

M. I am glad it has had that effect. But it is now time to consult our health. To-morrow, and all the time we continue in this Tusculan villa, let us consider this subject; and especially those portions of it which may ease our pain, alleviate our fears, and lessen our desires, which is the greatest advantage we can reap from the whole of philosophy.

BOOK II.

ON BEARING PAIN.

I. **NEOPTOLEMUS**, in Ennius, indeed, says that the study of philosophy was expedient for him; but that it required limiting to a few subjects, for that to give himself up entirely to it was what he did not approve of. And for my part, Brutus, I am perfectly persuaded that it is expedient for me to philosophize; for what can I do better, especially as I have no regular occupation? But I am not for limiting my philosophy to a few subjects, as he does; for philosophy is a matter in which it is difficult to acquire a little knowledge without acquainting yourself with many, or all its branches, nor can you well take a few subjects without selecting them out of a great number; nor can any one, who has acquired the knowledge of a few points, avoid endeavoring with the same eagerness to understand more. But still, in a busy life, and in one mainly occupied with military matters, such as that of Neoptolemus was at that time, even that limited degree of acquaintance with philosophy may be of great use, and may yield fruit, not perhaps so plentiful as a thorough knowledge of the whole of philosophy, but yet such as in some degree may at times deliver us from the dominion of our desires, our sorrows, and our fears; just as the effect of that discussion which we lately maintained in my Tusculan villa seemed to be that a great contempt of death was engendered, which contempt is of no small efficacy towards delivering the mind from fear; for whoever dreads what cannot be avoided can by no means live with a quiet and tranquil mind. But he who is under no

fear of death, not only because it is a thing absolutely inevitable, but also because he is persuaded that death itself hath nothing terrible in it, provides himself with a very great resource towards a happy life. However, I am not ignorant that many will argue strenuously against us; and, indeed, that is a thing which can never be avoided, except by abstaining from writing at all. For if my Oration, which were addressed to the judgment and approbation of the people (for that is a popular art, and the object of oratory is popular applause), have been criticised by some people who are inclined to withhold their praise from everything but what they are persuaded they can attain to themselves, and who limit their ideas of good speaking by the hopes which they conceive of what they themselves may attain to, and who declare, when they are overwhelmed with a flow of words and sentences, that they prefer the utmost poverty of thought and expression to that plenty and copiousness (from which arose the Attic kind of oratory, which they who professed it were strangers to, though they have now been some time silenced, and laughed out of the very courts of justice), what may I not expect, when at present I cannot have the least countenance from the people by whom I used to be upheld before? For philosophy is satisfied with a few judges, and of her own accord industriously avoids the multitude, who are jealous of it, and utterly displeased with it; so that, should any one undertake to cry down the whole of it, he would have the people on his side; while, if he should attack that school which I particularly profess, he would have great assistance from those of the other philosophers.

II. But I have answered the detractors of philosophy in general, in my Hortensius. And what I had to say in favor of the Academics, is, I think, explained with sufficient accuracy in my four books of the Academic Question.

But yet I am so far from desiring that no one should write against me, that it is what I most earnestly wish; for philosophy would never have been in such esteem in Greece itself, if it had not been for the strength which it acquired from the contentions and disputations of the

most learned men; and therefore I recommend all men who have abilities to follow my advice to snatch this art also from declining Greece, and to transport it to this city; as our ancestors by their study and industry have imported all their other arts which were worth having. Thus the praise of oratory, raised from a low degree, is arrived at such perfection that it must now decline, and, as is the nature of all things, verge to its dissolution in a very short time. Let philosophy, then, derive its birth in Latin language from this time, and let us lend it our assistance, and bear patiently to be contradicted and refuted; and although those men may dislike such treatment who are bound and devoted to certain predetermined opinions, and are under such obligations to maintain them that they are forced, for the sake of consistency, to adhere to them even though they do not themselves wholly approve of them; we, on the other hand, who pursue only probabilities, and who cannot go beyond that which seems really likely, can confute others without obstinacy, and are prepared to be confuted ourselves without resentment. Besides, if these studies are ever brought home to us, we shall not want even Greek libraries, in which there is an infinite number of books, by reason of the multitude of authors among them; for it is a common practice with many to repeat the same things which have been written by others, which serves no purpose but to stuff their shelves; and this will be our case, too, if many apply themselves to this study.

III. But let us excite those, if possible, who have had a liberal education, and are masters of an elegant style, and who philosophize with reason and method.

For there is a certain class of them who would willingly be called philosophers, whose books in our language are said to be numerous, and which I do not despise; for, indeed, I never read them: but still, because the authors themselves declare that they write without any regularity, or method, or elegance, or ornament, I do not care to read what must be so void of entertainment. There is no one in the least acquainted with literature who does not know the style and sentiments of that school; wherefore, since they are at no pains to express themselves well, I

do not see why they should be read by anybody except by one another. Let them read them, if they please, who are of the same opinions; for in the same manner as all men read Plato and the other Socratics, with those who sprung from them, even those who do not agree with their opinions, or are very indifferent about them; but scarcely any one except their own disciples take Epicurus or Metrodorus into their hands; so they alone read these Latin books who think that the arguments contained in them are sound. But, in my opinion, whatever is published should be recommended to the reading of every man of learning; and though we may not succeed in this ourselves, yet nevertheless we must be sensible that this ought to be the aim of every writer. And on this account I have always been pleased with the custom of the Peripatetics and Academics, of disputing on both sides of the question; not solely from its being the only method of discovering what is probable on every subject, but also because it affords the greatest scope for practising eloquence; a method that Aristotle first made use of, and afterward all the Aristotelians; and in our own memory Philo, whom we have often heard, appointed one time to treat of the precepts of the rhetoricians, and another for philosophical discussion, to which custom I was brought to conform by my friends at my Tusculum; and accordingly our leisure time was spent in this manner. And therefore, as yesterday before noon we applied ourselves to speaking, and in the afternoon went down into the Academy, the discussions which were held there I have acquainted you with, not in the manner of a narration, but in almost the very same words which were employed in the debate.

IV. The discourse, then, was introduced in this manner while we were walking, and it was commenced by some such an opening as this:

A. It is not to be expressed how much I was delighted, or rather edified, by your discourse of yesterday. For although I am conscious to myself that I have never been too fond of life, yet at times, when I have considered that there would be an end to this life, and that I must some time or other part with all its good things, a certain dread

and uneasiness used to intrude itself on my thoughts; but now, believe me, I am so freed from that kind of uneasiness that there is nothing that I think less worth any regard.

M. I am not at all surprised at that, for it is the effect of philosophy, which is the medicine of our souls; it banishes all groundless apprehensions, frees us from desires, and drives away fears: but it has not the same influence over all men; it is of very great influence when it falls in with a disposition well adapted to it. For not only does Fortune, as the old proverb says, assist the bold, but reason does so in a still greater degree; for it, by certain precepts, as it were, strengthens even courage itself. You were born naturally great and soaring, and with a contempt for all things which pertain to man alone; therefore a discourse against death took easy possession of a brave soul. But do you imagine that these same arguments have any force with those very persons who have invented, and canvassed, and published them, excepting indeed some very few particular persons? For how few philosophers will you meet with whose life and manners are conformable to the dictates of reason! who look on their profession, not as a means of displaying their learning, but as a rule for their own practice! who follow their own precepts, and comply with their own decrees! You may see some of such levity and such vanity, that it would have been better for them to have been ignorant; some covetous of money, some others eager for glory, many slaves to their lusts; so that their discourses and their actions are most strangely at variance; than which nothing in my opinion can be more unbecoming: for just as if one who professed to teach grammar should speak with impropriety, or a master of music sing out of tune, such conduct has the worst appearance in these men, because they blunder in the very particular with which they profess that they are well acquainted. So a philosopher who errs in the conduct of his life is the more infamous because he is erring in the very thing which he pretends to teach, and, while he lays down rules to regulate life by, is irregular in his own life.

V. A. Should this be the case, is it not to be feared that

you are dressing up philosophy in false colors? For what stronger argument can there be that it is of little use than that some very profound philosophers live in a discreditable manner?

M. That, indeed, is no argument at all, for as all the fields which are cultivated are not fruitful (and this sentiment of Accius is false, and asserted without any foundation,

The ground you sow on is of small avail;
To yield a crop good seed can never fail),

it is not every mind which has been properly cultivated that produces fruit; and, to go on with the comparison, as a field, although it may be naturally fruitful, cannot produce a crop without dressing, so neither can the mind without education; such is the weakness of either without the other. Whereas philosophy is the culture of the mind: this it is which plucks up vices by the roots; prepares the mind for the receiving of seeds; commits them to it, or, as I may say, sows them, in the hope that, when come to maturity, they may produce a plentiful harvest. Let us proceed, then, as we began. Say, if you please, what shall be the subject of our disputation.

A. I look on pain to be the greatest of all evils.

M. What, even greater than infamy?

A. I dare not indeed assert that; and I blush to think I am so soon driven from my ground.

M. You would have had greater reason for blushing had you persevered in it; for what is so unbecoming—what can appear worse to you, than disgrace, wickedness, immorality? To avoid which, what pain is there which we ought not (I will not say to avoid shirking, but even) of our own accord to encounter, and undergo, and even to court?

A. I am entirely of that opinion; but, notwithstanding that pain is not the greatest evil, yet surely it is an evil.

M. Do you perceive, then, how much of the terror of pain you have given up on a small hint?

A. I see that plainly; but I should be glad to give up more of it.

M. I will endeavor to make you do so; but it is a great

undertaking, and I must have a disposition on your part which is not inclined to offer any obstacles.

A. You shall have such: for as I behaved yesterday, so now I will follow reason wherever she leads.

VI. *M.* First, then, I will speak of the weakness of many philosophers, and those, too, of various sects; the head of whom, both in authority and antiquity, was Aristippus, the pupil of Socrates, who hesitated not to say that pain was the greatest of all evils. And after him Epicurus easily gave in to this effeminate and enervated doctrine. After him Hieronymus the Rhodian said, that to be without pain was the chief good, so great an evil did pain appear to him to be. The rest, with the exceptions of Zeno, Aristo, Pyrrho, were pretty much of the same opinion that you were of just now — that it was indeed an evil, but that there were many worse. When, then, nature herself, and a certain generous feeling of virtue, at once prevents you from persisting in the assertion that pain is the chief evil, and when you were driven from such an opinion when disgrace was contrasted with pain, shall philosophy, the preceptress of life, cling to this idea for so many ages? What duty of life, what praise, what reputation, would be of such consequence that a man should be desirous of gaining it at the expense of submitting to bodily pain, when he has persuaded himself that pain is the greatest evil? On the other side, what disgrace, what ignominy, would he not submit to that he might avoid pain, when persuaded that it was the greatest of evils? Besides, what person, if it be only true that pain is the greatest of evils, is not miserable, not only when he actually feels pain, but also whenever he is aware that it may befall him. And who is there whom pain may not befall? So that it is clear that there is absolutely no one who can possibly be happy. Metrodorus, indeed, thinks that man perfectly happy whose body is free from all disorders, and who has an assurance that it will always continue so; but who is there who can be assured of that?

VII. But Epicurus, indeed, says such things that it should seem that his design was only to make people laugh; for he affirms somewhere that if a wise man were to be burned or put to the torture — you expect, perhaps,

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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