

On Cruelty

(Edited)

IMAGINE virtue to be both something else and something nobler than the propensity towards goodness that is born in us. The well-disposed and naturally well-controlled mind follows the same course as the virtuous, and presents the same appearance in its actions. But virtue sounds like some greater and more active 'thing than merely to let oneself be led by a happy disposition quietly and peaceably along the path of reason. One who out of natural mildness and goodnature overlooks injuries received performs a very fine and praiseworthy action; but another who, though provoked and stung to anger by an insult, takes up the weapons of reason against his furious desire for revenge, and after a hard battle finally masters it, is undoubtedly doing a great deal more. The first man is behaving Well, the second virtuously; the first action might be called goodness, the second virtue. For the word virtue, I think, presupposes difficulty and struggle, and something that cannot be practised without an adversary. This is perhaps why we call God good, mighty, liberal, and just, but do not call Him virtuous; His workings are all natural and effortless.

Of the philosophers, not only the Stoics but the Epicurean also and in ranking the former higher than the latter I am following the common opinion; and this, in spite of Arcesilaus' subtle answer to the taunt that many went over from his school to the Epicureans but never the reverse, is a false one. 'I can well believe you,' he said to his taunter, 'cocks can easily be made into capons, but you cannot make a capon into a cock.' For truly, in steadfastness and strictness of opinions and precepts, the Epicurean sect yields nothing to the Stoic. There was one Stoic, indeed, who showed more honesty than the common run of disputants who, to combat Epicurus and load the dice in their favour, made him say things that he never thought, twisting his words, and using the rules of grammar to extract from his language a meaning and belief contrary to the one which they knew he had in mind and showed in his conduct; and that Stoic said that he had left the Epicurean sect for this reason among others: that he found their way too high and inaccessible; 'and they who are called lovers of pleasure are in fact lovers of beauty and justice. They cultivate and practise all the virtues.' (Cicero. *Letters*, XV, XIX)

Among the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, I say, there are several who have thought it not enough to have the soul in a good state, under firm control and well disposed to virtue, and not enough to keep our thoughts and resolutions high above the assaults of fortune, but that we must also seek opportunities of putting ourselves to the proof. They would have us go in quest of pain, poverty, and scorn, in order to combat them and keep our souls exercised, since 'virtue assailed is greatly strengthened'. (Seneca, *Ldlkrr*, xxii.) This is one of the reasons why Epaminondas, who was of yet a third sect, refused the riches which fortune put into his hands in an entirely lawful way, in order, as he said, that he might fight a battle with poverty - a condition in which he remained to the end. Socrates, I think, tried himself even more severely by keeping the shrewishness of his wife to practise on: a battle against a sharpened sword.

Metellus, alone of all the Roman senators, undertook by the power of his virtue to withstand the violence of Saturninus, Tribune of the people at Rome, who was trying by main force to pass in unjust law in favour of the plebeians. Having thus incurred the dire penalties that Saturninus had provided for all dissentients, Metellus addressed those who, in this extremity, were leading him to execution, in words to this effect: that it was too easy and too base a thing to do a bad action, and that good actions involving no danger were quite common; but to act well when it was dangerous to do so was the proper duty of a virtuous man.

These words of Metellus very clearly state the case that I was trying to prove: that virtue refuses facility as a companion, and that the easy, smooth, and gentle slope down which we are guided by the even steps of a naturally good disposition is not the path of true virtue. Virtue demands a harsh and thorny road; it desires either external difficulties, like those of Metellus, to contend with, by means of which fortune is pleased to interrupt its headlong career, or internal difficulties, created by the disorderly appetites and the imperfections of our natural state.

I have come so far with great ease. But as I conclude my reflections, it occurs to me that the mind of Socrates, the most perfect of which I have any knowledge, would, by this reckoning, have little to commend it. For I cannot imagine that man ever to have been prompted by evil desires. I can conceive of no difficulty or constraint in the way of his virtue; I know his reason to have been so powerful and so absolute a mistress over him, that it can never have permitted a wicked desire even to arise in him. I have nothing to set against a virtue as lofty as his. I seem to see it marching with victorious and triumphant steps, in state and at ease, without hindrance or obstacle. If virtue can only shine in battle with opposing desires, must we therefore say that it cannot dispense with the assistance of vice, and that it is to vice that it owes the reputation and honour in which it is held? What should we say then of that noble and generous Epicurean pleasure that prides itself on nourishing virtue tenderly in its bosom, and letting it frolic there, giving it disgrace, fever, poverty, death, and tortures as toys to play with?

If I assume that perfect virtue shows itself in the struggle with and the patient endurance of pain, in suffering the assaults of gout without being shaken from its place; if I allow hardships and difficulties to be its necessary aim, what shall we say of a virtue which has climbed to such a height that it not only despises pain but rejoices in it, and is tickled by the pangs of a severe colic? For such is the virtue established by the Epicureans, of which several of them, by their actions, have left us manifest proofs; as have many others, also, who have, I find, actually surpassed even their teaching. Witness the younger Cato. When I see him die, tearing out his own entrails, I cannot be content simply to believe that his mind was then wholly free from disturbance and terror. I cannot believe that he merely maintained that attitude which the rules of the Stoic sect prescribed, calm, unperturbed, and impassive. There was, it seems to me, in that man's virtue, too much joyousness and vigour to top there. I am quite certain that he felt delight and pleasure in that noble act, and that he took more satisfaction in it than in any other that he ever performed: "He thus quitted life, rejoicing that he had found a reason for dying." (Cicero, *Tusculans*, i, xxx)

So thoroughly do I believe this that I begin to wonder whether he would have wished the opportunity for this heroic achievement to be denied him. And were it not for the goodness which made him put the public interest before his own I could easily fall into the opinion that he was grateful to fortune for putting his virtue to so noble a proof, and helping_ that villain (Julius Caesar) to trample the ancient liberty of his country underfoot. As I read of Cato's action, I seem to see a strange rejoicing in his soul, and with it a feeling of extraordinary pleasure and manly delight as he considered the noble sublimity of his deed:

"More courageous after resolving to die."—Horace, *Odes*, x, xxxvii, 29.

not spurred on by any hope of glory, as the vulgar and weak judgements of some have supposed, for that is too mean a consideration to touch a heart so generous, so proud, and so unbending, but for the inherent beauty of the deed itself, which he, who controlled its springs, saw much more dearly in all its perfection than we can.

I am pleased by philosophy's decision that so brave an action would have been out of keeping with any other life but Cato's, and that his alone was fitted to end in this way. Therefore he rightly ordered his son and the senators who attended him to provide otherwise for themselves.

But Cato had been endowed by nature with an incredible strength of soul, which he had reinforced by his unremitting constancy; and he remained true to his fixed resolve that it was better to die than to look upon the face of a tyrant. (Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1, 3 1.)

Every man's death should correspond to his life. We do not change to die. I always interpret the death by the life; and if I am told of in apparently brave death joined to a feeble life, I hold that it is the product of some feeble cause in keeping with that life.

Must we say therefore that the simplicity of Cato's end, and the ease that he had acquired by strength of soul, should in any way detract from the splendour of his virtue? And what man whose brain is at all imbued with the true philosophy can be content to think of Socrates as merely free from fear and disturbances when prison fetters and condemnation fell to his lot! Who does not recognize in him not only courage and constancy - the former was natural to him - but also a certain new contentment, a delightful

gaiety, in his last words and actions? In that thrill of pleasure that he felt when scratching his leg after the fetters had been removed, does he not reveal a like joy and relief in his soul at being released from past discomforts and about to enter into the knowledge of things to come? May Cato forgive me if he please; his death is more tragic and more violent, but that of Socrates is in some way still more beautiful. 'May the Gods send me one like it!' said Aristippus to those who were lamenting it.

We see in the souls of these two men and their imitators - for I very much doubt whether they had equals - so perfect a habit of virtue that it has become their common complexion. It is no longer a painful virtue, nor one dictated by reason, for the maintenance of which the soul needs to brace itself; it is the very essence of the soul, it is its natural and habitual way. They have made it so by long practice of the precepts of philosophy, exercised upon a rich and fine nature. The wicked passions that spring up in us can find no entrance into them; the strength and firmness of their souls stifle and extinguish the lusts as soon as they begin to stir.

Now I think there can be no doubt that it is finer by a lofty and divine resolution to prevent the birth of temptations, and so to shape oneself to virtue that the very seeds of vice are rooted out, than to arrest their growth by main force and, after being surprised by the first onset of the passions, to arm and brace oneself to stay their advance and conquer them. Nor can one doubt that this second course is still finer than simply to be endowed with an easy and tractable nature which has an instinctive distaste for debauchery and vice. For this third and last way seems indeed to make a man innocent, but not virtuous; free from evil-doing, but not sufficiently apt to do well. Moreover, it is a condition so close to imperfection and weakness that I am uncertain how to draw the frontiers and distinguish them. The very words goodness and innocence have for this reason become in some sort terms of contempt. I can see that several virtues, among them chastity, sobriety, and temperance, may come to us from bodily defects. Firmness in the face of danger - if firmness is the proper word - contempt for death and patience in misfortunes, may arise in men - and often does - from an inability to judge events correctly and realize their actual nature. Thus failure of apprehension and stupidity sometimes disguise themselves as valorous actions; and I have often seen it happen that men have been praised for deeds that really deserved blame.

An Italian gentleman once said in my presence, to the discredit of his nation, that their subtlety and the brilliance of their imaginations were such that they foresaw the accidents and dangers which might befall them when they were still far off; that it must not appear strange, therefore, if in war they were often seen to provide for their safety even before they had clearly perceived the danger; that we French and the Spaniards, who were not so acute, would advance further, and had actually to see the danger with our eyes and feel it with our hands before it alarmed us, at which point we lost all control; but the Germans and the Swiss, who are coarser and heavier-witted, have hardly enough sense to change their minds even when the blows are raining on their bodies. This was, perhaps, only a jest. Yet it is very true that, in the business of war, raw soldiers often rush into dangers more recklessly than they do after once being scalded:

"Knowing how potent is a new-born pride in arms, and the hope of winning glory in the first battle."
(Virgil, Aeneid, xi, 154.)

That is why, in judging a particular action, we must take many circumstances into account, and consider the whole man who performed it, before we give it a name.

To say a word about myself; I have sometimes heard my friends credit my prudence with what was really the product of good fortune, and attribute to my courage and patience what was in fact achieved by my reason and judgement, thus endowing me with one quality instead of another, sometimes to my advantage and sometimes to my detriment. Meanwhile, I am so far from having attained that first and most perfect degree of excellence, in which virtue becomes a habit, that I have hardly given proof even of the second. I have not made any great efforts to curb the desires by which I have found myself assailed. My virtue is a virtue that could be more properly called a casual and fortuitous innocence. If I had been born with a more unruly temperament, I fear that I should have been in a most pitiable way. For I have never observed any great firmness in my soul that would be capable of resisting even the mildest of passions. I am

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unable to cherish quarrels and contentions in my breast; and so I can give myself no great thanks for happening to be free from several vices;

If my nature, otherwise good, is marred by a few slight faults, like the spots that you will wish away when scattered over a lovely body. (Horace. *Satires*, i, vi, 65.)

I owe it rather to my fortune than my reason. Fortune caused me to be born of a race famous for its integrity, and of an excellent father. I do not know whether he passed some part of his character on to me or whether family example and my good upbringing in childhood insensibly contributed to it, or whether I was, on the other hand born so,

Whether the Scales or the dread Scorpion. the most powerful influence over the hour of birth, or Capricorn, lord of the western wave, controls me.' (Horace, *Odes*, I, svii, 17)

But it so happens that for most vices I have an instinctive abhorrence. Antisthenes' reply to the men who asked him what was the best training seems to be rooted in this idea; he said it was to unlearn evil. I hold them in abhorrence, I say, from so natural and inborn a conviction that I still retain the same instinctive attitude to them that I imbibed at the breast. No circumstances have ever had the power to alter it, not even my own reasonings, which have in many ways departed from the common road, and so might easily have given me licence for actions which these natural inclinations make me hate. I will tell you something extraordinary, but I will tell it just the same: in many matters I find more order and restraint in my morals than in my opinions, and my appetites less depraved than my reason.

Aristippus put forward such bold arguments in favour of pleasure and riches, that he stirred up all philosophy to oppose him. But as for his morals, when the tyrant Dionysius offered him three pretty girls to choose from, he replied that he chose all three, since Paris had got into trouble for preferring one beauty to her two companions. After taking them home, however, he sent them back untouched. Once too, on a journey, when his servant complained at the weight of the money he was carrying, Aristippus ordered him to throw out so much as he found too heavy and leave it behind.

And Epicurus, who taught irreligion and luxury, was most scrupulous and laborious in his way of life. He wrote to a friend that he lived on nothing but coarse brown bread and water, and asked him to send a little cheese in case he might want to make a sumptuous meal. Can it perhaps be true that if we are to be absolutely good, it must be by an occult, natural, and universal quality, without rules, without reason, and without examples?

The excesses which I have happened to commit are not, thank God, of the worst kind. I have condemned them in myself, for my judgement has not been infected by them. On the contrary, it blames them more severely in me than in another. But that is all. For the rest, I put up insufficient resistance to them, and let myself too easily incline to the other side of the scales, except that I keep them under control and prevent their mingling with other vices. For vices generally cling together and become interlocked in anyone who is not on his guard. I have cut mine down, and forced them to be as single and as simple as I could.

"And I do not indulge my faults further." (Juvenal, VIII, 164)

Now as for the opinion of the Stoics, who say that the wise man acts, when he does act, with all the virtues together, although one may be more in evidence according to the nature of the action - and here a comparison with the human body might to some extent support them, for the action of anger cannot work unless all the humours assist it, even though anger may predominate - if they wish to draw a parallel deduction, that when the sinner sins he sins with all the vices together, I cannot believe them so simply; or else I do not understand them, for in effect I feel the contrary. These are ingenious, unsubstantial subtleties, with which philosophy sometimes amuses itself. I am addicted to some vices, but I avoid others as thoroughly as any saint could do.

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The Peripatetics, likewise, reject this indissoluble link and union; and Aristotle holds that a wise and just man may be intemperate and incontinent. Socrates admitted to those who recognized some inclination to vice in his face, that it was indeed his natural propensity, but that he had corrected it by discipline. And the philosopher Stilpo's intimates used to say that, though naturally given to wine and women, he had by efforts made himself most abstinent in respect to both. Such good as is in me I owe, on the contrary, to the chance of my birth. I owe it neither to law, nor to precept, nor to any other schooling. The innocence that is in me is a native innocence: I have little strength and no art.

Among other vices, I cruelly hate cruelty, both by nature and judgement, as the worst of all vices. But here my weakness extends so far that I cannot see a chicken's neck twisted without distress, or bear to hear the squealing of a hare in my hounds' jaws, though hunting is a very great pleasure to me.

Those who set out to combat sensual desires are fond of using the following argument to prove that they are wholly vicious and contrary to reason: that when pleasure is at its extreme height, it so masters us that reason can have no access. And they instance our experience of it in intercourse with women,

"When the body has a foretaste of pleasure. and man is about
to sow the field of women." (Lucretius, iv, 1106)

Here they think pleasure so transports us that our reason cannot perform its function, being benumbed by the ecstasy of pleasure. I know that it may be otherwise, and that one can sometimes, by force of will, successfully direct one's mind at that very instant to other thoughts. But one must prepare and brace it deliberately. I know that it is possible to curb the violence of this pleasure, and I know it by experience. For I have never found Venus so imperious a goddess as many who are chaster than I consider her to be. I do not, as the Queen of Navarre does in one of the tales in her *Heptamerom* - which is a pleasant book for its matter - consider it miraculous, or extremely difficult, for a man to pass whole nights with every opportunity and in all freedom beside a long-desired mistress, in fulfilment of a promise he has made to her to be satisfied with kisses and simple caresses.

I think that the example of the chase would be more appropriate. Though the pleasure is less, there is more excitement and surprise, and so our reason, taken unawares, has no time to prepare and brace itself for the encounter, when after a long quest, the quarry suddenly starts up, appearing, perhaps, in the place where we least expected it. This shock and the violence of the hue and cry strike us so hard that it would be difficult for anyone who loves this kind of sport to tam his thoughts elsewhere at that moment. And the poets make Diana victorious over Cupid's torch and arrows:

"Who does not forget among these delights all the pangs
that love brings with it?" (Horace, *Epodes*, 11, 37.)

To return to my subject, I am most tenderly sympathetic towards the afflictions of others, and would readily weep for company if I were able to weep on any occasion. There is nothing, that moves me to tears except tears, and not only real ones but tears of any sort, feigned or painted. I hardly pity the dead, I rather envy them; but I feel great pity for the dying. I am not so shocked by savages who roast and eat the bodies of their dead as by those who torture and persecute the living. I cannot even look on legal executions, however just they may be, with a steadfast eye. Someone who had occasion to testify to the clemency of Julius Caesar observed: 'He was mild in his vengeance. Having forced some pirates to surrender who had previously captured him and held him to ransom, since he had threatened them with the cross, he condemned them to be crucified. But he lied them strangled first. His secretary, Philemon, who had tried to poison him, he punished no more harshly than by a simple death.' Without naming this Latin author (Suctonius, *Life of Julius Caesar*) who dares to advance as evidence of clemency a mere putting to death of those by whom one has been wronged, it is easy to guess that he was affected by the horrible and villainous examples of cruelty practised by the Roman tyrants.

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For my part, even in judicial matters, anything that goes beyond a plain execution seems to me pure cruelty, and especially in us who ought to take care that souls should be sent to heaven in a state of grace; which cannot be, if they have been shaken and driven to despair by insufferable tortures.

Not long ago, a soldier, having observed from the tower in which he was imprisoned some carpenters busy erecting a scaffold and people gathering in the market-place, concluded that the preparations were for him. In his despair, having nothing else to kill himself with, he picked up an old rusty cart-nail which chance had put in his way, and gave himself two serious wounds in the throat. Then seeing that this had not been enough to despatch him, he soon afterwards dealt himself another wound in the belly, from which he became insensible. In this condition he was found by the first of his gaolers who came in to see him. They brought him round and, to fill the time until he expired~ they quickly read him his sentence, which was that he was to be beheaded. This delighted him immeasurably, and he consented to take a draught of wine which he had previously refused. Then after thanking the judges for the unexpected leniency of their sentence, he said that his resolve to kill himself was due to the dread of some more cruel punishment, which had been increased by the sight of the preparations. He had taken his life in this way to avoid a more unbearable fate.

I should advise that such examples of severity, the purpose of which is to keep people in awe, be practised on the dead bodies of criminals. For to see them refused burial, to see them boiled and quartered, would affect the common herd almost as much as do the pains inflicted on the living; although in reality all this amounts to little or nothing, since God says: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." (Luke, XII 4) But the poets particularly dwell upon the horror of this picture as something worse than death:

"Alas, that remains of a half-burnt king, with the bones bare, should be dragged along the ground, besmeared with foul dirt." (Ennius, quoted by Cicero, *Tusculans*, i, xlv.)

One day in Rome I happened to be present at the moment when they were executing Catena, a notorious robber. There was no excitement among the spectators at the strangling. But when it came to quartering his body, every single stroke that the executioner made was greeted by the people with doleful cries and exclamations, as if everyone had lent his own sense of feeling to the carrion.

These inhuman excesses should be exercised against the skin, not the flesh. Thus Artaxerxes, in a somewhat similar case, mitigated the harshness of Persia's ancient laws, by ordaining that nobles who had failed in their duties should not be given the customary scourging; but should be stripped and have their garments scourged in their stead; and that, whereas the custom was that they should have their hair torn out, they should now merely be deprived of their tall headdresses. The Egyptians, who were so devout, thought that they sufficiently satisfied divine justice by sacrificing effigies and representations of pigs: a bold idea, to try with shadowy imitations to make payment to God, the essential substance

I live in an epoch when, owing to the licence of our civil wars, we abound in incredible examples of this vice: there is nothing to be found in ancient histories more extreme than what we witness every day. But this has by no means reconciled me to it. I could hardly persuade myself, before I had actual evidence, that there exist any souls so unnatural as to commit murder for the mere pleasure of doing so; as to hack and chop off men's limbs, as to sharpen their wits for the invention of unusual tortures and new forms of death; and all this without enmity or gain, but merely for the enjoyment of the pleasing spectacle afforded by the pitiful gestures and motions, the lamentable groans and cries, of a man dying in anguish. This is the extreme limit to which cruelty can attain, "that one man should kill another, not in anger or in fear, but solely to enjoy the sight." Seneca, *Letters*, xc.

For my part, I have never been able to watch without distress even the pursuit and slaughter of an innocent animal, which has no defence and has done us no harm. And when, as will commonly happen, a weak and panting stag is reduced to surrender, and casts itself with tears in its eyes on the mercy of us, its pursuers,

"Bloodstained and groaning, like one imploring mercy." (Virgil, *Aeneid*, vii, 50)

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this has always seemed to me a most unpleasant sight.

I hardly ever capture an animal alive that I do not set it free in the fields. Pythagoras would buy them from fishermen and fowlers, to do the same:

"I think the blood of animals was the first to stain our weapons." (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xv, 106.)

Natures that are bloodthirsty towards animals show a native propensity towards cruelty. At Rome after the people had inured themselves to watching the slaughter of animals, they went on to men and gladiators. Nature herself, I fear, implants in men some instinct towards inhumanity. No one enjoys the sight of animals playing together and fondling one another, but the spectacle ' of them rending and dismembering one another is a universal entertainment.

And let no one mock me for this sympathy of mine, since theology itself commands us to treat them with some kindness. Considering that one and the same Master has lodged us in this place to serve Him, and that they as well as we are of His family, it is justified in enjoining us to show them some regard and affection. Pythagoras borrowed the doctrine of metempsychosis from the Egyptians, but it has since been accepted by many nations, and notably by our Druids:

Souls are exempt from death; always when they have left their first body, they go to new homes, am received them and there dwell.' Ovid, *MeAawrpomr*, xv, i IS.

The religion of our ancient Gauls maintained that souls, being eternal, never cease to move and change their lodging from one body to another; and they mixed with this conception some ideas about divine justice. For according to a soul's conduct when it was in Alexander, God, they said, assigned it another body to inhabit, more or less disagreeable, and suitable to its condition:

"He throws them into prison in the bodies of dumb beasts, the cruel into bears, robbers into wolves, and the cunning into foxes. And when after many years, they have passed through a thousand forms, they are purged by the river Lethe, and at last return to their primordial human forms." (Claudian, *Against Rufinus*, 11, 482)

If it had been courageous, it was lodged in the body of a lion, if licentious in a hog's, if cowardly in a stag's or a hare's, if crafty in a fox's, and so on, until, purified by this punishment, it took on the body of some other man.

'I myself, as I remember, in the days of the Trojan war, was Euphorbus, son of Panthous.' (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xv, 160)

As for this relationship between us and the beasts, I do not set much store by it; - nor by the fact that many nations, and notably some of the most ancient and noble, not only admitted beasts as their friends and companions, but ranked them far above themselves, regarding them sometimes as familiars and favourites of their gods, and holding them in superhuman respect and reverence. And others recognized no other god or divinity but them: "Beasts were treated as sacred by the barbarians, because of the benefits they bestowed." (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, i, xxxvi.)

This land adores the crocodile, that trembles before a snake-gorged ibis. Here gleams the golden image of a sacred long-tailed monkey: here a river-fish, there a dog, are gods for a whole city. (Juvenal, xv. 2)

And even Plutarch's interpretation of this error, which is very well reasoned, still does them honour. For he says that it was not the cat or the ox, for example, that the Egyptians adored, but that in those beasts they worshipped some image of the divine attributes; in the latter patience and usefulness; and in the

former activity, or an impatience at being confined (like that of our neighbours the Burgundians, and the rest of the Germans), that they thought of the cat as a symbol of liberty, which they loved and worshipped above every other divine attribute; and so on for the rest.

But when, among the most moderate opinions, I meet with arguments that set out to prove how closely we resemble the animals, how largely they share in our greatest privileges, and how feasible are the comparisons between us and them, I certainly forswear a great deal of our presumption, and willingly resign that imaginary sovereignty over other creatures which we are supposed to have.

But if all this were untrue, yet there is a certain consideration, and a general duty of humanity, that binds us not only to the animals, which have life and feeling, but even to the trees and plants. We owe justice to men, and kindness and benevolence to all other creatures who may be susceptible of it. There is some intercourse between them and us, and some mutual obligation. I am not ashamed to admit to so childishly tender a nature that I cannot easily refuse my dog when he offers to play with me or asks me to play with him at an inopportune moment.

The Turks have alms-houses and hospitals for animals. The Romans made the feeding of geese a public charge, since it was their vigilance that had saved the Capitol. The Athenians decreed that the mules, great and small, which had served in the building of the temple called Hecatompedon should be set at liberty and allowed to graze wherever they pleased, without hindrance. The Agrigentines had the common custom of solemnly burying animals that they had loved, such as horses of particular excellence, dogs and domestic birds, or even birds that had been kept for their children's pleasure. And the magnificence which was characteristic of them in other things was also singularly apparent in the number and costliness of the monuments which they erected to that end, and which survived in all their splendour for many centuries.

The Egyptians buried wolves, bears, crocodiles, dogs, and cats in holy places, embalming their bodies and weeping mourning at their death. Cimon gave burial with honour to the mares with which he had three times won the prize for the race at the Olympic games. Xanthippus of old had his dog buried on a headland of that seacoast which has been called after it ever since. And Plutarch tells us that it was a matter of conscience with him not to sell and send to the slaughter-house, for some trifling sum, an ox that had given him long service.