

SELF.

Οὐ γὰρ φιλεῖς σεαυτόν. ἐπεὶ τοι καὶ τὴν φύσιν αὐ σου, καὶ τὸ βούλημα ταύτης ἐφίλεις. ["For thou lovest not thyself, since if thou didst, thou wouldst love thy nature and her will."—*Mar. Aurel., Med.*, Bk. V., § 1.]

How unaccountable it is to live so as always to reprove one's self for the same things? How senseless and unreasonable always to want to be set right? How ridiculous is it to lose* the way that lies before one, and ever and anon, as if in a strange world, to ask "where am I?"

Resolve, therefore, never to forget thyself. How long is it that thou wilt continue thus to act two different parts and be two different persons? Call to mind what thou art; what thou hast resolved and entered upon; recollect thyself wholly within thyself. Be one entire and self-same man; and wander not abroad, so as to lose sight of the end; but keep that constantly in view both in the least concerns and in the greatest; in diversions, in serious affairs; in company, and alone; in the day time and at night. Let neither ceremony, nor entertainment in discourse, nor pleasantries, nor mirth amongst friends, nor anything of this kind, be the occasion of quitting that remembrance, or of losing that fixed attention.—But what will my carriage be in company? How shall I appear in conversation?—Dangerous consequences! But of what kind?—lest I be called ill-bred; a good companion. But is it not better I should deserve the name of friend? Is it not a better thing to be just, to have integrity, faith, innocency, to be a man, and † a lover of men? And on what this depends thou well knowest.

But if I suffer not myself to be at all transported, how shall I act with forwardness and concern in the public or for a friend?—If it be a part not consistent with the preservation of a character, it is never to be undertaken. If it be consistent, but

* cf. *Mar. Aurel.*, Bk. IV., § 46. † cf. Natural Affection.

with another person and not with thee, because thou hast less strength, why undertake a part beyond thy reach? For, first, thou art sure to act ungracefully, nauseously, affectedly, and so as to spoil what thou undertakest; and, in the next place, this is certain, that if thou forgettest *thyself*, thou wilt forget thy duty, and instead of acting for virtue, act for something else very different, as following thy own passion and irrational bent.

But this continual application is tedious and burdensome. Must there be no moments of rest, no indulgence, nor any relaxation?—It is here thou mayst truly cry out, οὐ γὰρ φιλεῖς σεαυτόν [thou lovest not thyself.—*Mar. Aurel., Med.*, Bk. V., § 1]. It is here that thou mayst justly say, thou knowest not how to love thyself, or thy own good. What else is there in the world that can give content but this? What else can save from misery? And to neglect this, to be faint, to be remiss, or to give over here: what else is it but to be cruel towards thyself? See how it is with others who place their interest and good in other things. See the covetous, the vain, the ambitious, the effeminate: which of these is thus negligent and forgetful of himself? When is it that the one is weary of thinking of his wealth, the other of his credit and esteem, the other of his power and grandeur, the other of his person and what belongs to it? Take any of these in any circumstances, in any company, engaged in any affairs. It is still easy to observe that they are not so taken out of themselves, but that they still look towards their end. They join with others, they interest themselves and enter into other concerns, but still there is a *reserve*. Another thing is at the bottom, and the respect is elsewhere. Their manners show it and their actions, gesture, and tone of voice—even where they most desire to hide it.—Nothing is more apparent to one who narrowly observes. How true and just a pattern is this, and how deserving of imitation, in another way. Shall those objects, such as they are, be able thus to allure and attract, and shall not virtue be as prevalent? Are sociable actions and a life according to nature less to be esteemed? Or are they things less beautiful in themselves? Shall he that is a virtuoso, a sculptor, a painter, a musician, an architect, or any one that truly loves his art or science, be wholly taken up with this, be wholly *this* and nothing else; and shall virtue alone be

Would not a man be by himself a month, and go to bed before seven a clock, rather than mix with fox-hunters, who having all day long tried in vain to break their necks, join at night in a second attempt upon their lives by drinking, and to express their mirth, are louder in senseless sounds within doors, than their barking and less troublesome companions are only without? I have no great value for a man who would not rather tire himself with walking; or if he was shut up scatter pins about the room in order to pick them up again, than keep company for six hours with half a score common sailors the day their ship was paid off.

I will grant, nevertheless, that the greatest part of mankind, rather than be alone any considerable time, would submit to the things I named: but I cannot see, why this love of company, this strong desire after society, should be construed so much in our favour, and alleged as a mark of some intrinsic worth in man, not to be found in other animals. For to prove from it the goodness of our nature, and a generous love in man, extended beyond himself on the rest of his species, by virtue of which he was a sociable creature, this eagerness after company and aversion of being alone, ought to have been most conspicuous, and most violent in the best of their kind; the men of the greatest genius, parts and accomplishments, and those who are the least subject to vice; the contrary of which is true. The weakest minds, who can the least govern their passions, guilty consciences that abhor reflexion, and the worthless, who are incapable of producing any thing of their own that is useful, are the greatest enemies to solitude, and will take up with any company rather than be without; whereas, the men of sense and of knowledge, that can think and contemplate on things, and such as are but little disturbed by their passions, can bear to be by themselves the longest without reluctancy; and, to avoid noise, folly, and impertinence, will run away from twenty companies; and, rather than meet with any thing disagreeable to their good taste, will prefer their closet or a garden, nay, a common or a desert to the society of some men.

[...]But the plainest demonstration that in all clubs and societies of conversable people, every body has the greatest consideration for himself, is, that the disinterested, who rather over-pays than wrangles; the good humoured, that is never [218]waspish nor soon offended; the easy and indolent, that hates disputes and never talks for triumph, is every where the darling of the company: whereas, the man of sense and knowledge, that will not be imposed upon or talked out of his reason; the man of genius and spirit, that can say sharp and witty things, though he never lashes but what deserves it; the man of honour, who neither gives nor takes an affront, may be esteemed, but is seldom so well beloved as a weaker man less accomplished.

[...] What I have endeavoured hitherto, has been to prove, that the *pulchrum et honestum*, excellency and real worth of things are most commonly precarious and alterable as modes and customs vary; that consequently the inferences drawn from their certainty are insignificant, and that the generous notions concerning the natural goodness of man are hurtful, as they tend to mislead, and are merely chimerical: the truth of this latter I have illustrated by the most obvious examples in history. I have spoke of our love of company and aversion to solitude, examined thoroughly the various motives of them, and made it appear that they all centre in self-love. I intend now to investigate into the nature of society, and diving into the very rise of it, make it evident, that not the good and amiable, but the bad and hateful qualities of man, his imperfections and the want of excellencies, which other creatures are endued with, are the first causes that made man sociable beyond other animals, the moment after he lost Paradise; and that if he had remained in his primitive innocence, and continued to enjoy the blessings that attended it, there is no shadow of probability that he ever would have become that sociable creature he is now.

ined how they can be experienced outside society; particular instances of these are the pleasures of praise and honor. God gave us mind and sense, by whose help we see something beautiful, fitting, and honorable in intentions, words, and actions, whether our own or those of others; hence we bestow praise and favor upon those who have deserved well of the human race, and such is the character of all men that scarcely anything gives a man more happiness than to be praised and honored even though he expects no other profit from it. And by some wonderful provision of nature it happens that, though there is no small joy in the mere investigation of truth, yet that joy is immensely increased when there is another to whom one may communicate one's findings. And here I call as particularly suitable witnesses those happy souls, those lofty hearts, who

have brought the distant stars before our eyes and
subjected the upper regions of the sky to their understanding.³³

Furthermore, by some wonderful sympathy³⁴ of nature, there are few or no pleasures, even physical pleasures, which are not augmented by association with others. There is no happy or cheerful frame of mind which does not demand to be shared and spread among others. Certainly, there is scarcely anything (and I could omit "scarcely") agreeable, joyful, happy, cheerful, or delightful, which does not boil up and bubble over from the human heart, and long to be poured out among others. Nor is there anything more cheering for a man than to share his happiness with others.³⁵ And therefore, though they claim that it is his own pleasure or advantage that each man seeks, yet such is the nature of certain pleasures, including the greatest of them, and of most of our desires, that they prompt us to seek social life by themselves almost without any reasoning; and by themselves they make the duties of social life agreeable and delightful. All these things the ancients seem to have discerned, nor does the illustrious Richard Cumberland altogether neglect them.³⁶ But they have been most eloquently

33. Ovid, *Fatti*, I, ll. 305–6, p. 22.

34. "Contagio": Cicero's translation of *sympatheia* in *De Divinatione* (*On Divination*), 2, 14, 33, in Cicero, *De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, p. 406.

35. Cicero, *De Amicitia* (*On Friendship*), 6.22, in Cicero, *De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, p. 130.

36. Cumberland, *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature*.

celebrated by the illustrious Earl of Shaftesbury, noble both by his family and by his genius, however correctly he has been criticized by theologians in other matters.³⁷ And I see nothing which can be said to the contrary.

Yes, and they have a higher teaching. For human nature is not sociable only in this secondary sense for the sake merely of our own advantage or pleasure, whatever it may be, but is in itself immediately and primarily kind, unselfish, and sociable without regard to its advantage or pleasure. And this is the rich explication they give of it. They declare their conviction that very many feelings and passions implanted in man by nature are kindly and unselfish and first and last look directly to the felicity of others. Such is the structure of the human mind, that when certain images (*species*) of things come before it, certain affections arise under the sole guidance of nature, without any art or deliberation, indeed without any previous command of the will. For just as a desire for private pleasure or advantage, a desire which is usually attributed to self-love, asserts itself as soon as a prospect of getting it arises, in the same way when images of other men and their fortune come to our attention, they excite public and unselfish feelings, even though there is no prospect of private advantage. For example, when the idea of a sentient nature tortured with serious pain is put before the mind, it excites commiseration and a simple desire to take away the pain. In the same way, the idea of a fortunate, happy, cheerful nature equally excites shared and social joy; and the continuance of that state is desired for itself. Nor is this concern for the condition of others only seen when they are present and before our external senses (in which case perhaps powerful reactions or emotions are visible) but whenever, in a quiet moment, we call up an image of others by reading histories or the narratives of travelers, or even when from the stories of drama we receive a certain image of human nature, even in the remotest nations or centuries where no advantage of our own is involved, with what heartfelt concern do we follow the fortunes of entire countries or honorable individuals? With what horror do we avert our minds from the major ills of human life, miserable slavery, the

37. Shaftesbury, "Sensus Communis," pt. 3, sec. 2, pp. 51–53, and "The Moralists," pt. 2, sec. 4, pp. 283–88, in *Characteristics*; and Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*, vol. 2, for discussion of Shaftesbury on the higher pleasures of social life and on his differences with theologians.