ARISTOTLE'S
NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

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BOOK I

Book I. Happiness. cc. i-iii. Introduction: the nature of the subject. c. i. Every Practical Science has an End.

1 Every art and every investigation, and likewise every practical pursuit or undertaking, seems to aim at some good: hence it has been well said that the
2 Good is That at which all things aim. (It is true that a certain variety is to be observed among the ends at which the arts and sciences aim: in some cases the activity of practising the art is itself the end,[a] whereas in others the end is some product over and above the mere exercise of the art; and in the arts whose ends are certain things beside the practice of the arts themselves, these products are essentially superior
3 in value to the activities.) But as there are numerous pursuits and arts and sciences, it follows that their ends are correspondingly numerous: for instance, the end of the science of medicine is health, that of the art of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy
4 victory, that of domestic economy wealth. Now in cases where several such pursuits are subordinate to some single faculty—as bridle-making and the other trades concerned with horses' harness are subordinate to horsemanship, and this and every other military pursuit to the science of strategy, and

similarly other arts to different arts again—in all these cases, I say, the ends of the master arts are things more to be desired than all those of the arts subordinate to them; since the latter ends are only
5 pursued for the sake of the former. (And it makes no difference whether the ends of the pursuits are the activities themselves or some other thing beside these, as in the case of the sciences mentioned.)

The ultimate End, which is the Supreme Good, is the End of Political Science.

ii If therefore among the ends at which our actions aim there be one which we wish for its own sake, while we wish the others only for the sake of this, and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (which would obviously result in a process *ad infinitum*, so that all desire would be futile and vain), it is clear that this one ultimate End must
2 be the Good, and indeed the Supreme Good. Will not then a knowledge of this Supreme Good be also of great practical importance for the conduct of life? Will it not better enable us to attain what is fitting,
3 like archers having a target to aim at? If this be so, we ought to make an attempt to determine at all events in outline what exactly this Supreme Good is, and of which of the theoretical or practical sciences it is the object.

4 Now it would be agreed that it must be the object of the most authoritative of the sciences—some
5 science which is pre-eminently a master-craft. But
6 such is manifestly the science of Politics; for it is this that ordains which of the sciences are to exist in states, and what branches of knowledge the different classes of the citizens are to learn, and up to what point; and we observe that even the most highly esteemed of the faculties, such as strategy, domestic economy, oratory, are subordinate to the

7 political science. Inasmuch then as the rest of the sciences are employed by this one, and as it moreover lays down laws as to what people shall *do* and what things they shall refrain from doing, the end of this science must include the ends of all the others. Therefore, the Good of man must be the
8 end of the science of Politics. For even though it be the case that the Good is the same for the individual and for the state, nevertheless, the good of the state is manifestly a greater and more perfect good, both to attain and to preserve.[a] To secure the good of one person only is better than nothing; but to secure the good of a nation or a state is a nobler and more divine achievement.

This then being its aim, our investigation is in a sense the study of Politics.

iii Now our treatment of this science will be adequate, if it achieves that amount of precision which belongs to its subject matter. The same exactness must not be expected in all departments of philosophy alike, any more than in all the pro-
2 ducts of the arts and crafts. The subjects studied by political science are Moral Nobility[b] and Justice; but these conceptions involve much difference of opinion and uncertainty, so that they are sometimes believed to be mere conventions and to
3 have no real existence in the nature of things. And a similar uncertainty surrounds the conception of the Good, because it frequently occurs that good things have harmful consequences: people have before now been ruined by wealth, and in other cases courage
4 has cost men their lives. We must therefore be content if, in dealing with subjects and starting from premises thus uncertain, we succeed in presenting a

Political Science not an exact Science.

broad outline of the truth : when our subjects and our premises are merely generalities, it is enough if we arrive at generally valid conclusions. Accordingly we may ask the student also to accept the various views we put forward in the same spirit ; for it is the mark of an educated mind to expect that amount of exactness in each kind which the nature of the particular subject admits. It is equally unreasonable to accept merely probable conclusions from a mathematician and to demand strict demonstration from an orator.

5 Again, each man judges correctly those matters with which he is acquainted ; it is of these that he is a competent critic. To criticize a particular subject, therefore, a man must have been trained in that subject : to be a good critic generally, he must have had an all-round education. Hence the young are not fit to be students of Political Science.[a] For they have no experience of life and conduct, and it is these that supply the premises and subject matter of this 6 branch of philosophy. And moreover they are led by their feelings ; so that they will study the subject to no purpose or advantage, since the end of this 7 science is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference whether they are young in years or immature in character : the defect is not a question of time, it is because their life and its various aims are guided by feeling ; for to such persons their knowledge is of no use, any more than it is to persons of defective self-restraint.[b] But Moral Science may be of great value to those who guide their desires and actions by principle.

Its study is both impossible and useless for the young and immature.

8 Let so much suffice by way of introduction as to

being a practical science, is only pursued for the sake of its practical application.

the student of the subject, the spirit in which our conclusions are to be received, and the object that we set before us.

cc. iv-vii. The nature of Happiness.

c. iv. Current views stated.

iv To resume, inasmuch as all studies and undertakings are directed to the attainment of some good, let us discuss what it is that we pronounce to be the aim of Politics, that is, what is the highest of all the
2 goods that action can achieve. As far as the name goes, we may almost say that the great majority of mankind are agreed about this; for both the multitude and persons of refinement speak of it as Happiness,[a] and conceive 'the good life' or 'doing well'[b] to be the same thing as 'being happy.' But what constitutes happiness is a matter of dispute; and the popular account of it is not the same as that
3 given by the philosophers. Ordinary people identify it with some obvious and visible good, such as pleasure or wealth or honour—some say one thing and some another, indeed very often the same man says different things at different times: when he falls sick he thinks health is happiness, when he is poor, wealth. At other times, feeling conscious of their own ignorance, men admire those who propound something grand and above their heads; and it has been held by some thinkers[c] that beside the many good things we have mentioned, there exists another Good, that is good in itself, and stands to all those goods as the cause of their being good.

4 Now perhaps it would be a somewhat fruitless task to review all the different opinions that are held. It will suffice to examine those that are most widely prevalent, or that seem to have some argument in their favour.

5 And we must not overlook the distinction between

arguments that start from first principles and those that lead to first principles. It was a good practice of Plato to raise this question, and to enquire whether the right procedure was to start from or to lead up to the first principles, as in a race-course one may run from the judges to the far end of the track or reversely. Now no doubt it is proper to start from the known. But 'the known' has two meanings—'what is known to us,' which is one thing, and 'what is knowable in itself,' which is another. Perhaps then for us [a] at all events it is proper to start from
6 what is known to us. This is why in order to be a competent student of the Right and Just, and in short of the topics of Politics in general, the pupil is
7 bound to have been well trained in his habits. For the starting-point or first principle is the fact that a thing is so; if this be satisfactorily ascertained, there will be no need also to know the reason why it is so. And the man of good moral training knows first principles already, or can easily acquire them. As for the person who neither knows nor can learn, let him hear the words of Hesiod [b]:

Inductive method justified.

> Best is the man who can himself advise;
> He too is good who hearkens to the wise;
> But who, himself being witless, will not heed
> Another's wisdom, is worthless indeed.

v But let us continue from the point [c] where we digressed. To judge from men's lives, the more or less reasoned conceptions of the Good or Happiness that seem to prevail among them are the following. On the one hand the generality of men and the most vulgar identify the Good with pleasure,
2 and accordingly are content with the Life of Enjoyment—for there are three specially prominent

Current views of the Good inferred from typical Lives. The Life of Enjoyment.

Lives,[a] the one just mentioned, the Life of Politics,
3 and thirdly, the Life of Contemplation. The generality of mankind then show themselves to be utterly slavish, by preferring what is only a life for cattle; but they get a hearing for their view as reasonable because many persons of high position share the feelings of Sardanapallus.[b]

4 Men of refinement, on the other hand, and men of action think that the Good is honour—for this may be said to be the end of the Life of Politics. But honour after all seems too superficial to be the Good for which we are seeking; since it appears to depend on those who confer it more than on him upon whom it is conferred, whereas we instinctively feel that the Good must be something proper to its possessor and not easy to be taken away from him. The Life of Action.

5 Moreover men's motive in pursuing honour seems to be to assure themselves of their own merit; at least they seek to be honoured by men of judgement and by people who know them, that is, they desire to be honoured on the ground of virtue. It is clear therefore that in the opinion at all events of men of action,
6 virtue is a greater good than honour; and one might perhaps accordingly suppose that virtue rather than honour is the end of the Political Life. But even virtue proves on examination to be too incomplete to be the End; since it appears possible to possess it while you are asleep, or without putting it into practice throughout the whole of your life; and also for the virtuous man to suffer the greatest misery and misfortune—though no one would pronounce a man living a life of misery to be happy, unless for

have what I ate; and the delightful deeds of wantonness and love which I did and suffered; whereas all my wealth is vanished.'

the sake of maintaining a paradox. But we need not pursue this subject, since it has been sufficiently treated in the ordinary discussions.[a]

7 The third type of life is the Life of Contemplation, which we shall consider in the sequel. The Life of Contemplation (Bk. X. vii).

8 The Life of Money-making is a constrained [b] kind of life, and clearly wealth is not the Good we are in search of, for it is only good as being useful, a means to something else. On this score indeed one might conceive the ends before mentioned to have a better claim, for they are approved for their own sakes. But even they do not really seem to be the Supreme Good; however, many arguments have been laid down in regard to them, so we may dismiss them. The Life of Money-making.

vi But perhaps it is desirable that we should examine the notion of a Universal Good, and review the difficulties that it involves, although such an enquiry goes against the grain because of our friendship for the authors of the Theory of Ideas.[c] Still perhaps it would appear desirable, and indeed it would seem to be obligatory, especially for a philosopher, to sacrifice even one's closest personal ties in defence of the truth. Both are dear to us, yet 'tis our duty to prefer the truth.[d] Plato's Idea of Good refuted as basis for Ethics.

2 The originators [e] of this theory, then, used not to postulate Ideas of groups of things in which they posited [f] an order of priority and posteriority [g] (for (1) Idea of Good disproved by Doctrine of Categories; (a) 'Good' denotes a thing, or a quality of a thing, or its

phenomena such as motion, in the sense of 'constrained,' 'not natural.' The text here has been suspected.

[b] The translation 'Forms' is perhaps less misleading: *εἶδος* is not a psychological term.

[c] Probably a verse quotation.

[d] Or perhaps 'importers' from the Pythagoreans of S. Italy.

[e] Perhaps 'we posit': see p. 18 crit. n.[1]

[f] A is 'prior in nature' (though not necessarily in time) to B, when A can exist without B but not B without A; and they cannot then be on a par as members of one class.

which reason they did not construct an Idea of numbers in general). But Good is predicated alike in the Categories of Substance, of Quality, and of Relation; yet the Absolute,[a] or Substance, is prior in nature to the Relative, which seems to be a sort of offshoot or 'accident' of Substance; so that there cannot be a common Idea corresponding to the absolutely good and the relatively good.

relation to another thing; but the last notion is secondary, and cannot be classed with the first under one Idea.

3 Again, the word 'good' is used in as many senses as the word 'is'; for we may predicate good in the Category of Substance, for instance of God or intelligence; in that of Quality—the excellences; in that of Quantity—moderate in amount; in that of Relation—useful; in that of Time—a favourable opportunity; in that of Place—a suitable 'habitat'[b]; and so on. So clearly good cannot be a single and universal general notion; if it were, it would not be predicable in all the Categories, but only in one.

(b) 'Good may mean 'a good thing,' 'excellent,' 'enough,' 'useful,' 'opportune,' 'healthy,' etc.; but these are not a single notion.

4 Again, things that come under a single Idea must be objects of a single science; hence there ought to be a single science dealing with all good things. But as a matter of fact there are a number of sciences even for the goods in one Category: for example, opportunity, for opportunity in war comes under the science of strategy, in disease under that of medicine; and the due amount in diet comes under medicine, in bodily exercise under gymnastics.

(c) Good even in one category is the object of several sciences.

5 One might also raise the question what precisely they mean by their expression 'the Ideal so-and-so,'[c] seeing that one and the same definition of man applies both to 'the Ideal man' and to

(ii) The Idea of Good superfluous, being the same in essence as the concept 'good.'

ment or suite of rooms, as in Pliny's descriptions of Italian villas.

[c] Literally 'so-and-so itself.'

'man,' [a] for in so far as both are man, there will be no difference between them; and if so, no more will there be any difference between 'the Ideal Good' and 'Good' in so far as both are good.

6 Nor yet will the Ideal Good be any more good because it is eternal, seeing that a white thing that lasts a long time is no whiter than one that lasts only a day. (Its eternity does not affect its essence.)

7 The Pythagoreans [b] seem to give a more probable doctrine on the subject of the Good when they place Unity in their column of goods; and indeed Speusippus [c] appears to have followed them. But this subject must be left for another discussion. (The Pythagorean view.)

8 We can descry an objection that may be raised against our arguments on the ground that the theory in question was not intended to apply to every sort of good, and that only things pursued and accepted for their own sake are pronounced good as belonging to a single species, while things productive or preservative of these in any way, or preventive of their opposites, are said to be good as a means to these, (III, supplementing i *a*) The Idea of Good does not even apply to things good in themselves (if any), since even they are good in different ways;

9 and in a different sense. Clearly then the term 'goods' would have two meanings, (1) things good in themselves and (2) things good as a means to these; let us then separate things good in themselves from things useful as means, and consider whether the former are called good because they

tion of the world; hence perhaps the late position of good in the list of opposites. The phrase 'column of goods' (*cf. Met.* N, 1093 b 12 'column of the beautiful') is inexact, as good was only one of the things in the column—unless it means the column to which good things among others belong; but doubtless all the positive principles were regarded as akin.

[c] Speusippus was Plato's nephew, and succeeded him as head of the Academy.

10 fall under a single Idea. But what sort of things is one to class as good in themselves? Are they not those things which are sought after even without any accessory advantage, such as wisdom, sight, and certain pleasures and honours? for even if we also pursue these things as means to something else, still one would class them among things good in themselves. Or is there nothing else good in itself except the Idea? If so, the species will be of no
11 use.[a] If on the contrary the class of things good in themselves includes these objects, the same notion of good ought to be manifested in all of them, just as the same notion of white is manifested in snow and in white paint. But as a matter of fact the notions of honour and wisdom and pleasure, as being good, are different and distinct. Therefore, good is not a general term corresponding to a single Idea.

though 'good' must denote something—perhaps a certain relation.

12 But in what sense then are different things called good? For they do not seem to be a case of things that bear the same name merely by chance. Possibly things are called good in virtue of being derived from one good; or because they all contribute to one good. Or perhaps it is rather by way of a proportion[b]: that is, as sight is good in the body, so intelligence is good in the soul, and similarly another thing in something else.

(iv) The Idea of Good not relevant to Ethics, since a transcendent good is unattainable,

13 Perhaps however this question must be dismissed for the present, since a detailed investigation of it belongs more properly to another branch of philosophy.[c] And likewise with the Idea of the Good; for even if the goodness predicated of various things in common really is a unity or something existing separately and absolute, it clearly will not be practi-

cable or attainable by man; but the Good which we are now seeking is a good within human reach. and useless even as a guide to the attainment of practicable goods.

14 But possibly someone may think that to know the Ideal Good may be desirable as an aid to achieving those goods which are practicable and attainable: having the Ideal Good as a pattern we shall more easily know what things are good for us, and knowing 15 them, obtain them. Now it is true that this argument has a certain plausibility; but it does not seem to square with the actual procedure of the sciences. For these all aim at some good, and seek to make up their deficiencies,[a] but they do not trouble about a knowledge of the Ideal Good. Yet if it were so potent an aid, it is improbable that all the professors of the arts and sciences should not know it, nor even 16 seek to discover it. Moreover, it is not easy to see *how* knowing that same Ideal Good will help a weaver or carpenter in the practice of his own craft, or how anybody will be a better physician or general for having contemplated the absolute Idea. In fact it does not appear that the physician studies even health [b] in the abstract; he studies the health of the human being—or rather of some particular human being, for it is individuals that he has to cure.

Let us here conclude our discussion of this subject.

vii We may now return to the Good which is the object of our search, and try to find out what exactly it can be. For good appears to be one thing in one pursuit or art and another in another: it is different in medicine from what it is in strategy, and so on with the rest of the arts. What definition of the Good then will hold true in all the arts? Perhaps we may define it as that for the sake of which everything else is done. This applies to something Happiness the Supreme practical Good because (*a*) perfect or final, and (*b*) self-sufficient or complete in itself.

different in each different art—to health in the case of medicine, to victory in that of strategy, to a house in architecture, and to something else in each of the other arts; but in every pursuit or undertaking it describes the end of that pursuit or undertaking, since in all of them it is for the sake of the end that everything else is done. Hence if there be something which is the end of all the things done by human action, this will be the practicable Good—or if there be several such ends, the sum of these will
2 be the Good. Thus by changing its ground the argument has reached the same result as before.[a] We must attempt however to render this still more precise.

3 Now there do appear to be several ends at which our actions aim; but as we choose some of them—for instance wealth, or flutes,[b] and instruments generally—as a means to something else, it is clear that not all of them are final ends; whereas the Supreme Good seems to be something final. Consequently if there be some one thing which alone is a final end, this thing—or if there be several final ends, the one among them which is the most final—
4 will be the Good which we are seeking. In speaking of degrees of finality, we mean that a thing pursued as an end in itself is more final than one pursued as a means to something else, and that a thing never chosen as a means to anything else is more final than things chosen both as ends in themselves and as means to that thing; and accordingly a thing chosen always as an end and never as a means we
5 call absolutely final. Now happiness above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense, since we always choose it for its own sake and never as a

means to something else ; whereas honour, pleasure, intelligence, and excellence in its various forms, we choose indeed for their own sakes (since we should be glad to have each of them although no extraneous advantage resulted from it), but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, in the belief that they will be a means to our securing it. But no one chooses happiness for the sake of honour, pleasure, etc., nor as a means to anything whatever other than itself.

6 The same conclusion also appears to follow from a consideration of the self-sufficiency of happiness—for it is felt that the final good must be a thing sufficient in itself. The term self-sufficient, however, we employ with reference not to oneself alone, living a life of isolation, but also to one's parents and children and wife, and one's friends and fellow citizens in general, since man is by nature a social
7 being.[a] On the other hand a limit has to be assumed in these relationships ; for if the list be extended to one's ancestors and descendants and to the friends of one's friends, it will go on *ad infinitum*. But this is a point that must be considered later on ; we take a self-sufficient thing to mean a thing which merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable and lacking in nothing,[b] and such a thing we deem happi-
8 ness to be. Moreover, we think happiness the most desirable of all good things without being itself reckoned as one among the rest ;[c] for if it were so reckoned, it is clear that we should consider it more desirable when even the smallest of other good things were combined with it, since this addition would result in a larger total of good, and of two goods the greater is always the more desirable.

Happiness, therefore, being found to be something final and self-sufficient, is the End at which all actions aim.

9 To say however that the Supreme Good is happiness will probably appear a truism; we still require a more explicit account of what constitutes happiness. Nature of Happiness deduced from the Function of man.

10 Perhaps then we may arrive at this by ascertaining what is man's function. For the goodness or efficiency of a flute-player or sculptor or craftsman of any sort, and in general of anybody who has some function or business to perform, is thought to reside in that function; and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the function of man, if he has a function.

11 Are we then to suppose that, while the carpenter and the shoemaker have definite functions or businesses belonging to them, man as such has none, and is not designed by nature to fulfil any function? Must we not rather assume that, just as the eye, the hand, the foot and each of the various members of the body manifestly has a certain function of its own, so a human being also has a certain function over and above all the functions of his particular

12 members? What then precisely can this function be? The mere act of living appears to be shared even by plants, whereas we are looking for the function peculiar to man; we must therefore set aside the vital activity of nutrition and growth. Next in the scale will come some form of sentient life; but this too appears to be shared by horses,

13 oxen, and animals generally. There remains therefore what may be called the practical[a] life of the rational part of man. (This part has two divisions,[b]

one rational as obedient to principle, the other as possessing principle and exercising intelligence). Rational life again has two meanings; let us assume that we are here concerned with the active exercise [a] of the rational faculty, since this seems to be the
14 more proper sense of the term. If then the function of man is the active exercise of the soul's faculties [b] in conformity with rational principle, or at all events not in dissociation from rational principle, and if we acknowledge the function of an individual and of a good individual of the same class (for instance, a harper and a good harper, and so generally with all classes) to be generically the same, the qualification of the latter's superiority in excellence being added to the function in his case (I mean that if the function of a harper is to play the harp, that of a good harper is to play the harp well): if this is so, and if we declare that the function of man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with
15 rational principle, and say that the function of a good man is to perform these activities well and rightly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with its own proper excellence —from these premises it follows that the Good of man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity
16 with the best and most perfect among them. Moreover this activity must occupy a complete lifetime; for one swallow does not make spring, nor does one fine day; and similarly one day or a brief period of happiness does not make a man supremely blessed [c] and happy.

Definition of Happiness.

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17 Let this account then serve to describe the Good in outline—for no doubt the proper procedure is to begin by making a rough sketch, and to fill it in afterwards. If a work has been well laid down in outline, to carry it on and complete it in detail may be supposed to be within the capacity of anybody; and in this working out of details Time seems to be a good inventor or at all events coadjutor. This indeed is how advances in the arts have actually
18 come about, since anyone can fill in the gaps. Also the warning given above [a] must not be forgotten; we must not look for equal exactness in all departments of study, but only such as belongs to the subject matter of each, and in such a degree as is appro-
19 priate to the particular line of enquiry. A carpenter and a geometrician both seek after a right angle,[b] but in different ways; the former is content with that approximation to it which satisfies the purpose of his work; the latter, being a student of truth, looks for its essence or essential attributes. We should therefore proceed in the same manner in other subjects also, and not allow side issues to outweigh the main task in hand.

Ethics a practical and therefore not an exact science.

20 Nor again must we in all matters alike demand an explanation of the reason why things are what they are; in some cases it is enough if the fact that they are so is satisfactorily established.[c] This is the case with first principles; and the fact is the primary
21 thing—it *is* a first principle. And principles are studied—some by induction, others by perception, others by some form of habituation, and also others
22 otherwise [d]; so we must endeavour to arrive at the principles of each kind in their natural manner, and must also be careful to define them correctly,

23 since they are of great importance for the subsequent course of the enquiry. The beginning is admittedly more than half of the whole,[a] and throws light at once on many of the questions under investigation.

cc. viii-xii. Definition of Happiness tested c. viii. it satisfies current opinions.

viii Accordingly we must examine our first principle[b] not only as a logical conclusion deduced from certain premises but also in the light of the current opinions on the subject. For if a proposition be true, all the facts harmonize with it, but if it is false, it is soon found to be discordant with them.

2 Now things good have been divided into three classes, external goods on the one hand, and goods of the soul and of the body on the other[c]; and of these three kinds of goods, those of the soul we commonly pronounce good in the fullest sense and the highest degree. But it is our actions and the soul's active exercise of its functions[d] that we posit (as being Happiness); hence so far as this opinion goes—and it is of long standing, and generally accepted by students of philosophy—it supports the correctness of our definition of Happiness.

3 It also shows it to be right merely in declaring the End to consist in actions or activities of some sort, for thus the End is included among goods of the soul, and not among external goods.[e]

4 Again, our definition accords with the description of the happy man as one who 'lives well' or 'does

body and those outside and of fortune,' VII. xiii. 2) on the other. Hence in § 3 'external goods' must include 'bodily goods,' as also §§ 15 f., where 'external goods' are subdivided into the instruments and the indispensable conditions of well-being (and so in more scientific language, c. ix. 7), the latter subdivision including beauty, the only bodily good there specified.

[a] See the definition, c. vii. 15. [e] See note [c].

well'; for it has virtually identified happiness with a form of good life or doing well.[a]

5 And moreover all the various characteristics that are looked for in happiness are found to belong to
6 the Good as we define it. Some people think happiness is goodness or virtue, others prudence, others a form of wisdom; others again say it is all of these things, or one of them, in combination with pleasure, or accompanied by pleasure as an indispensable adjunct; another school include external prosperity
7 as a concomitant factor. Some of these views have been held by many people and from ancient times, others by a few distinguished men, and neither class is likely to be altogether mistaken; the probability is that their beliefs are at least partly, or indeed mainly, correct.

8 Now with those who pronounce happiness to be virtue, or some particular virtue, our definition is in agreement; for 'activity in conformity with virtue'
9 involves virtue. But no doubt it makes a great difference whether we conceive the Supreme Good to depend on possessing virtue or on displaying it—on disposition, or on the manifestation of a disposition in action. For a man may possess the disposition without its producing any good result, as for instance when he is asleep, or has ceased to function from some other cause; but virtue in active exercise cannot be inoperative—it will of necessity act, and act well. And just as at the Olympic games the wreaths of victory are not bestowed upon the handsomest and strongest persons present, but on men who enter for the competitions—since it is among these that the winners are found,—so it is those who

[a] *Cf.* c. iv. 2 note.

act rightly who carry off the prizes and good things of life.

10 And further, the life of active virtue is essentially pleasant. For the feeling of pleasure is an experience of the soul,[a] and a thing gives a man pleasure in regard to which he is described as 'fond of' so-and-so: for instance a horse gives pleasure to one fond of horses, a play to one fond of the theatre, and similarly just actions are pleasant to the lover of justice, and acts conforming with virtue generally to
11 the lover of virtue. But whereas the mass of mankind take pleasure in things that conflict with one another,[b] because they are not pleasant of their own nature, things pleasant by nature are pleasant to lovers of what is noble, and so always are actions in conformity with virtue, so that they are pleasant essentially as well as pleasant to lovers of the noble.
12 Therefore their life has no need of pleasure as a sort of ornamental appendage,[c] but contains its pleasure in itself. For there is the further consideration that the man who does not enjoy doing noble actions is not a good man at all: no one would call a man just if he did not like acting justly, nor liberal if he did not like doing liberal things, and similarly with the other
13 virtues. But if so, actions in conformity with virtue must be essentially pleasant.

But they are also of course both good and noble,

of his nature that he dislikes with another, so that there is a conflict between his desires, or between his desire for pleasure and his wish for what he thinks good (see IX. iv., esp. §§ 8-10, and contrast § 5).

[c] The word is especially used of an amulet hung round the neck or fastened round a limb.

and each in the highest degree, if the good man judges them rightly; and his judgement is as we
14 have said. It follows therefore that happiness is at once the best, the noblest, and the pleasantest of things: these qualities are not separated as the inscription at Delos makes out—

> Justice is noblest, and health is best,
> But the heart's desire is the pleasantest—,

for the best activities possess them all; and it is the best activities, or one activity which is the best of all, in which according to our definition happiness consists.

15 Nevertheless it is manifest that happiness also requires external goods in addition, as we said; for it is impossible, or at least not easy, to play a noble part unless furnished with the necessary equipment.[a] For many noble actions require instruments for their performance, in the shape of friends or
16 wealth or political power; also there are certain external advantages, the lack of which sullies supreme felicity, such as good birth, satisfactory children, and personal beauty: a man of very ugly appearance or low birth, or childless and alone in the world, is not our idea of a happy man, and still less so perhaps is one who has children or friends[b] that are worthless, or who has had good ones but lost them
17 by death. As we said therefore, happiness does seem to require the addition of external prosperity,

Aristotle to denote the material equipment of life, and has almost or quite ceased to be felt as a metaphor.

[b] Perhaps 'or friends' is slipped in because of 'alone in the world' just above, but friends should not be mentioned here among the indispensable conditions of happiness, as they were included just above among its instruments (see § 2 note).

and this is why some people identify it with good fortune (though some identify it with virtue [a]).

ix It is this that gives rise to the question whether happiness is a thing that can be learnt, or acquired by training, or cultivated in some other manner, or whether it is bestowed by some divine dispensa- 2 tion or even by fortune. (1) Now if anything that men have is a gift of the gods, it is reasonable to suppose that happiness is divinely given—indeed of all man's possessions it is most likely to be so, 3 inasmuch as it is the best of them all. This subject however may perhaps more properly belong to another branch of study.[b] Still, even if happiness is not sent us from heaven, but is won by virtue and by some kind of study or practice, it seems to be one of the most divine things that exist. For the prize and end of goodness must clearly be supremely good 4 —it must be something divine and blissful. (2) And also on our view it will admit of being widely diffused, since it can be attained through some process of study or effort by all persons whose capacity for 5 virtue has not been stunted or maimed. (3) Again, if it is better to be happy as a result of one's own exertions than by the gift of fortune, it is reasonable to suppose that this is how happiness is won; inasmuch as in the world of nature things have a natural tendency to be ordered in the best possible way, 6 and the same is true of the products of art, and of causation of any kind, and especially the highest.[c] Whereas that the greatest and noblest of all things should be left to fortune would be too contrary to the fitness of things.

Happiness as defined independent of Fortune;

7 Light is also thrown on the question by our definition of happiness, which said that it is a certain

though it requires the gifts of

kind of activity of the soul; whereas the remaining good things [a] are either merely indispensable conditions of happiness, or are of the nature of auxiliary means, and useful instrumentally. This conclusion [b] moreover agrees with what we laid down at the outset; for we stated that the Supreme Good was the end of political science, but the principal care of this science is to produce a certain character in the citizens, namely to make them virtuous, and capable of performing noble actions.

Fortune as conditions or as means.

We have good reasons therefore for not speaking of an ox or horse or any other animal as being happy, because none of these is able to participate in noble activities. For this cause also children cannot be happy, for they are not old enough to be capable of noble acts; when children are spoken of as happy, it is in compliment to their promise for the future. Happiness, as we said, requires both complete goodness and a complete lifetime. For many reverses and vicissitudes of all sorts occur in the course of life, and it is possible that the most prosperous man may encounter great disasters in his declining years, as the story is told of Priam in the epics; but no one calls a man happy who meets with misfortunes like Priam's, and comes to a miserable end.

X Are we then to count no other human being happy either, as long as he is alive? Must we obey Solon's warning,[c] and 'look to the end'? And if we are indeed to lay down this rule, can a man really be happy after he is dead? Surely that is an extremely strange notion, especially for us who

Happiness therefore not easily affected by vicissitudes of Fortune.

call him the happiest of mankind until he should have heard that he had ended his life without misfortune; he bade him 'mark the end of every matter, how it should turn out.'

3 define happiness as a form of activity! While if on the other hand we refuse to speak of a dead man as happy, and Solon's words do not mean this, but that only when a man is dead can one safely call him blessed as being now beyond the reach of evil and misfortune, this also admits of some dispute; for it is believed that some evil and also some good can befall the dead, just as much as they can happen to the living without their being aware of it—for instance honours, and disgraces, and the prosperity and misfortunes of their children and their descend-
4 ants in general. But here too there is a difficulty. For suppose a man to have lived in perfect happiness until old age, and to have come to a correspondingly happy end: he may still have many vicissitudes befall his descendants, some of whom may be good and meet with the fortune they deserve, and others the opposite; and moreover these descendants may clearly stand in every possible degree of remoteness from the ancestors in question. Now it would be a strange thing if the dead man also were to change [a] with the fortunes of his family, and were to become a happy man at one time and then miserable at
5 another; yet on the other hand it would also be strange if ancestors were not affected at all, even over a limited period, by the fortunes of their descendants.

6 But let us go back to our former difficulty,[b] for perhaps it will throw light on the question [c] we are
7 now examining. If we are to look to the end, and congratulate a man when dead not as actually being blessed, but because he has been blessed in the past, surely it is strange if at the actual time when a man is happy that fact cannot be truly predicated of

him, because we are unwilling to call the living happy owing to the vicissitudes of fortune, and owing to our conception of happiness as something permanent and not readily subject to change, whereas the wheel of fortune often turns full circle
8 in the same person's experience. For it is clear that if we are to be guided by fortune, we shall often have to call the same man first happy and then miserable; we shall make out the happy man to be a sort of 'chameleon, or a house built on the sand.' [a]

9 But perhaps it is quite wrong to be guided in our judgement by the changes of fortune, since true prosperity and adversity do not depend on fortune's favours, although, as we said, our life does require these in addition; but it is the active exercise of our faculties in conformity with virtue that causes happiness, and the opposite activities its opposite.

10 And the difficulty just discussed is a further confirmation of our definition; since none of man's functions possess the quality of permanence so fully as the activities in conformity with virtue: they appear to be more lasting even than our knowledge of particular sciences. And among these activities themselves those which are highest in the scale of values are the more lasting, because they most fully and continuously occupy the lives of the supremely happy: for this appears to be the reason why we do not forget them.

11 The happy man therefore will possess the element of stability in question, and will remain happy all his life; since he will be always or at least most often employed in doing and contemplating the things that are in conformity with virtue. And he

will bear changes of fortunes most nobly, and with perfect propriety in every way, being as he is 'good in very truth' and 'four-square without reproach.'[a]

12 But the accidents of fortune are many and vary in degree of magnitude; and although small pieces of good luck, as also of misfortune, clearly do not change the whole course of life, yet great and repeated successes will render life more blissful, since both of their own nature they help to embellish it, and also they can be nobly and virtuously utilized[b]; while great and frequent reverses can crush and mar our bliss both by the pain they cause and by the hindrance they offer to many activities. Yet nevertheless even in adversity nobility shines through, when a man endures repeated and severe misfortune with patience, not owing to insensibility
13 but from generosity and greatness of soul. And if, as we said, a man's life is determined by his activities, no supremely happy man can ever become miserable. For he will never do hateful or base actions, since we hold that the truly good and wise man will bear all kinds of fortune in a seemly way, and will always act in the noblest manner that the circumstances allow; even as a good general makes the most effective use of the forces at his disposal, and a good shoemaker makes the finest shoe possible out of the leather supplied him, and so on with all the other
14 crafts and professions. And this being so, the happy man can never become miserable; though it is true he will not be supremely blessed if he encounters the misfortunes of a Priam. Nor yet

recalls the two classes of external goods defined in c. viii. 15, 16 and c. ix. 7.

assuredly will he be variable and liable to change; for he will not be dislodged from his happiness easily, nor by ordinary misfortunes, but only by severe and frequent disasters, nor will he recover from such disasters and become happy again quickly, but only, if at all, after a long term of years, in which he has had time to compass high distinctions and achievements.

15 May not we then confidently pronounce that man happy who realizes complete goodness in action, and is adequately furnished with external goods? Or should we add, that he must also be destined to go on living not [a] for any casual period but throughout a complete lifetime in the same manner, and to die accordingly, because the future is hidden from us, and we conceive happiness as an end, something 16 utterly and absolutely final and complete? If this is so, we shall pronounce those of the living who possess and are destined to go on possessing the good things we have specified to be supremely blessed, though on the human scale of bliss.

Revised definition of Happiness.

So much for a discussion of this question.

xi That the happiness of the dead is not influenced at all by the fortunes of their descendants and their friends in general seems too heartless a doctrine, 2 and contrary to accepted beliefs. But the accidents of life are many and diverse, and vary in the degree in which they affect us. To distinguish between them in detail would clearly be a long and indeed endless undertaking, and a general treatment in 3 outline may perhaps be enough. Even our own misfortunes, then, though in some cases they exercise considerable weight and influence upon the course of our lives, in other cases seem comparatively un-

Happiness how far modified after death by fortunes of descendants.

important; and the same is true of the misfortunes
4 of our friends of all degrees. Also it makes a great difference whether those who are connected with any occurrence are alive or dead, much more so than it does in a tragedy whether the crimes and horrors are supposed to have taken place beforehand
5 or are enacted on the stage. We ought therefore to take this difference also into account, and still more perhaps the doubt that exists whether the dead really participate in good or evil at all. For the above considerations seem to show that even if any good or evil does penetrate to them, the effect is only small and trifling, either intrinsically or in relation to them, or if not trifling, at all events not of such magnitude and kind as to make the unhappy happy or to rob the happy of their blessedness.

6 It does then appear that the dead are influenced in some measure by the good fortune of their friends, and likewise by their misfortunes, but that the effect is not of such a kind or degree as to render the happy unhappy or *vice versa*.

Happiness the End proved by terms expressing value.

xii These questions being settled, let us consider whether happiness is one of the things we praise or rather one of those that we honour [a]; for it is at all events clear that it is not a mere potentiality.[b]

2 Now it appears that a thing which we praise is always praised because it has a certain quality and stands in a certain relation to something. For we praise just men and brave men, in fact good men and virtue generally, because of their actions and the results they produce; and we praise the men who are strong of body, swift of foot and the like

[b] *i.e.*, not merely a potentiality of good but an actual good, whether as means or end.

on account of their possessing certain natural qualities, and standing in a certain relation to something
3 good and excellent. The point is also illustrated by our feeling about praises addressed to the gods: it strikes us as absurd that the gods should be referred to our standards, and this is what praising them amounts to, since praise, as we said, involves
4 a reference of its object to something else. But if praise belongs to what is relative, it is clear that the best things merit not praise but something greater and better: as indeed is generally recognized, since we speak of the gods as blessed and happy,[a] and also 'blessed' is the term that we apply to the most godlike men; and similarly with good things—no one praises happiness as one praises justice, but we call it 'a blessing,' deeming it something higher and more divine than things we praise.

5 Indeed it seems that Eudoxus[b] took a good line in advocating the claims of pleasure to the prize of highest excellence, when he held that the fact that pleasure, though a good, is not praised, is an indication that it is superior to the things we praise, as God and the Good are, because they are the standards to which everything else is referred.

6 For praise belongs to goodness, since it is this that makes men capable of accomplishing noble deeds, while encomia[c] are for deeds accomplished, whether
7 bodily feats or achievements of the mind. However,

Rhet. I. ix. That chapter contains a parenthesis (§§ 33, 34) distinguishing praise, as proper to πράξεις, actions in operation, from encomia, which belong to ἔργα, the results achieved by action; but this distinction is not maintained in the context (§ 35, and *cf.* § 2 where God as well as man is given as an object of praise).

to develop this subject is perhaps rather the business of those who have made a study of encomia. For our purpose we may draw the conclusion from the foregoing remarks, that happiness is a thing honoured
8 and perfect. This seems to be borne out by the fact that it is a first principle or starting-point, since all other things that all men do are done for its sake; and that which is the first principle and cause of things good we agree to be something honourable and divine.

xiii But inasmuch as happiness is a certain activity of soul in conformity with perfect goodness, it is necessary to examine the nature of goodness. For this will probably assist us in our investigation of
2 the nature of happiness. Also, the true statesman seems to be one who has made a special study of goodness, since his aim is to make the citizens good
3 and law-abiding men—witness the lawgivers of Crete and Sparta, and the other great legislators of history;
4 *but if the study of goodness falls within the province* of Political Science, it is clear that in investigating goodness we shall be keeping to the plan which we adopted at the outset.

Bks I. xiii.-VI. Analysis of definition of Happiness. c. xiii The Soul, its parts and their Virtues.

5 Now the goodness that we have to consider is clearly human goodness, since the good or happiness which we set out to seek was human good and human
6 happiness. But human goodness means in our view excellence of soul, not excellence of body; also our definition of happiness is an activity of the soul.
7 Now if this is so, clearly it behoves the statesman to have some acquaintance with psychology, just as the physician who is to heal the eye or the other parts of the body[a] must know their anatomy.

Indeed a foundation of science is even more requisite for the statesman, inasmuch as politics is a higher and more honourable art than medicine; but physicians of the better class devote much attention
8 to the study of the human body. The student of politics [a] therefore as well as the psychologist must study the nature of the soul, though he will do so as an aid to politics, and only so far as is requisite for the objects of enquiry that he has in view: to pursue the subject in further detail would doubtless be more laborious than is necessary for his purpose.
9 Now on the subject of psychology some of the teaching current in extraneous discourses [b] is satisfactory, and may be adopted here: namely that the soul consists of two parts, one irrational and the
10 other capable of reason.[c] (Whether these two parts are really distinct in the sense that the parts of the body or of any other divisible whole are distinct, or whether though distinguishable in thought as two they are inseparable in reality, like the convex and concave sides of a curve, is a question of no import-
11 ance for the matter in hand.) Of the irrational part of the soul again one division appears to be common to all living things, and of a vegetative nature: I refer to the part that causes nutrition and growth; for we must assume that a vital faculty of this nature exists in all things that assimilate nourishment, including embryos—the same faculty being present also in the fully-developed organism (this is more reasonable than to assume a different nutritive
12 faculty in the latter). The excellence of this faculty therefore appears to be common to all animate

[a] Literally "having a plan or principle."

things and not peculiar to man ; for it is believed that this faculty or part of the soul is most active during sleep, but when they are asleep you cannot tell a good man from a bad one (whence the saying that for half their lives there is no difference between
13 the happy and the miserable). This is a natural result of the fact that sleep is a cessation of the soul from the activities on which its goodness or badness depends—except that in some small degree certain of the sense-impressions may reach the soul during sleep, and consequently the dreams of the good are better than those of ordinary men.
14 We need not however pursue this subject further, but may omit from consideration the nutritive part of the soul, since it exhibits no specifically human excellence.

15 But there also appears to be another element in the soul, which, though irrational, yet in a manner participates in rational principle. In self-restrained and unrestrained [a] people we approve their principle, or the rational part of their souls, because it urges them in the right way and exhorts them to the best course ; but their nature seems also to contain another element beside that of rational principle, which
16 combats and resists that principle. Exactly the same thing may take place in the soul as occurs with the body in a case of paralysis : when the patient wills to move his limbs to the right they swerve to the left ; and similarly in unrestrained persons their impulses run counter to their principle. But whereas in the body we see the erratic member, in the case of the soul we do not see it ; nevertheless it cannot be doubted that in the soul also there is an element beside that of principle,

which opposes and runs counter to principle (though in what sense the two are distinct does not concern
17 us here). But this second element also seems, as we said, to participate in rational principle; at least in the self-restrained man it obeys the behest of principle—and no doubt in the temperate and brave man it is still more amenable, for all parts of his nature are in harmony with principle.

18 Thus we see that the irrational part, as well as the soul as a whole, is double. One division of it, the vegetative, does not share in rational principle at all; the other, the seat of the appetites and of desire in general, does in a sense participate in principle, as being amenable and obedient to it (in the sense in fact in which we speak of 'paying heed' to one's father and friends, not in the sense of the term 'rational' in mathematics [a]). And that principle can in a manner appeal to the irrational part, is indicated by our practice of admonishing delinquents, and by our employment of rebuke and exhortation generally.

19 If on the other hand it be more correct to speak of the appetitive part of the soul also as rational, in that case it is the rational part which, as well as the whole soul, is divided into two, the one division having rational principle in the proper sense and in itself, the other obedient to it as a child to its father.

20 Now virtue also is differentiated in correspondence with this division of the soul. Some forms of virtue are called intellectual virtues, others moral virtues: Wisdom or intelligence and Prudence [b] are intel-

(*ratio*) means 'to be rational' in the sense of commensurable.

[b] *i.e.*, practical, as distinguished from speculative, wisdom.

lectual, Liberality and Temperance are moral virtues. When describing a man's moral character we do not say that he is wise or intelligent, but gentle or temperate; but a wise man also is praised for his disposition,[a] and praiseworthy dispositions we term virtues.

a virtue in the narrower sense of moral virtue. Throughout Aristotle's ethical works, praise and blame are the ordinary tests of virtue and vice. (See also c. xii.)