

## OF FORTUNE.

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MORTALS' AFFAIRS FORTUNE NOT COUNSEL RULES.\*

1. AND does not justice rule the affairs of mortals, — nor impartiality, nor moderation, nor decorum? But was it of Fortune and long of Fortune that Aristides remained obstinate in his poverty, although he could have made himself master of much wealth? And that Scipio, when he had taken Carthage, neither received nor so much as saw any part of the booty? Was it of Fortune and long of Fortune that Philocrates, having received a sum of gold of King Philip, laid it out in whores and fish? And that Lasthenes and Euthykrates, by measuring their happiness by their bellies and the most abject of follies, lost Olynthus? Was it of Fortune that Alexander son of Philip refrained from the captive women himself, and punished those that offered them any indignity; while Alexander, son of Priam, long of an evil Daemon and Fortune, first vitiated his host's wife and then took her away with him, and filled both the continents with war and calamities? And if such things as these can come by Fortune, what hinders but that we may as well plead that cats, goats, and monkeys are constrained by Fortune to be ravenous, lustful, and ridiculous?

2. But if there be such things to be found as moderation, justice, and fortitude, how can it stand with reason

\* From Chaeremon, Frag. 2.

there should not be such a thing as wisdom also? And if there be wisdom, how can it be but there must be good counsel? For moderation is (as they are used to say) a certain sort of wisdom; and justice cannot subsist without wisdom. Certainly we call that good counsel and wisdom that render us manful in pleasures continence and moderation; in dangers and hardships, endurance and resolution; and in communities and public business, equality and justice. And therefore if we will needs have it that the effects of conduct belong to Fortune, let then both the effects of justice and moderation belong to Fortune also. Nay, by Jove, let stealing be ascribed to Fortune too, and cutting of purses, and a lustful lewd life; and let us quit our reasoning quite, and turn ourselves loose to Fortune, to be carried and driven, like filth and dust, before an impetuous wind. If there be no such thing as conduct, it must of necessity follow, that there should be no such thing as advising about our affairs, nor any consultation or enquiry about utility; and that Sophocles did talk idly when he said:

Whate'er is sought,  
It may be caught;  
But what we shun  
Will from us run ;\*

and when elsewhere he made this distribution of things:

I learn what's to be taught,  
I seek what's to be sought;  
I beg the rest of Heaven.

For what is to be sought or what is to be learned by mortals, if all things go by Fortune? And what senate of a republic is not overthrown, or what council of a prince is not dissolved, if all things are subject to Fortune?— which we use to upbraid with blindness because we blindly fall into it. And indeed how can we

\* Soph. Oed. Tyr. 110.

otherwise choose, when we first pluck good counsel like our eyes out of our heads, and then take us a blind guide of our lives ?

3. Imagine that now some one of us should say,

Seers' affairs Fortune not eyesight rules,

nor yet the eyes, which Plato calls light-bearers ; and again,

Hearers' affairs are by blind Fortune ruled,

and not by a certain power receptive of the strokes of the air, conveyed to it through the organ of the ear and brain. It would beseem us then, doubtless, to pay a due respect to our sense. But our sight, hearing, and smelling, with the other parts of our bodies' faculties, were bestowed upon us by nature to minister unto good conduct and discretion. And "It is the mind that sees, and the mind that hears ; the rest are deaf and blind." And as, were there not a sun, we might, for all the other stars, pass our days in darkness (as Heraclitus says) ; so had man neither mind nor reason, his life would be, for all his senses, nothing better than that of brutes. But it is by neither Fortune nor chance that we exceed them and bear sway over them ; but Prometheus (that is, reason) is the cause,

Which gives both horse and ass and oxen strong,  
To carry us and ease our labor long,\*

as Aeschylus speaks. For the greater part of brutes are much happier than we, as to the fortune and form of their constitution ; for some of them are armed with horns, some with teeth, and some with stings ; and the urchin's back, (saith Empedocles) bristles with prickly thorns ; others again are shod, others are clad with scales, others with shaggy hair, and others with hard claws and hoofs ; but man alone (as Plato speaks) was left by Nature naked, unarmed, unshod, and uncovered. But all those

\* From the Prometheus Released of Aeschylus, Frag. 188.

ills she sweetened with one gift, — reason, care, and forecast.

Small is the strength of poor frail man ;  
 Yet by his shifting wit he can  
 Enslave the arts and properties  
 Of all on land, in sea and skies.

The lightest and swiftest things are horses ; but they run for man. A dog is a fierce and an angry animal ; but it guards man. Fish is the sweetest thing, and swine the fattest ; but they are man's nourishment and cheer. What is bigger than an elephant ? But this also is become man's plaything, and a spectacle at public solemnities, and it learns to skip, dance, and kneel. Such things as these are not introduced in vain, but that we may learn by them whither knowledge advances man, and above what things it sets him, and how he comes to be master, and exceed all other things.

For we nor boxers nor good wrestlers are,  
 Nor yet good runners.\*

Yea, in all these we are far more unhappy than the brutes. But by our experience, memory, wit, and dexterity (as Anaxagoras speaks) we make use of what is theirs ; we press out their honey, we milk them, we catch them, and drive them up and down as we please. So that in all this there is nothing that depends on Fortune, but all on counsel and forecast.

4. Moreover, the affairs of carpenters are affairs of mortals, and so are those of copper-founders, builders, and statuaries ; amongst whom yet we can see nothing brought to perfection by chance or at random. For that there falls in but little of Fortune to an expert artist, whether founder or builder, but that the most and greatest part of their workmanship is performed by mere art, hath been thus insinuated by a certain poet :

Go forth into the street, ye craftsmen all,  
 Who on grim-visaged Ergana do call,  
 That's stuck with sacred baskets all around.

\* Odyss. VIII. 246.

For the trades have Ergana and Minerva for their patroness, and not Fortune. It is indeed reported of one that, as he was drawing a horse and had hit right in all the rest, both shapes and colors, but was not well satisfied with the draught he had made of a puff of froth that was tempered by the bit and wrought out with the horse's breathing, he therefore had often wiped it off; but that at length he in a great fume struck his sponge full of colors, as it was, against the board, and that this, as it lighted, to admiration made a most lively impress, and so filled up what was defective in the piece. This is the only artificial work of Fortune that history mentions. Artists everywhere make use of rules, lines, measures, and arithmetical proportions, that their works may nowhere have in them any thing that is casual or fortuitous. And the truth is, arts are styled a sort of petty wisdoms, though they might be much better called certain sheddings or flings of it sprinkled upon the several needful services of human life; as is obscurely riddled to us in the fire feigned to have been first divided by Prometheus, and then scattered up and down the world. For just so, certain little particles and fragments of wisdom as it were crumbled and broken small fell into ranks and methods.

5. It seems therefore very strange how it came to pass that arts should stand in no need of Fortune to compass their proper end, but that which is the greatest and most complete of all arts, and which is the very sum of man's worth and commendation, should prove to be nothing at all. But there is a kind of good counsel in stretching and slackening of strings, which they call the art of music; and in dressing of meats, which we call cookery; and in washing of clothes, which we call the art of fulling; and we teach our children how to put on their shoes and clothes, and to take their meat in their right hand, and hold their bread in their left; as being sensible that even such com-

mon things as these do not come by Fortune, but require attention and heed. But do the greatest things and the most important to a happy state require no wisdom, and have no share in rational proceeding and forecast? Yet no man ever wetted clay and then left it, as if there would be bricks by chance and Fortune; nor, having provided wool and leather, sat him down and prayed to Fortune that they might be made clothes and shoes for him; nor can any man, when he hath amassed together much gold and silver, and furnished himself with a multitude of slaves and attendants, and enclosed himself in a great palace with many gates, and set out costly couches and tables, fancy to himself that, if he have not wisdom with them, these things will be his happiness, and an undisturbed, blissful, and unchangeable life. One asked Iphicrates the general, by way of taunt, what he was? For he was neither spearman nor archer, nor yet bore light armor. I am (replied he) one that commands and uses all these.

6. In like manner wisdom is itself neither gold nor silver nor fame nor wealth nor health nor strength nor beauty. What then is it? It is what can use all these with decorum, and by means of which every one of these is made pleasant, commendable, and useful, and without which they become useless, unprofitable, and prejudicial, and the burthen and shame of their possessors. Hesiod's Prometheus therefore gives very good advice to Epimetheus:

Brother, be sure you never take  
A boon from Jove, but giv't him back, \*

meaning things of Fortune and external. For, as if he had bid him not to play on a flute if ignorant of music, nor to read a book if he knew not his letters, nor to ride if he understood not a horse, so it would be if he advised him not to govern if a fool, nor to be a rich man if a miser,

\* Hesiod, Works and Days, 86.

and not to marry if apt to be ruled by a woman. For success above desert is to fools an occasion of misthinking, as Demosthenes\* saith; yes, and good fortune above desert is to the unwise an occasion of misdoing.

Olynth. I. p. 16, 1.

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