, to the good man that which is in accordance with virtue. Happiness, therefore, does not lie in amusement; it would, indeed, be strange if the end were amusement, and one were to take trouble and suffer hardship all one's life in order to amuse oneself. For, in a word, everything that we choose we choose for the sake of something else—except happiness, which is an end. Now to exert oneself and work for the sake of amusement seems silly and utterly childish. But to amuse oneself in order that one may exert oneself, as Anacharsis puts it, seems right; for amusement is a sort of relaxation, and we need relaxation because we cannot work continuously. Relaxation, then, is not an end; for it is taken for the sake of activity.

The happy life is thought to be virtuous; now a virtuous life requires exertion, and does not consist in amusement. And we say that serious things are better than laughable things and those connected with amusement, and that the activity of the better of any two things—whether it be two elements of our being or two men—is the more serious; but the activity of the better is *ipso facto* superior and more of the nature of happiness. And any chance person—even a slave—can enjoy the bodily pleasures no less than the best man; but no one assigns to a slave a share in happiness—unless he assigns to him also a share in human life. For happiness does not lie in such occupations, but, . . . in virtuous activities.

Aristotle, *Ethics,* 1176ª33

17 The forms of Virtue are justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, wisdom. If virtue is a faculty of beneficence, the highest kinds of it must be those which are most useful to others, and for this reason men honour most the just and the courageous, since courage is useful to others in war, justice both in war and in peace. Next comes liberality; liberal people let their money go instead of fighting for it, whereas other people care more for money than for anything else. Justice is the virtue through which everybody enjoys his own possessions in accordance with the law; its opposite is injustice, through which men enjoy the possessions of others in defiance of the law. Courage is the virtue that disposes men to do noble deeds in situations of danger, in accordance with the law and in obedience to its commands; cowardice is the opposite. Temperance is the virtue that disposes us to obey the law where physical pleasures are concerned; incontinence is the opposite. Liberality disposes us to spend money for others' good; illiberality is the opposite. Magnanimity is the virtue that disposes us to do good to others on a large scale; [its opposite is meanness of spirit]. Magnificence is a virtue productive of greatness in matters involving the spending of money. The opposites of these two are smallness of spirit and meanness respectively. Prudence is that virtue of the understanding which enables men to come to wise decisions about the relation to happiness of the goods and evils that have been previously mentioned.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* 1366ª39

18 *Laelius.* If we wish to avoid anxiety we must avoid virtue itself, which necessarily involves some anxious thoughts in showing its loathing and abhorrence for the qualities which are opposite to itself—as kindness for ill nature, self-control for licentiousness, courage for cowardice. Thus you may notice that it is the just who are most pained at injustice, the brave at cowardly actions, the temperate at depravity. It is then characteristic of a rightly ordered mind to be pleased at what is good and grieved at the reverse.

Cicero, *Friendship,* XIII

19 Anyone who separates the supreme good from virtue and measures it only in terms of self-interest—if he is always consistent and never over-ruled by his better nature—could find no value in friendship, justice, or generosity. No one can be brave who considers pain the supreme evil. Nor could anyone be temperate who regards pleasure as the highest good.

Cicero, *De Officiis,* I, 2

20 It is virtue, to fly vice; and the highest wisdom to have lived free from folly.

Horace, *Epistles,* I, 1

21 Nature does not give a man virtue: the process of becoming a good man is an art.

Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius,* 90

22 All vices are at odds with nature, all abandon the proper order of things.

Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius,* 122

23 A man must cast virtue out from his heart if he is to admit anger, because vices and virtues do not mix well together. One can no more be angry and kind at the same time than he can be sick and well.

Seneca, *On Anger,* II, 12

24 Vice quickly creeps in; virtue is difficult to find; she requires ruler and guide. But vice can be acquired even without a tutor.

Seneca, *Quaestiones Naturales,* III, 30

25 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

Matthew 12:33

26 Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Philippians 4:8

27 Vice, the opposite of virtue, shows us more clearly what virtue is. Justice becomes more obvious when we have injustice to compare it to. Many such things are proved by their contraries.

Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria,* XII, 1

28 Real excellence . . . is most recognised when most openly looked into; and in really good men, nothing which meets the eyes of external observers so truly deserves their admiration, as their daily common life does that of their nearer friends.

Plutarch, *Pericles*

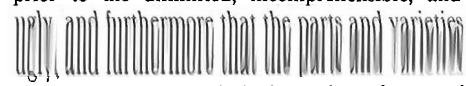
29 The most glorious exploits do not always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtue or vice in men; sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest, informs us better of their characters and inclinations, than the most famous sieges, the greatest armaments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever.

Plutarch, *Alexander*

30 The true love of virtue is in all men produced by the love and respect they bear to him that teaches it; and those who praise good men, yet do not love them, may respect their reputation, but do not really admire, and will never imitate their virtue.

Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*

31 There is . . . a method very exact and necessary for all discussion of the nature of the universe which very clearly and indisputably presents to us the fact that that which is fair and limited, and which subjects itself to knowledge, is naturally prior to the unlimited, incomprehensible, and



of the infinite and unlimited are given shape and boundaries by the former, and through it attain to their fitting order and sequence, and like objects brought beneath some seal or measure, all gain a share of likeness to it and similarity of name when they fall under its influence. For thus it is reasonable that the rational part of the soul will be the agent which puts in order the irrational part, and passion and appetite, which find their places in the two forms of inequality, will be regulated by the reasoning faculty as though by a kind of equality and sameness. And from this equalizing process there will properly result for us the so-called ethical virtues, sobriety, courage, gentleness, self-control, fortitude, and the like.

Nicomachus, *Arithmetic,* I, 23

32 Modest actions preserve the modest man, and immodest actions destroy him: and actions of fidelity preserve the faithful man, and the contrary actions destroy him. And on the other hand contrary actions strengthen contrary characters: shamelessness strengthens the shameless man, faithlessness the faithless man, abusive words the abusive man, anger the man of an angry temper, and unequal receiving and giving make the avaricious man more avaricious.

For this reason philosophers admonish us not to be satisfied with learning only, but also to add study, and then practice.

Epictetus, *Discourses,* II, 9

33 If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, and, in a word, anything better than thy own mind's self-satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason, and in the condition that is assigned to thee without thy own choice; if, I say, thou seest anything better than this, turn to it with all thy soul, and enjoy that which thou hast found to be the best. . . . If thou findest everything else smaller and of less value than this, give place to nothing else, for if thou dost once diverge and incline to it, thou wilt no longer without distraction be able to give the preference to that good thing which is thy proper possession and thy own; for it is not right that anything of any other kind, such as praise from the many, or power, or enjoyment of pleasure, should come into competition with that which is rationally and politically or practically good.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* III, 6

34 When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good

quality of a fourth. For nothing delights so much as the examples of the virtues, when they are exhibited in the morals of those who live with us and present themselves in abundance, as far as is possible. Wherefore we must keep them before us.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* VI, 48

35 The perfection of moral character consists in this, in passing every day as the last, and in being neither violently excited nor torpid nor playing the hypocrite.

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* VII, 69

36 For most or even all forms of evil serve the Universe—much as the poisonous snake has its use—though in most cases their function is unknown. Vice itself has many useful sides: it brings about much that is beautiful, in artistic creations for example, and it stirs us to thoughtful living, not allowing us to drowse in security.

Plotinus, *Second Ennead,* III, 18

37 Nothing is utterly condemnable save vice.

Augustine, *Confessions,* II, 3

38 No one without true piety—that is, true worship of the true God—can have true virtue.

Augustine, *City of God,* V, 19

39 In Scripture they are called God's enemies who oppose His rule, not by nature, but by vice; having no power to hurt Him, but only themselves. For they are His enemies, not through their power to hurt, but by their will to oppose Him. For God is unchangeable, and wholly proof against injury. Therefore the vice which makes those who are called His enemies resist Him, is an evil not to God, but to themselves. And to them it is an evil, solely because it corrupts the good of their nature. It is not nature, therefore, but vice, which is contrary to God. For that which is evil is contrary to the good. And who will deny that God is the supreme good? Vice, therefore, is contrary to God, as evil to good. Further, the nature it vitiates is a good, and therefore to this good also it is contrary. But while it is contrary to God only as evil to good, it is contrary to the nature it vitiates, both as evil and as hurtful. For to God no evils are hurtful; but only to natures mutable and corruptible, though, by the testimony of the vices themselves, originally good. For were they not good, vices could not hurt them. For how do they hurt them but by depriving them of integrity, beauty, welfare, virtue, and, in short, whatever natural good vice is wont to diminish or destroy? But if there be no good to take away, then no injury can be done, and consequently there can be no vice. For it is impossible that there should be a harmless vice. Whence we gather, that though vice cannot injure the unchangeable good, it can injure nothing but good; because it does not exist where it does not injure.

Augustine, *City of God,* XII, 3

40 If the Creator is truly loved, that is, if He Himself is loved and not another thing in His stead, He cannot be evilly loved; for love itself is to be ordinately loved, because we do well to love that which, when we love it, makes us live well and virtuously. So that it seems to me that it is a brief but true definition of virtue to say, it is the order of love.

Augustine, *City of God,* XV, 22

41 Though the soul may seem to rule the body admirably, and the reason the vices, if the soul and reason do not themselves obey God, as God has commanded them to serve Him, they have no proper authority over the body and the vices. For what kind of mistress of the body and the vices can that mind be which is ignorant of the true God, and which, instead of being subject to His authority, is prostituted to the corrupting influences of the most vicious demons? It is for this reason that the virtues which it seems to itself to possess, and by which it restrains the body and the vices that it may obtain and keep what it desires, are rather vices than virtues so long as there is no reference to God in the matter.

Augustine, *City of God,* XIX, 25

42 Man is judged to be good or bad chiefly according to the pleasure of the human will; for that man is good and virtuous who takes pleasure in the works of virtue, and that man evil who takes pleasure in evil works.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 34, 4

43 One can make bad use of a virtue taken as an object, for instance, by having evil thoughts about a virtue, that is, by hating it, or by being proud of it; but one cannot make bad use of virtue as principle of action, so that an act of virtue be evil.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 55, 4

44 Human virtue is a habit perfecting man in view of his doing good deeds. Now, in man there are but two principles of human actions, namely, the intellect or reason and the appetite; for these are the two principles of movement in man as stated in [Aristotle's] book on the *Soul.* Consequently every human virtue must be a perfection of one of these principles. Accordingly if it perfects man's speculative or practical intellect in order that his deed may be good, it will be an intellectual virtue, but if it perfects his appetite, it will be a moral virtue. It follows therefore that every human virtue is either intellectual or moral.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 58, 3

45 Moral virtue can be without some of the intellectual virtues, namely, wisdom, science, and art, but

not without understanding and prudence. Moral virtue cannot be without prudence, because moral virtue is a habit of choosing, that is, making us choose well. Now in order that a choice be good, two things are required. First, that the intention be directed to a due end; and this is done by moral virtue, which inclines the appetitive power to the good that is in accord with reason, which is a due end. Secondly, that man take rightly those things which have reference to the end, and he cannot do this unless his reason counsel, judge and command rightly, which is the function of prudence and the virtues joined to it.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 58, 4

46 Things may be numbered either in respect of their formal principles, or according to their subjects, and in either way we find that there are four cardinal virtues.

For the formal principle of the virtue of which we speak now is the good of reason, which good can be considered in two ways. First, as consisting in the consideration itself of reason; and thus we have one principal virtue, called Prudence.—Secondly, according as the reason puts its order into something else: either into operations, and then we have Justice; or into passions, and then there must be two virtues. For the need of putting the order of reason into the passions is due to their going against reason, and this occurs in two ways. First, by the passions inciting to something against reason, and then the passions need a curb, which we call Temperance. Secondly, by the passions withdrawing us from following the dictate of reason, for instance, through fear of danger or toil, and then man needs to be strengthened for that which reason dictates, lest he turn back; and to this end there is Fortitude.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 61, 2

47 Virtues are understood differently by various writers. For some take them as signifying certain general conditions of the human soul, to be found in all the virtues, so that, namely, prudence is merely a certain rectitude of discernment in any actions or matters whatever; justice, a certain rectitude of the soul by which man does what he ought in any matters; temperance, a disposition of the soul moderating any passions or operations, so as to keep them within bounds; and fortitude, a disposition by which the soul is strengthened for that which is in accord with reason, against any assaults of the passions, or the toil involved by any operations. To distinguish these four virtues in this way does not imply that justice, temperance and fortitude are distinct virtuous habits. For it pertains to every moral virtue, from the fact that it is a habit, that it should be accompanied by a certain firmness so as not to be moved by its contrary, and this, we have said, belongs to fortitude. Moreover, since it is a virtue, it is directed to good which involves the notion of right and due, and this, we have said, belongs to justice. Again, owing to the fact that it is a moral virtue partaking of reason, it observes the mode of reason in all things, and does not exceed its bounds, which has been stated to belong to temperance. It is only in the point of having discernment which we ascribed to prudence, that there seems to be a distinction from the other three, since discernment belongs essentially to reason; but the other three imply a certain participation of reason by way of a kind of application (of reason) to passions or operations. According to the above explanation, then, prudence would be distinct from the other three virtues but these would not be distinct from one another; for it is evident that one and the same virtue is both habit, and virtue, and moral virtue.

Others, however, with better reason, take these four virtues, according as they have their special determinate matter, each its own matter, in which special praise is given to that general condition from which the virtue's name is taken. . . . In this way it is clear that the aforesaid virtues are distinct habits, differentiated in respect of their diverse objects.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 61, 4

48 Speaking absolutely, the intellectual virtues, which perfect the reason, are more excellent than the moral virtues, which perfect the appetite.

But if we consider virtue in its relation to act, then moral virtue, which perfects the appetite, whose function it is to move the other powers to act . . . is more excellent. And since virtue is called so from its being a principle of action, for it is the perfection of a power, it follows again that the nature of virtue agrees more with moral than with intellectual virtue.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 66, 3

49 Men who are well disposed are led willingly to virtue by being admonished better than by coercion; but men who are evilly disposed are not led to virtue unless they are compelled.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I–II, 95, 1

50 Virtue is praised because of the will, not because of the ability: and therefore if a man fall short of equality which is the mean of justice, through lack of ability, his virtue deserves no less praise, provided there be no failing on the part of his will.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II–II, 81, 6

51 *Cressida.* In everything there should be moderation,
For though one might forbid all drunkenness,
One could not say that men through all creation
Should never drink—'twere folly, nothing less.

Chaucer, *Troilus and Cressida,* II, 103

52 That servant and that nurse unto the vices
Which men do call in English Idleness,
Portress at Pleasure's gate, by all advices
We should avoid, and by her foe express,
That is to say, by lawful busyness,
We ought to live with resolute intent,
Lest by the Fiend through sloth we should be rent.

For he, that with his thousand cords and sly
Continually awaits us all to trap,
When he a man in idleness may spy
He easily the hidden snare will snap,
And till the man has met the foul mishap,
He's not aware the Fiend has him in hand;
We ought to work and idleness withstand.

And though men never dreaded they must die,
Yet men see well, by reason, idleness
Is nothing more than rotten sluggardry,
Whereof comes never good one may possess;
And see sloth hold her in a leash, no less,
Only to sleep and eat and always drink
And to absorb all gain of others' swink.

Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales:*
Second Nun's Prologue

53 A man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity. . . . He need not make himself uneasy at incurring a reproach for those vices without which the state can only be saved with difficulty, for if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something which looks like virtue, if followed, would be his ruin; whilst something else, which looks like vice, yet followed brings him security and prosperity.

Machiavelli, *Prince,* XV

54 As if our touch were infectious, we by our handling corrupt things that of themselves are beautiful and good. We can grasp virtue in such a way that it will become vicious, if we embrace it with too sharp and violent a desire. Those who say that there is never any excess in virtue, inasmuch as it is no longer virtue if there is excess in it, are playing with words.

Montaigne, *Essays,* I, 30, Of Moderation

55 It seems to me that virtue is something other and nobler than the inclinations toward goodness that are born in us. Souls naturally regulated and well-born follow the same path, and show the same countenance in their actions, as virtuous ones. But virtue means something greater and more active than letting oneself, by a happy disposition, be led gently and peacefully in the footsteps of reason. He who through a natural mildness and easygoingness should despise injuries received would do a very fine and praiseworthy thing; but he who, outraged and stung to the quick by an injury, should arm himself with the arms of reason against this furious appetite for vengeance, and after a great conflict should finally master it, would without doubt do much more. The former would do well, and the other virtuously; one action might be called goodness, the other virtue. For it seems that the name of virtue presupposes difficulty and contrast, and that it cannot be exercised without opposition. Perhaps this is why we call God good, strong, liberal, and just, but we do not call him virtuous: his operations are wholly natural and effortless.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 11, Of Cruelty

56 Virtue refuses facility for her companion; and . . . the easy, gentle, and sloping path that guides the footsteps of a good natural disposition is not the path of true virtue. It demands a rough and thorny road; it wants to have either external difficulties to struggle with . . . by means of which fortune takes pleasure in breaking up the unwaveringness of a man's career; or internal difficulties created by the disordered appetites and imperfections of our nature.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 11, Of Cruelty

57 When I confess myself religiously to myself, I find that the best goodness I have has some tincture of vice.

Montaigne, *Essays,* II, 20,
We Taste Nothing Pure

58 The acknowledgment of virtue carries no less weight in the mouth of the man who hates it, inasmuch as truth wrests it from him by force, and if he will not receive it within, at least he covers himself with it as an ornament.

Montaigne, *Essays,* III, 1,
Of the Useful and the Honorable

59 There is no vice truly a vice which is not offensive, and which a sound judgment does not condemn; for its ugliness and painfulness is so apparent that perhaps the people are right who say it is chiefly produced by stupidity and ignorance. So hard it is to imagine anyone knowing it without hating it.

Montaigne, *Essays,* III, 2, Of Repentance

60 *Portia.* How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice,* V, i, 90

61 *Clown.* Any thing that's mended is but patched: virtue that transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that amends is but patched with virtue.

Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night,* I, v, 52

62 *Sir Toby.* Dost thou think, because thou art virtu-

ous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?
Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night,* II, iii, 123

63 *Laertes.* Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.
Ophelia. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.
Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* I, iii, 33

64 *1st Lord.* Our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.
Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well,* IV, iii, 82

65 *Duke.* Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.
Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure,* I, i, 33

66 *Iago.* Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions; but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.
Shakespeare, *Othello,* I, iii, 322

67 *Edgar.* The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us.
Shakespeare, *Lear,* V, iii, 170

68 *Griffith.* Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues
We write in water.
Shakespeare, *Henry VIII,* IV, ii, 45

69 'Tis better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
When not to be receives reproach of being,
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deem'd
Not by our feeling but by others' seeing.
Shakespeare, *Sonnet CXXI*

70 I am a Knight, and a Knight will I die, if so it please Omnipotence. Some chuse the high Road of haughty Ambition; others the low Ways of base servile Flattery; a Third sort take the crooked Path of deceitful Hypocrisy; and a few, very few, that of true Religion. I for my own Part, guided by my Stars, follow the narrow Track of Knight-Errantry; and for the Exercise of it, I despise Riches, but not Honour. I have redress'd Grievances, and righted the Injur'd, chastis'd the Insolent, vanquish'd Giants, and trod Elves and Hobgoblins under my Feet! I am in Love, but no more than the Profession of Knight-Errantry obliges me to be; yet I am none of this Age's vicious Lovers, but a chaste Platonick. My Intentions are all directed to vertuous Ends, and to do no Man Wrong, but Good to all the World. And now let your Graces judge, most excellent Duke and Dutchess, whether a Person who makes it his only Study to practise all this, deserves to be upbraided for a Fool.
Cervantes, *Don Quixote,* II, 32

71 Men abandoned to vice do not so much corrupt manners, as those that are half good and half evil.
Bacon, *Advancement of Learning,* Bk. I, VI, 9

72 The arts which flourish in times while virtue is in growth, are military; and while virtue is in state, are liberal; and while virtue is in declination, are voluptuary.
Bacon, *Advancement of Learning,* Bk. II, X, 13

73 Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.
Bacon, *Of Adversity*

74 Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set; and surely virtue is best in a body that is comely, though not of delicate features; and that hath rather dignity of presence, than beauty of aspect.
Bacon, *Of Beauty*

75 We do not believe ourselves to be exactly sharing in the vices of the vulgar when we see that we are

Wherwith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone?
But rigid looks of Chast austerity,
And noble grace that dash't brute violence
With sudden adoration, and blank aw.
So dear to Heav'n is Saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried Angels lacky her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in cleer dream, and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft convers with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th'outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the souls essence,
Till all be made immortal.

Milton, *Comus,* 432

Elder Brother. This I hold firm,
Vertue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd,
Yea even that which mischief meant most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on it self shall back recoyl,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gather'd like scum, and setl'd to it self
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed, and self-consum'd, if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rott'nness,
And earths base built on stubble.

Milton, *Comus,* 588

I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness.

Milton, *Areopagitica*

in so far as it has the power of affecting certain things which can be understood through the laws of its nature alone.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* IV, Definition 8

85 The more each person strives and is able to seek his own profit, that is to say, to preserve his being, the more virtue does he possess; on the other hand, in so far as each person neglects his own profit, that is to say, neglects to preserve his own being, is he impotent.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* IV, Prop. 20

86 There is no single thing in nature which is more profitable to man than a man who lives according to the guidance of reason. For that is most profitable to man which most agrees with his own nature, that is to say, man. . . . But a man acts absolutely from the laws of his own nature when he lives according to the guidance of reason, and so far only does he always necessarily agree with the nature of another man; therefore there is no single thing more profitable to man than man.

When each man seeks most that which is profitable to himself, then are men most profitable to one another; for the more each man seeks his own profit and endeavours to preserve himself, the more virtue does he possess, or, in other words, the more power does he possess to act according to the laws of his own nature, that is to say, to live according to the guidance of reason. But men most agree in nature when they live according to the guidance of reason, therefore . . . men will be most profitable to one another when each man seeks most what is profitable to himself.

Spinoza, *Ethics,* IV, Prop. 35, Corols. 1–2

87 Though that passes for vice in one country which is counted a virtue, or at least not vice, in another, yet everywhere virtue and praise, vice and blame, go together. Virtue is everywhere, that which is thought praiseworthy; and nothing else but that which has the allowance of public esteem is called virtue.

Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding,* Bk. II, XXVIII, 11

88 Virtue is harder to be got than a knowledge of the world.

Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education,* 70

89 [Lemuel Gulliver lists the negative blessings of living among the Houyhnhnms] I did not feel the treachery or inconstancy of a friend, nor the injuries of a secret or open enemy. I had no occasion of bribing, flattering or pimping, to procure the favour of any great man, or of his minion. I wanted no fence against fraud or oppression: here was neither physician to destroy my body, nor lawyer to ruin my fortune: no informer to watch my words and actions, or forge accusations against me for hire: here were no gibers, censurers, backbiters, pickpockets, highwaymen, house-breakers, attorneys, bawds, buffoons, gamesters, politicians, wits, spleneticks, tedious talkers, controvertists, ravishers, murderers, robbers, virtuosoes; no leaders or followers of party and faction; no encouragers to vice, by seducement or examples: no dungeon, axes, gibbets, whipping-posts, or pillories: no cheating shop-keepers or mechanicks: no pride, vanity or affectation: no fops, bullies, drunkards, strolling whores, or poxes: no ranting, lewd expensive wives: no stupid, proud pedants: no importunate, over-bearing, quarrelsome, noisy, roaring, empty, conceited, swearing companions: no scoundrels raised from the dust upon the merit of their vices; or nobility thrown into it, on account of their virtues: no lords, fiddlers, judges, or dancing-masters.

Swift, *Gulliver's Travels,* IV, 10

90 As fruits ungrateful to the planter's care
On savage stocks inserted learn to bear;
The surest Virtues thus from Passions shoot,
Wild Nature's vigor working at the root.
What crops of wit and honesty appear
From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear!
See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
Ev'n av'rice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;
Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,
Is gentle love, and charms all womankind:
Envy, to which th'ignoble mind's a slave,
Is emulation in the learn'd or brave:
Nor Virtue, male or female, can we name,
But what will grow on Pride, or grow on Shame.

Pope, *Essay on Man,* Epistle II, 181

91 Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Pope, *Essay on Man,* Epistle II, 217

92 Virtuous and vicious ev'ry Man must be,
Few in th'extreme, but all in the degree.

Pope, *Essay on Man,* Epistle II, 231

93 This gentleman [Mr. Square the philosopher] and Mr. Thwackum scarce ever met without a disputation; for their tenets were indeed diametrically opposite to each other. Square held human nature to be the perfection of all virtue, and that vice was a deviation from our nature, in the same manner as deformity of body is. Thwackum, on the contrary, maintained that the human mind, since the fall, was nothing but a sink of iniquity, till purified and redeemed by grace. In one point only they agreed, which was, in all their discourses on morality never to mention the word goodness. The favourite phrase of the former, was the natural beauty of virtue; that of the latter, was the

divine power of grace. The former measured all actions by the unalterable rule of right, and the eternal fitness of things; the latter decided all matters by authority; but in doing this, he always used the scriptures and their commentators, as the lawyer doth his Coke upon Lyttleton, where the comment is of equal authority with the text.

Fielding, *Tom Jones,* III, 3

94 The foibles and vices of men, in whom there is great mixture of good, become more glaring objects from the virtues which contrast them and shew their deformity; and when we find such vices attended with their evil consequence to our favourite characters, we are not only taught to shun them for our own sake, but to hate them for the mischiefs they have already brought on those we love.

Fielding, *Tom Jones,* X, 1

95 There are a set of religious, or rather moral writers, who teach that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine, and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true.

Fielding, *Tom Jones,* XV, 1

96 The human mind feels such an exquisite pleasure in the exercise of power; even those who are lovers of virtue are so excessively fond of themselves that there is no man so happy as not still to have reason to mistrust his honest intentions; and, indeed, our actions depend on so many things that it is infinitely easier to do good, than to do it well.

Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws,* XXVIII, 41

97 In the present order of things, virtue is attended with more peace of mind than vice, and meets with a more favourable reception from the world.

Hume, *Concerning Human Understanding,* XI, 108

98 Whatever may be the consequence of such a miraculous transformation of mankind as would endow them with every species of virtue, and free them from every species of vice, this concerns not the magistrate, who aims only at possibilities. He cannot cure every vice by substituting a virtue in its place. Very often he can only cure one vice by another; and in that case, he ought to prefer what is least pernicious to society.

Hume, *Of Refinement in the Arts*

99 What is virtue? Beneficence towards the fellow-creature. Can I call virtue things other than those which do me good? I am needy, you are generous. I am in danger, you help me. I am deceived, you tell me the truth. I am neglected, you console me. I am ignorant, you teach me. Without difficulty I shall call you virtuous. But what will become of the cardinal and divine virtues? Some of them will remain in the schools.

Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary:* Virtue

100 The most depraved of men always pay some sort of homage to public faith; and even robbers, who are the enemies of virtue in the great society, pay some respect to the shadow of it in their secret caves.

Rousseau, *Political Economy*

101 The noblest virtues are negative, they are also the most difficult, for they make little show, and do not even make room for that pleasure so dear to the heart of man, the thought that some one is pleased with us. If there be a man who does no harm to his neighbours, what good must he have accomplished! What a bold heart, what a strong character it needs! It is not in talking about this maxim, but in trying to practise it, that we discover both its greatness and its difficulty.

Rousseau, *Emile,* II

102 Virtue presented singly to the imagination or the reason is so well recommended by its own graces and so strongly supported by arguments, that a good man wonders how any can be bad.

Johnson, *Rambler No. 175*

103 Neither our virtues nor vices are all our own. If there were no cowardice there would be little insolence. Pride cannot rise to any great degree but by the concurrence of blandishment or the sufferance of tameness.

Johnson, *Rambler No. 180*

104 Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who, not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition. This, the natural progress and consequence of the arts, has sometimes perhaps been retarded by accidental circumstances; but, generally speaking, the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any State to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption.

Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia,* XIX

105 It is always easy, as well as agreeable, for the inferior ranks of mankind to claim a merit from the contempt of that pomp and pleasure which fortune has placed beyond their reach. The virtue of the primitive Christians, like that of the first Romans, was very frequently guarded by poverty and ignorance.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* XV

106 We may learn from the example of Cato that a character of pure and inflexible virtue is the most apt to be misled by prejudice, to be heated by enthusiasm, and to confound private enmities with public justice.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* XXXIX

107 There are very few of those virtues which are not capable of being imitated, and even outdone in many of their most striking effects, by the worst of vices.

Burke, *Speech on Economical Reform (Feb. 11, 1780)*

108 When the thinking man has conquered the temptations to vice, and is conscious of having done his (often hard) duty, he finds himself in a state of peace and satisfaction which may well be called *happiness,* in which virtue is her own reward.

Kant, *Preface to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics*

109 Virtue signifies a moral strength of will. But this does not exhaust the notion; for such strength might also belong to a *holy* (super-human) being, in whom no opposing impulse counteracts the law of his rational will; who therefore willingly does everything in accordance with the law. Virtue then is the moral strength of a *man's* will in his obedience to *duty;* and this is a moral *necessitation* by his own law giving reason, inasmuch as this constitutes itself a power *executing* the law. It is not itself a duty, nor is it a duty to possess it (otherwise we should be in duty bound to have a duty), but it commands, and accompanies its command with a moral constraint (one possible by laws of internal freedom). But since this should be irresistible, strength is requisite, and the degree of this strength can be estimated only by the magnitude of the hindrances which man creates for himself, by his inclinations. Vices, the brood of unlawful dispositions, are the monsters that he has to combat; wherefore this moral strength as *fortitude* constitutes the greatest and only true martial glory of man; it is also called the true *wisdom,* namely, the practical, because it makes the *ultimate end* of the existence of man on earth its own end. Its possession alone makes man free, healthy, rich, a king, etc., nor can either chance or fate deprive him of this, since he possesses himself, and the virtuous cannot lose his virtue.

Kant, *Introduction to the Metaphysical Elements of Ethics,* XIV

110 That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love.

Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey,* 33

111 The principle of self-interest rightly understood is not a lofty one, but it is clear and sure. It does not aim at mighty objects, but it attains without excessive exertion all those at which it aims. As it lies within the reach of all capacities, everyone can without difficulty learn and retain it. By its admirable conformity to human weaknesses it easily obtains great dominion; nor is that dominion precarious, since the principle checks one personal interest by another, and uses, to direct the passions, the very same instrument that excites them.

The principle of self-interest rightly understood produces no great acts of self-sacrifice, but it suggests daily small acts of self-denial. By itself it cannot suffice to make a man virtuous; but it disciplines a number of persons in habits of regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self-command; and if it does not lead men straight to virtue by the will, it gradually draws them in that direction by their habits. If the principle of interest rightly understood were to sway the whole moral world, extraordinary virtues would doubtless be more rare; but I think that gross depravity would then also be less common. The principle of interest rightly understood perhaps prevents men from rising far above the level of mankind, but a great number of other men, who were falling far below it, are caught and restrained by it. Observe some few individuals, they are lowered by it; survey mankind, they are raised.

Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* Vol. II, II, 8

112 Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances.

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

113 My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

Tennyson, *Sir Galahad*

114 You who govern public affairs, what need have

you to employ punishments? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends.

Thoreau, *Walden:* The Village

115 Our whole life is startlingly moral. There is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice. Goodness is the only investment that never fails.

Thoreau, *Walden:* Higher Laws

116 The first element of good government . . . being the virtue and intelligence of the human beings composing the community, the most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves.

Mill, *Representative Government,* II

117 Bulstrode shrank from a direct lie with an intensity disproportionate to the number of his more indirect misdeeds. But many of these misdeeds were like the subtle muscular movements which are not taken account of in the consciousness, though they bring about the end that we fix our mind on and desire. And it is only what we are vividly conscious of that we can vividly imagine to be seen by Omniscience.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch,* VII, 68

118 It seems not to be true that there is a power in the universe, which watches over the well-being of every individual with parental care and brings all his concerns to a happy ending. On the contrary, the destinies of man are incompatible with a universal principle of benevolence or with—what is to some degree contradictory—a universal principle of justice. Earthquakes, floods, and fires do not differentiate between the good and devout man, and the sinner and unbeliever. And, even if we leave inanimate nature out of account and consider the destinies of individual men in so far as they depend on their relations with others of their own kind, it is by no means the rule that virtue is rewarded and wickedness punished, but it happens often enough that the violent, the crafty, and the unprincipled seize the desirable goods of the earth for themselves, while the pious go empty away. Dark, unfeeling, and unloving powers determine human destiny; the system of rewards and punishments, which, according to religion, governs the world, seems to have no existence.

Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,* XXXV

9.11 | *Courage and Cowardice*

Of all the virtues, the one most frequently extolled by the poets is courage. Many of the memorable characters of the great epics and tragedies of antiquity, of the plays of Shakespeare, and of modern fiction are depicted as lionhearted men, men who have the fortitude to withstand the onslaughts of misfortune, or the valor to attempt what the timid or craven would never dare. The historians and the biographers, too, give us portraits of bold and daring leaders, of men whose strength of character enables them to remain steady on their course, overcoming what appear to be insuperable obstacles. Courage is the stuff out of which heroes are made and the heroic temper is moulded. Relevant, therefore, to the consideration of courage are quotations that will be found in Section 1.6 on Human Greatness: The Hero.

The reader will have noted the vocabulary of epithets applicable to this virtue and its associated vice: for courageous, brave, bold, daring, valorous, fearless; for cowardly, timid, craven, pusillanimous, effeminate. The name given the virtue itself is frequently fortitude rather than courage, the one word in its etymology implying strength—strength of moral character, not of physique; the other suggesting robustness of spirit.