

and war seem to be un leisured; those of war indeed entirely so, for no one desires to be at war for the sake of being at war, nor deliberately takes steps to cause a war; a man would be thought an utterly blood-thirsty character if he declared war on a friendly state for the sake of causing battles and massacres. But the activity of the politician also is un leisured, and aims at securing something beyond the mere participation in politics: positions of authority and honor, or, if the happiness of the politician himself and of his fellow-citizens, this happiness conceived as something distinct from political activity.

If, then, among practical pursuits displaying the virtues, politics and war stand out preeminent in nobility and grandeur, and yet they are un leisured, and directed to some further end, not chosen for their own sakes: whereas the activity of the intellect is felt to excel in serious worth, consisting as it does in contemplation, and to aim at no end beyond itself, and also to contain a pleasure peculiar to itself, and therefore augmenting its activity: and if accordingly the attributes of this activity are found to be self-sufficiency, leisuredness, such freedom from fatigue as is possible for man, and all the other attributes of blessedness: it follows that it is the activity of the intellect that constitutes complete human happiness, provided it be granted a complete span of life, for nothing that belongs to happiness can be incomplete.

O. THE JOYS OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Such a life as this, however, will be higher than the human level: not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine; and by as much as this something is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the exercise of the other forms of virtue. If, then, the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life.

Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought so far as possible to achieve immortality, and do all that man may to live in accordance with the highest thing

in him; for though this be small in bulk, in power and value it far surpasses all the rest.

It may even be held that this is the true self of each, inasmuch as it is the ruling and better part; and, therefore, it would be a strange thing if a man should choose to live not his own life but the life of some other than himself.

25. STOICISM: VIRTUE, THE HIGHEST GOOD *

Epictetus (circa 90 A.D.)

A. THE WISE MAN SEEKS ONLY WHAT IS WITHIN HIS CONTROL

Of things some are in our power, and others are not. In our power are opinion, choice, desire, aversion; and, in a word, whatever are our own acts; not in our power are the body, property, reputation, offices, and, in a word, whatever are not our own acts. Remember, then, that if you think the things which are by nature slavish to be free, and the things which are in the power of others to be your own, you will be hindered, you will lament, you will be disturbed, you will blame both gods and men; but if you think what is another's, as it really is, belongs to another, no man will ever compel you, no man will hinder you, you will never blame any man, you will accuse no man, you will do nothing involuntarily, no man will harm you, you will have no enemy, for you will not suffer any harm.

Remember that desire contains in it the hope of obtaining that which you desire; and the hope in aversion is that you will not fall into that which you attempt to avoid; and he who fails in his desire is unfortunate; and he who falls into that which he would avoid, is unhappy. If, then, you attempt to avoid only the things contrary to nature which are within your power, you will not be involved in any of the things which you would avoid. But if you attempt to avoid disease or death or poverty, you will be unhappy. Take away, then, aversion from all things

* *Encheiridion* (trans. by George Long; London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1912), pp. 379-403. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

which are not in our power, and transfer it to the things contrary to nature which are in our power.

B. FALSE OPINIONS CAUSE MOST OF OUR UNHAPPINESS

Men are disturbed, not by the things which happen, but by their opinions about these things; for example, death is nothing terrible, for if it were, it would have seemed so to Socrates; for the opinion about death, that it is terrible, is the terrible thing. When, then, we are impeded or disturbed or grieved, let us never blame others, but ourselves, that is, our opinions. It is the act of an ill-instructed man to blame others for his own bad condition; it is the act of one who has begun to be instructed, to lay the blame on himself.

C. DO NOT DESIRE WHAT IS NOT IN YOUR POWER

If you would have your children and your wife and your friends to live for ever, you are silly; for you would have the things which are not in your power to be in your power, and the things which belong to others to be yours. So if you would have your slave to be free from faults, you are a fool. But if you wish not to fail in your desires, you are able to do that. Practice, then, this which you are able to do.

He is the master of every man who has the power over the things which another person wishes or does not wish, the power to confer them on him or to take them away. Whoever wishes to be free, let him neither wish for any thing nor avoid anything which depends on others; if he does not observe this rule, he must be a slave.

D. DUTY DEPENDS ON YOUR STATION IN LIFE

Remember that thou art an actor in a play, of such a kind as the teacher may choose; if short, of a short one; if long, of a long one; if he wishes you to act the part of a poor man, see that you act the part naturally; if the part of a lame man, a magistrate, of a private person, do the same. For this is your duty, to act well the part that is given to you; but to select the part belongs to another.

Duties are universally measured by relations. Is a man a

father? The precept is to take care of him, to yield to him in all things, to submit when he is reproachful, when he inflicts blows. But suppose that he is a bad father? No; but a father. Does a brother wrong you? Maintain, then, your own position towards him, and do not examine what he is doing, but what you must do that your will shall be conformable to nature. For another will not damage you, unless you choose: but you will be damaged then when you shall think that you are damaged. In this way, then, you will discover your duty from the relation of a neighbor, from that of a citizen, from that of a general, if you are accustomed to contemplate the relations.

E. AVOID BEING CARRIED AWAY BY PLEASURE

If you have received the impression of any pleasure, guard yourself against being carried away by it; but let the thing wait for you, and allow yourself a certain delay on your own part. Then think of both times, of the time when you will enjoy the pleasure, and of the time after the enjoyment of the pleasure when you will repent and will reproach yourself. And set against these things how you will commend yourself. But if it seems to you seasonable to do the thing, take care that the charm of it, and the pleasure, and the attraction of it shall not conquer you: but set on the other side the consideration how much better it is to be conscious that you have gained this victory.

F. ACT WISELY IN EVERY SITUATION

Everything has two handles, the one by which it may be borne, the other by which it may not. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold of the act by that handle wherein he acts unjustly, for this is the handle which cannot be borne: but lay hold of the other, that he is your brother, that he was nurtured with you, and you will lay hold of the thing by that handle by which it can be borne.

G. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

On no occasion call yourself a philosopher, and do not speak much among the uninstructed about philosophical precepts, but do that which follows from them. For example, at a banquet

do not say how a man ought to eat, but eat as you ought to eat. For remember that in this way Socrates also altogether avoided ostentation; persons used to come to him and ask to be recommended by him to philosophers, and he used to take them to philosophers; so easily did he submit to being overlooked.

Accordingly, if any conversation should arise among uninstructed persons about any precept, generally be silent; for there is great danger that you will immediately vomit up what you have not digested. And when a man shall say to you, that you know nothing, and you are not vexed, then be sure that you have begun the work of philosophy. For even sheep do not vomit up their grass and show to the shepherds how much they have eaten; but when they have internally digested the pasture, they produce externally wool and milk. Do you also show not your theorems to the uninstructed, but show the acts which come from their digestion.

H. EVIL IS WITHIN A MAN RATHER THAN IN EXTERNALS

The condition and characteristic of an uninstructed person is this: he never expects from himself profit nor harm, but from externals. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher is this: he expects all advantage and all harm from himself.

The marks of one who is making progress are these: he censures no man, he praises no man, he blames no man, he accuses no man, he says nothing about himself as if he were somebody or knew something; when he is impeded at all or hindered, he blames himself; if a man praises him, he ridicules the praiser to himself; if a man censures him, he makes no defense; he removes all desire from himself, and he transfers aversion to those things only of the things within our power which are contrary to nature; he employs a moderate movement towards everything; whether he is considered foolish or ignorant, he cares not; and, in a word, he watches himself as if he were an enemy and lying in ambush.

I. FOLLOW THE RULES WHICH LEAD TO A GOOD LIFE

Whatever rules are proposed to you for the conduct of life, abide by them, as if they were laws, as if you would be guilty

of impiety if you transgressed any of them. And whatever any man shall say about you, do not attend to it: for this is no affair of yours. How long will you, then, still defer thinking yourself worthy of the best things? Have you accepted the rules, which it was your duty to agree to, and have you agreed to them? What teacher, then, do you still expect, that you defer to him correction of yourself?

You are no longer a youth, but already a full-grown man. If, then, you are negligent and slothful, and are continually making procrastination after procrastination, and fixing day after day, after which you will attend to yourself, you will not know that you are not making improvement, but you will continue ignorant both while you live and till you die. Immediately, then, think it right to live as a full-grown man, and one who is making proficiency, and let everything which appears to you to be the best be to you a law which must not be transgressed.

And if any thing laborious or pleasant or glorious or inglorious be presented to you, remember that now is the contest, now are the Olympic games, and they cannot be deferred; and that it depends on one defeat and one giving way that progress is either lost or maintained. Socrates in this way became perfect, in all things improving himself, attending to nothing except to reason. But you, though you are not yet a Socrates, ought to live as one who wishes to be a Socrates.

26. MEDITATIONS *

Marcus Aurelius (121-180)

A. ON GETTING UP IN THE MORNING

In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present: I am rising to the work of a human being. Why, then, am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I

* *The Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus* (trans. by George Long; Philadelphia: David McKay Co.), pp. 149-150, 104, 129-132.

42 / The Five Great Philosophies of Life

These confessions of an Epicurean heretic, wrung from a man who had been rigidly trained by a stern father in Epicurean principles, yet whose surpassing candor compelled him to make these admissions, so fatal to the system, so ennobling to the man and to the doctrine he proclaimed, serve as an admirable preparation for the succeeding chapters, where these same principles, which Mill introduces as supplements, and modifications, and amendments to Epicureanism, will be presented as the foundation-stones of larger and deeper views of life. Mill starts with a jack-knife which he publicly proclaims to be in every part of the handle and in every blade through and through Epicurean; then gets a new handle from the Stoics; borrows one blade from Plato, and another from Aristotle; unconsciously steals the biggest blade of all from Christianity; makes one of the best knives to be found on the moral market: yet still, in loyalty to early parental training, insists on calling the finished product by the same name as that with which he started out. The result is a splendid knife to cut with; but a difficult one to classify. Our quest for the principles of personality will not bring us anything much better, for practical purposes, than the lofty teaching of Mill's "Utilitarianism," and its companion in inconsistency, Herbert Spencer's "Principles of Ethics." All our five principles are present in these so-called hedonistic treatises. But it is a great theoretical advantage, and ultimately carries with it considerable practical gain, to give credit where credit is due, and to call things by their right names. Thanks to the candor of these heretics, though the names we encounter hereafter will be new, we shall greet most of the principles we discover under these new names as old friends to whom the Epicurean heretics gave us our first introduction.

Chapter 2

Stoic Self-Control by Law

The Psychological Law of Apperception

THE SHORTEST WAY to understand the Stoic principle is through the psychological doctrine of apperception. According to this now universally accepted doctrine, the mind is not an empty cabinet into which ready-made impressions of external things are dumped. The mind is an active process; and the meaning and value of any sensation presented from without is determined by the reaction upon it of the ideas and aims that are dominant within. This doctrine has revolutionized psychology and pedagogy, and when rightly introduced into the personal life proves even more revolutionary there. Stoicism works this doctrine for all that it is worth. Christian Science and kindred popular cults of the present day are perhaps working it for rather more than it is worth.

Translated into simple everyday terms, this doctrine in its application to the personal life means that the value of any external fact or the possession or experience depends on the way in which we take it. Take riches, for example. Stocks and bonds, real estate and mortgages, money and bank accounts, in themselves do not make a man either rich or poor. They may enrich or they may impoverish his personality. It is not until they are taken up into the mind, thought over, related to one's general scheme of conduct, made the basis of one's purposes and plans, that they become a factor in the personal life. Obviously the same amount of money, a hundred thousand dollars, may be worked over into personal life in a great variety of ways. One man is made proud by it. Another is made lazy. Another is made hard-hearted. Another is made avaricious for more. Another is fired with the desire to speculate. Another is filled with anxiety lest he may lose it. All these are obviously impoverished by the so-called wealth which they possess. To rich men's wives and children, whose wealth comes without the strenuous exertion and close human contact involved in earning it, it generally works their personal impoverishment in one or more of these fatal ways. For wealth, in an indolent, self-indulgent, vain, conceited, ostentatious, unsympathetic mind, takes on the color of these odious qualities, and becomes a

curse to its possessor; just because he or she is cursed with these evil propensities already, and the wealth simply adds fuel to the preëxistent, though perhaps latent and smoldering flames.

On the other hand one man is made grateful for the wealth he has been able to accumulate. Another is made more sympathetic. Another is made generous. Another is urged into the larger public service his independent means makes possible. Another is lifted up into a sense of responsibility for its right use. On the whole the men and women who earn their money honestly are usually affected in one or more of these beneficial ways, and their wealth becomes an enrichment of their personality.

Now it is impossible that this hundred thousand dollars should get into any man's mind, and become a mental state, without its being mixed with one or other of these mental, emotional, and volitional accompaniments. The mental state, in other words, is a compound, of which the external fact, in this case the hundred thousand dollars, is the least important ingredient. It is so unimportant a factor that the Stoics pronounced it indifferent. The tone and temper in which we accept our riches, the ends to which we devote them, the spirit in which we hold them, the way in which we spend them, are so vastly more important than the mere fact of having them, that by comparison, the fact itself seems indifferent. Like all strong statements, this is doubtless an exaggeration. You cannot have just the same mental state without riches that you can have with them. The external fact is a factor, though a relatively small one, in the composite mental state. The virtues of a rich man are not precisely the same as the virtues of a poor man. Yet the Stoic paradox is very much nearer the truth than the statement of the average man, that external things are the whole, or even the most important part of our mental states.

The same thing is true of health and sickness. Health often makes one careless, insensitive, negligent of duty; while sickness often makes one conscientious, considerate, faithful, and thus more useful and efficient than his healthy brother. Popularity often puffs up with pride; while persecution, by humbling, prepares the heart for truer blessedness. Hence whether an external fact is good or evil, depends on how we take it, what we make of it, the state of mind and heart and will into which it enters as a factor; and that in turn depends, the Stoic tells us, on ourselves, and is under our control.

Stoicism is fundamentally this psychological doctrine of

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apperception, carried over and applied in the field of the personal life,—the doctrine, namely, that no external thing alone can affect us for good or evil, until we have woven it into the texture of our mental life, painted it with the color of our dominant mood and temper, and stamped it with the approval of our will. Thus everything except a slight residuum is through and through mental, our own product, the expression of what we are and desire to be. The only difference between Stoicism and Christian Science at this point is that Stoicism recognizes the material element; though it does so only to minimize it, and pronounce it indifferent. Christian Science denies that there is any physical fact, or even the raw material out of which to make one. All is merely mental, says the consistent Christian Scientist with the toothache. There is no matter there to ache. The Stoic, truer to the facts, and in not less but more heroic spirit declares: "There is matter, but it doesn't matter if there is." The toothache can be taken as a spur to greater fortitude and equanimity than the man whose teeth are all sound has had opportunity to practically exemplify; and so the total mental state, toothache-borne-with-fortitude, may be positively good.

This doctrine that external things never in themselves constitute a mental state; that they are consequently indifferent; that the all-important contribution is made by the mind itself; that this contribution from the mind is what gives the tone and determines the worth of the total mental state; and that this contribution is exclusively our own affair and may be brought entirely under our own control;—this is the first and most fundamental Stoic principle. If we have grasped this principle, we are prepared to read intelligently and sympathetically the otherwise startling and paradoxical deliverances of the Stoic masters.

Selections from the Stoic Scriptures

First let us listen to Epictetus, the slave, the Stoic of the cottage as he has been called:—

"Everything has two handles: one by which it may be borne, another by which it cannot. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold on the affair by the handle of his injustice, for by that it cannot be borne; but rather by the opposite, that he is your brother, that he was brought up with you, and thus you will lay hold on it as it is to be borne." Here the handle is a homely but effective figure for the mass of mental association

into which the external fact of a brother who acts unjustly is introduced before he actually enters our mental state, and determines how we shall feel and act.

"If a person had delivered up your body to some passer-by, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in delivering up your mind to any reviler, to be disconcerted and confounded?" The reviling does not become a determining factor in my own mental state unless I choose to let it. If I feel humiliated and stung by it, it is because I am weak and foolish enough to stake my estimate of myself, and my consequent happiness, upon what somebody who does not know me says about me, rather than on what I, who know myself better than anybody else, actually think. A boy at Phillips Andover Academy once drew this distinction very adroitly for another boy. There had been a free fight among the boys causing a great deal of disturbance, and Principal Bancroft had traced the beginning of it to an insulting remark on the part of the boy in question. Dr. Bancroft accused him of beginning the trouble. "No, sir," said the boy, "I did not begin it. The other fellow began it." "Well," said Principal Bancroft, "you tell me precisely what took place, and I will decide who began it." "Oh," replied the boy, "I simply called him a 'darned' fool, and he took offence." Now if the other boy had been a Stoic, he would not have taken offense, and the first boy might have called him a fool with impunity. Imputing Stoicism to that extent to other people, however, is very dangerous business. Stoicism is a doctrine to be strictly applied to ourselves, but never imputed to other people, least of all to the people we wish to abuse and revile.

Epictetus again states his doctrine most explicitly on the subject of terrors. "Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of things. Thus death is nothing terrible else it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the terror consists in our notion of death, that it is terrible. When, therefore, we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never impute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our views."

Again he makes a sharp distinction between what is in our power,—that is, what we think about things; and what are not in our power,—that is external facts. "There are things which are within our power, and there are things which are beyond our power. Within our power are opinion, aim, desire, aversion, and, in one word, whatever affairs are our own. Beyond our power are body, property, reputation, office, and, in one word, whatever are not properly our own affairs."

See harassment

"Now the things within our power are by nature free, unrestricted, unhindered; but those beyond our power are weak, dependent, restricted, alien. Remember, then, that if you attribute freedom to things by nature dependent, and seek for your own that which is really controlled by others, you will be hindered, you will lament, you will be disturbed, you will find fault both with gods and men. But if you take for your own only that which is your own, and view what belongs to others just as it really is, then no one will ever compel you, no one will restrict you; you will find fault with no one, you will accuse no one, you will do nothing against your will; no one will hurt you, you will not have an enemy, nor will you suffer any harm."

All this is simply carrying out the principle that we need not concern ourselves about purely external things, for those things pure and simple can never get into our minds, or affect us one way or the other. The only things that enter into us are things as we think about them, facts as we feel about them, forces as we react upon them, and these thoughts, feelings, and reactions are our own affairs; and if we do not think serenely, feel tranquilly, and act freely with reference to them, it is not the fault of external things, but of ourselves.

In his discourse on tranquillity Epictetus gives us the same counsel. "Consider, you who are about to undergo trial, what you wish to preserve, and in what to succeed. For if you wish to preserve a mind in harmony with nature, you are entirely safe; everything goes well; you have no trouble on your hands. While you wish to preserve that freedom which belongs to you, and are contented with that, for what have you longer to be anxious? For who is the master of things like these? Who can take them away? If you wish to be a man of modesty and fidelity, who shall prevent you? If you wish not to be restrained or compelled, who shall compel you to desires contrary to your principles? to aversions contrary to your opinion? The judge, perhaps, will pass a sentence against you which he thinks formidable; but can he likewise make you receive it with shrinking? Since, then, desire and aversion are in your power, for what have you to be anxious?"

Epictetus bids us meet difficulties in the same way. "Difficulties are things that show what men are. For the future, in case of any difficulty, remember that God, like a gymnastic trainer, has pitted you against a rough antagonist. For what end? That you may be an Olympic conqueror, and this cannot be without toil. No man, in my opinion, has a more profitable difficulty

on his hands than you have, provided you but use it as an athletic champion uses his antagonist."

Epictetus does not shrink from the logic of his teaching in its application to the sorrows of others, though here it is tempered by a concession to the weakness of ordinary mortals. "When you see a person weeping in sorrow, either when a child goes abroad, or when he is dead, or when the man has lost his property, take care that the appearance do not hurry you away with it as if he were suffering in external things. But straightway make a distinction in your mind, and be in readiness to say, it is not that which has happened that afflicts this man, for it does not afflict another, but it is the opinion about this thing which afflicts the man. So far as words, then, do not be unwilling to show him sympathy, and even if it happens so, to lament with him. But take care that you do not lament internally also."

At this point, if not before, we feel that Stoicism is doing violence to the nobler feelings of our nature, and are prepared to break with it. Stoicism is too hard and cold and individualistic to teach us our duty, or even to leave us free to act out our best inclinations, toward our neighbor. We may be as Stoical as we please in our own troubles and afflictions; but let us beware how we carry over its icy distinctions into our interpretation of our neighbor's suffering.

I have drawn most of my illustrations from Epictetus, because this resignation comes with rather better grace from a poor, lame man, who has been a slave, and who lives on the barest necessities of life, than from the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and the wealthy courtier Seneca. Yet the most distinctive utterances of these men teach the same lesson. Seneca attributes it to his pilot in the famous prayer, "Oh, Neptune, you may save me if you will; you may sink me if you will; but whatever happens, I shall keep my rudder true." Marcus Aurelius says: "Let the part of thy soul which leads and governs be undisturbed by the movements in the flesh, whether of pleasure or pain; and let it not unite itself with them, but let it circumscribe itself, and limit those effects to their parts." "Let it make no difference to thee whether thou art cold or warm, if thou art doing thy duty, and whether dying or doing something else. For it is one of the acts of life,—this act by which we die; it is sufficient then in this act also to do well what we have in hand." "External things touch not the soul, not in the least degree." "Remember on every occasion which leads thee to vexation to apply this principle: that this is not a misfortune, but to bear it nobly is good fortune."

If you all afflict each other!

The most recent prophet of Stoicism is Maurice Maeterlinck. In "Wisdom and Destiny," he says:—

"The event itself is pure water that flows from the pitcher of fate, and seldom has it either savour or perfume or colour. But even as the soul may be wherein it seeks shelter, so will the event become joyous or sad, become tender or hateful, become deadly or quick with life. To those round about us there happen incessant and countless adventures, whereof every one, it would seem, contains a germ of heroism; but the adventure passes away, and heroic deed there is none. But when Jesus Christ met the Samaritan, met a few children, an adulterous woman, then did humanity rise three times in succession to the level of God."

"It might almost be said that there happens to men only that they desire. It is true that on certain external events our influence is of the feeblest, but we have all-powerful action on that which these events shall become in ourselves—in other words, on their spiritual part. The life of most men will be saddened or lightened by the thing that may chance to befall them,—in the men whom I speak of, whatever may happen is lit up by their inward life. If you have been deceived, it is not the deception that matters, but the forgiveness whereto it gave birth in your soul, and the loftiness, wisdom, completeness of this forgiveness,—by these shall your eyes see more clearly than if all men had ever been faithful. But if, by this act of deceit, there have come not more simpleness, loftier faith, wider range to your love, then have you been deceived in vain, and may truly say nothing has happened."

"Let us always remember that nothing befalls us that is not of the nature of ourselves. There comes no adventure but wears to our soul the shape of our everyday thoughts; and deeds of heroism are but offered to those who, for many long years, have been heroes in obscurity and silence. And whether you climb up the mountain or go down the hill to the valley, whether you journey to the end of the world or merely walk round your house, none but yourself shall you meet on the highway of fate. If Judas go forth to-night, it is toward Judas his steps will tend, nor will chance for betrayal be lacking; but let Socrates open his door,—he shall find Socrates asleep on the threshold before him, and there will be occasion for wisdom. We become that which we discover in the sorrows and joys that befall us; and the least expected caprices of fate soon mould themselves to our thought. It is in our past that Destiny finds all her weapons, her vestments, her jewels. A sorrow your soul has changed

into sweetness, to indulgence or patient smiles, is a sorrow that shall never return without spiritual ornament; and a fault or defect you have looked in the face can harm you no more. All that has thus been transformed can belong no more to the hostile powers. Real fatality exists only in certain external disasters—as disease, accident, the sudden death of those we love; but inner fatality there is none. Wisdom has will power sufficient to rectify all that does not deal death to the body; it will even at times invade the narrow domain of external fatality. Even when the deed has been done, the misfortune has happened, it still rests with ourselves to deny her the least influence on that which shall come to pass in our soul. She may strike at the heart that is eager for good, but still is she helpless to keep back the light that shall stream to this heart from the error acknowledged, the pain undergone. It is not in her power to prevent the soul from transforming each single affliction into thoughts, into feelings, and treasure she dare not profane. Be her empire never so great over all things external, she always must halt when she finds on the threshold a silent guardian of the inner life. For even as triumph of dictators and consuls could be celebrated only in Rome, so can the true triumph of Fate take place nowhere save in our soul."

It would be easy to cite passage after passage in which the great masters of Stoicism ring the changes on this idea, that the external thing, whether it be good or evil, cannot get into the fortified citadel of my mind, and therefore cannot touch me. Before it can touch me it must first be incorporated into my mind. In the very act of incorporation it undergoes a transformation, which in the perverse man may change the best external things into poison and bitterness; and in the sage is able to convert the worst of external facts into virtue, glory, and honor. Out of indifferent external matter, thinking makes the world in which we live; and if it is not a good world, the fault is, not with the indifferent external matters,—such as, to take Epictetus's enumeration of them, "Wealth, health, life, death, pleasure, and pain, which lie between the virtues and the vices,"—but in our weak and erroneous thinking.

The Stoic Reverence for Universal Law

The first half of the Stoic doctrine is that we give our world the color of our thoughts. The second half of Stoicism is concerned with what these thoughts of ours shall be. The first half of the doctrine alone would leave us in crude fantastic Cynicism,

—the doctrine out of which the broader and deeper Stoic teaching took its rise. The Cynic paints the world in the flaring colors of his undisciplined, individual caprice. Modern apostles of the essential Stoic principle incline to paint the world in the roseate hues of a merely optional optimism. They want to be well, and happy, and serene, and self-satisfied; they think they are; and thinking makes them so. If Stoicism had been as superficial as that, as capricious, and temperamental, and individualistic, it would not have lasted as it has for more than two thousand years. The Stoic thought had substance, content, objective reality, as unfortunately most of the current phases of popular philosophy have not. This objective and universal principle the Stoic found in law. We must think things, not as we would like to have them, which is the optimism of the fabled ostrich, with its head in the sand; not in some vague, general phrases which mean nothing, which is the optimism of mysticism; but in the hard, rigid terms of universal law. Everything that happens is part of the one great whole. The law of the whole determines the nature and worth of the part. Seen from the point of view of the whole, every part is necessary, and therefore good,—everything except, as Cleanthes says in his hymn, "what the wicked do in their foolishness." The typical evils of life can all be brought under the Stoic formula, under some beneficial law; all, that is, except sin. That particular form of evil was not satisfactorily dealt with until the advent of Christianity. (*Sorginess + grace*)

Take evils of accident to begin with. An aged man slips on the ice, falls, breaks a bone, and is left, like Epictetus, lame for life. The particular application of the law of gravitation in this case has unfortunate results for the individual. But the law is good. We should not know how to get along in the world without this beneficent law. Shall we repine and complain against the law that holds the stars and planets in their courses, shapes the mountains, sways the tides, brings down the rain, and draws the rivers to the sea, turning ten thousand mill-wheels of industry as it goes rejoicing on its way; shall we complain against this law because in one instance in a thousand million it chances to throw down an individual, which happens to be me, and breaks a bone or two of mine, and leaves me for the brief span of my remaining pilgrimage with a limping gait? If Epictetus could say to his cruel master under torture, "You will break my leg if you keep on," and then when it broke could smilingly add, "I told you so,"—cannot we endure with forti-

tude, and even grateful joy, the incidental inflictions which so beneficent a master as the great law of gravitation in its magnificent impartiality may see fit to mete out to us?

A current of electricity, seeking its way from sky to earth, finds on some particular occasion the body of a beloved husband, a dear son, an honored father of dependent children, the best conductor between the air and the earth, and kills the person through whose body it takes its swift and fatal course. Yet this law has no malevolence in its impartial heart. On the contrary the beneficent potency of the laws of electricity is so great that our largest hopes for the improvement of our economic condition rest on its unexplored resources.

A group of bacteria, ever alert to find matter not already appropriated and held in place by vital forces stronger than their own, find their food and breeding place within a human body, and subject our friend or our child to weeks of fever, and perchance to death. Yet we cannot call evil the great biological law that each organism shall seek its meat from God wherever it can find it. Indeed were it not for these micro-organisms, and their alertness to seize upon and transform into their own living substance everything morbid and unwholesome, the whole earth would be nothing but a vast charnel house reeking with the intolerable stench of the undisintegrated and unburied dead.

The most uncompromising exponent of this second half of the Stoic doctrine in the modern world is Immanuel Kant. According to him the whole worth and dignity of life turns not on external fortune, nor even on good natural endowments, but on our internal reaction, the reverence of our will for universal law. Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will. Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other *talents* of the mind, however they may be named, or courage, resolution, perseverance, as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects; but these gifts of nature may also become extremely bad and mischievous if the will which is to make use of them, and which, therefore, constitutes what is called character, is not good. It is the same with the gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honour, even health, and the general well-being and contentment with one's condition which is called happiness, inspire pride and often presumption, if there is not a good will to correct the influence of these on the mind."

"Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational

beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws, that is, according to principles; *i.e.* have a will."

"Consequently the only good action is that which is done out of pure reverence for universal law. This categorical imperative of duty is expressed as follows: 'Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a Universal Law of Nature.' And since every other rational being must conduct himself on the same rational principle that holds for me, I am bound to respect him as I do myself. Hence the second practical imperative is: 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end, never as means only.'"

In Kant Stoicism reaches its climax. Law and the will are everything: possessions, even graces are nothing.

The Stoic Solution of the Problem of Evil

The problem of evil was the great problem of the Stoic, as the problem of pleasure was the problem of the Epicurean. To this problem the Stoic gives substantially four answers, with all of which we are already somewhat familiar:—

First: Only that is evil which we choose to regard as such. To quote Marcus Aurelius once more on this fundamental point: "Consider that everything is opinion, and opinion is in thy power. Take away then, when thou chooseth, thy opinion, and like a mariner who has doubled the promontory, thou wilt find calm, everything stable, and a waveless bay." "Take away thy opinion, and then there is taken away the complaint: I have been harmed. Take away the complaint: I have been harmed, and the harm is done away."

Second: Since virtue or integrity is the only good, nothing but the loss of that can be a real evil. When this is present, nothing of real value can be lacking. A Stoic then says, "Virtue suffers no vacancy in the place she inhabits; she fills the whole soul, takes away the sensibility of any loss, and is herself sufficient." "As the stars hide their diminished heads before the brightness of the sun, so pains, afflictions, and injuries are all crushed and dissipated by the greatness of virtue; whenever she shines, everything but what borrows its splendour from her disappears, and all manner of annoyances have no more effect upon her than a shower of rain upon the sea." "It does not matter what you bear, but how you bear it." "Where a man can live at all, he can live well." "I must die. Must I then die lamenting? I must go into exile. Does any man hinder me from

going with smiles and cheerfulness and contentment?" "Life itself is neither good nor evil, but only a place for good and evil." "It is the edge and temper of the blade that make a good sword, not the richness of the scabbard; and so it is not money and possessions that make a man considerable, but his virtue." "They are amusing fellows who are proud of things which are not in our power. A man says: I am better than you for I possess much land, and you are wasting with hunger. Another says: I am of consular rank; another: I have curly hair. But a horse does not say to a horse: I am superior to you, for I possess much fodder and much barley, and my bits are of gold, and my harness is embroidered; but he says: I am swifter than you. And every animal is better or worse from his own merit or his own badness. Is there then no virtue in man only, and must we look to our hair, and our clothes, and to our ancestors?" "Let our riches consist in coveting nothing, and our peace in fearing nothing."

Third: What seems evil to the individual is good for the whole: and since we are members of the whole is good for us. "Must my leg be lamed?" the Stoic asks. "Wretch, do you then on account of one poor leg find fault with the world? Wilt thou not willingly surrender it for the whole? Know you not how small a part you are compared with the whole?" "If a good man had foreknowledge of what would happen, he would cooperate toward his own sickness and death and mutilation, since he knows that these things are assigned to him according to the universal arrangement, and that the whole is superior to the part."

Fourth: Trial brings out our best qualities, is "stuff to try the soul's strength on," and "educate the man," as Browning puts it. This interpretation of evil as a means of bringing out the higher moral qualities, though not peculiar to Stoicism, was very congenial to their system, and appears frequently in their writings. "Just as we must understand when it is said that *Æsculapius* prescribed to this man horse exercise, or bathing in cold water, or going without shoes, so we must understand when it is said that the nature of the universe prescribed to this man disease, or mutilation, or loss of anything of the kind." "Calamity is the touchstone of a brave mind, that resolves to live and die master of itself. Adversity is the better for us all, for it is God's mercy to show the world their errors, and that the things they fear and covet are neither good nor evil, being the common and promiscuous lot of good men and bad."

The Stoic Paradoxes

A good test of one's appreciation of the Stoic position is whether or not one can see the measure of truth their paradoxes contain.

The first paradox is that there are no degrees in vice. In the words of the Stoic, "The man who is a hundred furlongs from Canopus, and the man who is only one, are both equally not in Canopus."

One of the few bits of moral counsel which I remember from the infant class in the Sunday-school runs as follows:—

*"It is a sin
To steal a pin:
Much more to steal
A greater thing."*

This, in spite of its exquisite lyrical expression, the Stoic would flatly deny. The theft of a pin, and the defalcation of a bank cashier for a hundred thousand dollars; a cross word to a dog, and a course of conduct which breaks a woman's heart, are from the Stoic standpoint precisely on a level. For it is not the consequences but the form of our action that is the important thing. It is not how we make other people feel as a result of our act, but how we ourselves think of it, as we propose to do it, or after it is done, that determines its goodness or badness. If I steal a pin, I violate the universal law just as clearly and absolutely as though I stole the hundred thousand dollars. I can no more look with deliberate approval on the cross word to a dog, than on the breaking of a woman's heart. There are things that do not admit of degrees. We must either fire our gun off or not fire it. We cannot fire part of the charge. We want either an absolutely good egg for breakfast, or no egg at all. One that is partially good, or on the line between goodness and badness, we send back as altogether bad. If there is a little round hole in a pane of glass, cut by a bullet, we reject the whole pane is imperfect, just as though a big jagged hole had been made in it by a brickbat. We get an echo of this paradox in the statement of St. James, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."

This paradox becomes plain, self-evident truth, the moment we admit the Stoic position that not external things, and their appeal to our sensibility, but our internal attitudes toward uni-

versal law, are the points on which our virtue hangs. Either we intend to obey the universal law of nature or we do not; and between the intention of obedience and the intention of disobedience there is no middle ground.

Second: The wise man, the Stoic sage, is absolutely perfect, the complete master of himself, and rightfully the ruler of the world. If everything depends on our thought, and our thought is in tune with the universal law, then obviously we are perfect. Beyond such complete inner response to the universal law it is impossible for man to advance.

Curiously enough, the religious doctrine of perfectionism, which often arises in Methodist circles, and in such holiness movements as have taken their rise from the influence of Methodism, shows this same root in the conception of law. Wesley's definition of sin is "the violation of a known law." If that be all there is of sin, then any of us who is ordinarily decent and conscientious, may boast of perfection. You can number perfectionists by tens of thousands on such abstract terms as these. But if sin be not merely deliberate violation of abstract law; if it be failure to fulfill to the highest degree the infinitely delicate personal, domestic, civic, and social relations in which we stand; then the very notion of perfection is preposterous, and the profession of it little less than blasphemy. But like the modern religious perfectionists, the Stoics had little concern for the concrete, individual, personal ties which bind men and women together in families, societies, and states. Perfection was an easy thing, because they had defined it in such abstract terms. Still, though not by any means the whole of virtue as deeper schools have apprehended it, it is something to have our inner motive absolutely right, when measured by the standard of universal law. That at least the Stoic professed to have attained.

Third: The Stoic is a citizen of the whole world. Local, domestic, national ties bind him not. But this is a cheap way of gaining universality,—this skipping the particulars of which the universal is composed. To be as much interested in the politics of Rio Janeiro or Hong Kong as you are in those of the ward of your own city does not mean much until we know how much you are interested in the politics of your own ward. And in the case of the Stoic this interest was very attenuated. As is usually the case, extension of interest to the ends of the earth was purchased at the cost of defective intensity close at home, where charity ought to begin. As a matter of fact the Stoics were very defective in their standards of citizenship.

Still, what the law of justice demanded, that they were disposed to render to every man; and thus, though on a very superficial basis, the Stoics laid the broad foundation of an international democracy which knows no limits of color, race, or stage of development. Though Stoicism falls far short of the warmth and devotion of modern Christian missions, yet the early stage of the missionary movement, in which people were interested, not in the concrete welfare of specific peoples, but in vast aggregates of "souls," represented on maps, and in diagrams, bears a close resemblance to the Stoic cosmopolitanism. We have all seen people who would give and work to save the souls of the heathen, who would never under any circumstances think of calling on the neighbor on the same street who chanced to be a little below their own social circle. The soul of a heathen is a very abstract conception; the lowly neighbor a very concrete affair. The Stoics are not the only people who have deceived themselves with vast abstractions.

The Religious Aspect of Stoicism

The Stoics had a genuine religion. The Epicureans, too, had their gods, but they never took them very seriously. In a world made up of atoms accidentally grouped in transient relations, of which countless accidental groupings I happen to be one, there is no room for a real religious relationship. Consequently the Epicurean, though he amused himself with poetic pictures of gods who led lives of undisturbed serenity, unconcerned about the affairs of men, had no consciousness of a great spiritual whole of which he was a part, or of an Infinite Person to whom he was personally related.

To the Stoic, on the contrary, the round world is part of a single universe, which holds all its parts in the grasp and guidance of one universal law, determining each particular event. By making that law of the universe his own, the individual man at once worships the all-controlling Providence, and achieves his own freedom. For the law to which he yields is at once the law of the whole universe, and the law of his own nature as a part of the universe. "We are born subjects," exclaims the Stoic, "but to obey God is perfect liberty." "Everything," says Marcus Aurelius, "harmonises with me which is harmonious to thee, O universe. Nothing for me is too early or too late, which is in due time for thee."

A characteristic prayer and meditation and hymn will show us, far better than description, what this Stoic religion meant to those who devoutly held it. Epictetus gives us this prayer of the

dying Cynic: "I stretch out my hands to God and say: The means which I have received from thee for seeing thy administration of the world and following it I have not neglected: I have not dishonoured thee by my acts: see how I have used my perceptions: have I ever blamed thee? have I been discontented with anything that happens or wished it to be otherwise? Have I wished to transgress the relations of things? That thou hast given me life, I thank thee for what thou hast given: so long as I have used the things which are thine I am content; take them back and place them wherever thou mayest choose; for thine were all things,—thou gavest them to me. Is it not enough to depart in this state of mind, and what life is better and more becoming than that of a man who is in this state of mind, and what end is more happy?"

He also offers us this meditation on the inevitable losses of life, by which he consoles himself with the thought that all he has is a loan from God, which these seeming losses but restore to their rightful owner, who had lent them to us for a while.

"Never say about anything, I have lost it; but say, I have restored it. Is your child dead? It has been restored. Is your wife dead? She has been restored. Has your estate been taken from you? Has not this been also restored? 'But he who has taken it from me is a bad man.' But what is it to you by whose hands the giver demanded it back? So long as he may allow you, take care of it as a thing which belongs to another, as travellers do with their inn."

The grandest expression of the Stoic religion, however, is found in the hymn of Cleanthes. Elsewhere there is too evident a disposition to condescend to use God's aid in keeping up the Stoic temper; with little of outgoing adoration for the greatness and glory which are in God himself. But in this grand hymn we have genuine reverence, devotion, worship, praise, self-surrender,—in short, that confession of the glory of the Infinite by the conscious weakness of the finite in which the heart of true religion everywhere consists. Nowhere outside of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures has adoration breathed itself in more exalted and fervent strains. The hymn is addressed to Zeus, as the Stoics freely used the names of the popular gods to express their own deeper meanings.

Hymn to Zeus

"Thee it is lawful for all mortals to address. For we are Thy offspring, and alone of living creatures possess a voice which

is the image of reason. Therefore I will forever sing Thee and celebrate Thy power. All this universe rolling round the earth obeys Thee, and follows willingly at Thy command. Such a minister hast Thou in Thy invincible hands, the two-edged, flaming, vivid thunderbolt. O King, most High, nothing is done without Thee, neither in heaven or on earth, nor in the sea, except what the wicked do in their foolishness. Thou makest order out of disorder, and what is worthless becomes precious in Thy sight; for Thou hast fitted together good and evil into one, and hast established one law that exists forever. But the wicked fly from Thy law, unhappy ones, and though they desire to possess what is good, yet they see not, neither do they hear the universal law of God. If they would follow it with understanding, they might have a good life. But they go astray, each after his own devices,—some vainly striving after reputation, others turning aside after gain excessively, others after riotous living and wantonness. Nay, but, O Zeus, Giver of all things, who dwellest in dark clouds and rulest over the thunder, deliver men from their foolishness. Scatter it from their souls, and grant them to obtain wisdom, for by wisdom Thou dost rightly govern all things; that being honoured we may repay Thee with honour, singing Thy works without ceasing, as it is right for us to do. For there is no greater thing than this, either for mortal men or for the gods, to sing rightly the universal law."

Modern literature of the nobler sort has many a Stoic note; and we ought to be able to recognize it in its modern as well as in its ancient dress. The very best brief expression of the Stoic creed is found in Henley's Lines to R. T. H. B.:—

*"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*"In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*"Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me unafraid.*

*"It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul."*

The chief modern type of Stoicism, however, is Matthew Arnold. His great remedy for the ills of which life is so full is stated in the concluding lines of "The Youth of Man":—

*"While the locks are yet brown on thy head,
While the soul still looks through thine eyes,
While the heart still pours
The mantling blood to thy cheek,
Sink, O youth, in thy soul!
Learn to the greatness of Nature;
Rally the good in the depths of thyself!"*

The Permanent Value of Stoicism

If now we know the two fundamental principles of Stoicism, the indifference of external circumstance as compared with the reaction of our own thought upon it, and the sanctification of our thought by self-surrender to the universal law; and if we have learned to recognize these Stoic notes alike in ancient and modern prose and poetry, we are ready to discriminate between the good in it which we wish to cherish, and the shortcomings of the system which it is well for us to avoid.

We can all reduce enormously our troubles and vexations by bringing to bear upon them the two Stoic formulas. Toward material things, toward impersonal events at least, we may all with profit put on the Stoic armor, or to use the figure of the turtle, which is most expressive of the Stoic attitude, we can all draw the soft sensitive flesh of our feelings inside the hard shell of resolute thoughts. There is a way of looking at our poverty, our plainness of feature, our lack of mental brilliancy, our humble social estate, our unpopularity, our physical ailments, which, instead of making us miserable, will make us modest, contented, cheerful, serene. The mistakes that we make, the foolish words we say, the unfortunate investments into which we get drawn, the failures we experience, all may be transformed by the Stoic formula into spurs to greater effort and stimulus to wiser deeds in days to come. Simply to shift the emphasis from the dead external fact beyond our control, to the live option which always presents itself within; and to

know that the circumstance that can make us miserable simply does not exist, unless it exists by our consent within our own minds;—this is a lesson well worth spending an hour with the Stoics to learn once for all.

And the other aspect of their doctrine, its quasireligious side, though not by any means the last word about religion, is a valuable first lesson in the reality of religion. To know that the universal law is everywhere, and that its will may in every circumstance be done; to measure the petty perturbations of our little lives by the vast orbits of natural forces moving according to beneficent and unchanging law; when we come out of the exciting political meeting, or the roar of the stock-exchange, to look up at the calm stars and the tranquil skies and hear them say to us, "So hot, my little man";—this elevation of our individual lives by the reverent contemplation of the universe and its unswerving laws, is something which we may all learn with profit from the old Stoic masters. Business, house-keeping, school-teaching, professional life, politics, society, would all be more noble and dignified if we could bring to them every now and then a touch of this Stoic strength and calm.

Criticism, complaint, fault-finding, malicious scandal, unpopularity, and all the shafts of the censorious are impotent to slay or even wound the spirit of the Stoic. If these criticisms are true, they are welcomed as aids in the discovery of faults which are to be frankly faced, and strenuously overcome. If they are false, unfounded, due to the querulousness or jealousy of the critic rather than to any fault of the Stoic, then he feels only contempt for the criticisms and pity for the poor misguided critic. The true Stoic can be the serene husband of a scolding shrew of a wife; the complacent representative of dissatisfied and enraged constituents; maintain unruffled equanimity when cut by his aristocratic acquaintances and excluded from the most select social circles: for he carries the only valid standard of social measurement under his own hat, and needs not the adoration of his wife, the cheers of his constituents, the cards and invitations, the nods and smiles of the four hundred to assure him of his dignity and worth. If he is an author, it does not trouble him that his books are unsold, unread, uncut. If the many could appreciate him, he would have to be one of themselves, and then there would be no use in his trying to instruct them. His book is what the universal law gave him to say, and decreed that it should be; and whether there be many or few

*Don't concern
yourself with
public opinion.*

to whom the universal law has revealed the same truth, and granted power to appreciate it, is the concern of the universal, not of himself, the individual author. Again, if he is in poor health, weary, exhausted, if each stroke of work must be wrought in agony and pain,—that, too, is decreed for him by those just laws which he or his ancestors have blindly violated; and he will accept even this dictate of the universal law as just and good: he will not suffer these trifling incidental pains and aches to diminish by one jot the output of his hand or brain. When disillusion and disappointment overtake him; when the things his youth had sighed for finally take themselves forever out of his reach; when he sees clearly that only a few more years remain to him, and those must be composed of the same monotonous round of humdrum details, duties that have lost the charm of novelty, functions that have long since been relegated to the unconsciousness of habit, vexations that have been endured a thousand times, petty pleasures that have long since lost their zest: even then the Stoic says that this, too, is part of the universal program, and must be accepted resignedly. If there is little that nature has left to give him for which he cares, yet he can return to her the tribute of an obedient will and a contented mind: if he can expect little from the world, he can contribute something to it; and so to the last he maintains,—

*"One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."*

When there is hard work to be done, to which there is no pleasure, no honor, no emolument attached; when there are evils to be rebuked which will bring down the wrath and vengeance of the powers that be on him who exposes the wrong; when there are poor relatives to be supported, and slights to be endured, and injustice to be borne, it is well for us all to know this Stoic formula, and fortify our souls behind its impenetrable walls. To consider not what happens to us, but how we react upon it; to measure good in terms not of sensuous pleasure, but of mental attitude; to know that if we are for the universal law it matters not how many things may be against us; to rest assured that there can be no circumstance or condition in which this law cannot be done by us, and therefore no situation of which we cannot be more than master, through implicit obedience to the great law that governs all,—this is

the stern consolation of Stoicism; and there are few of us so happily situated in all respects that there do not come to us times when such a conviction is a defense and refuge for our souls. Beyond and above Stoicism we shall try to climb in later chapters. But below Stoicism one may not suffer his life to fall, if he would escape the fearful hells of depression, despair, and melancholia. As we lightly send back across the centuries our thanks to Epicurus for teaching us to prize at their true worth health and the good things of life, so let us reverently bow before the Stoic sages, who taught us the secret of that hardy virtue which bears with fortitude life's inevitable ills.

The Defects of Stoicism

Why we cannot rest in Stoicism as our final guide to life, the mere statement of their doctrine must have made clear to every one; and in calling attention to its limitations I shall only be saying for the reader what he has been saying to himself all through the chapter. It may be well enough to treat things as indifferent, and work them over into such mental combinations as best serve our rational interests. To treat persons in that way, however, to make them mere pawns in the game which reason plays, is heartless, monstrous. The affections are as essential to man as his reason. It is a poor substitute for the warm, sweet, tender ties that bind together husband and wife, parent and child, friend and friend,—this freezing of people together through their common relation to the universal law; I suppose that is why, in all the history of Stoicism, though college girls usually have a period of flirting with the Stoic melancholy of Matthew Arnold, no woman was ever known to be a consistent and steadfast Stoic. Indeed a Stoic woman is a contradiction in terms. One might as well talk of a warm iceberg, or soft granite, or sweet vinegar. Stoicism is something of which men, unmarried or badly married men at that, have an absolute monopoly.

Again if its disregard of particulars and individuals is cold and hard, its attempted substitute of abstract, vague universality is a bit absurd. Sometimes the lighter mood of caricature best brings out the weaknesses that are concealed in grave systems when taken too seriously. Mr. W. S. Gilbert has put the dash of absurdity there is in the Stoic doctrines so convincingly that his lines may serve the purpose of illustrating the inherent weakness of the Stoic position better than more formal criticism. They are addressed

64 / The Five Great Philosophies of Life
TO THE TERRESTRIAL GLOBE

"Roll on, thou ball, roll on;
Through pathless realms of space
Roll on.

What though I'm in a sorry case?
What though I cannot pay my bills?
What though I suffer toothache's ills?
What though I swallow countless pills?
Never you mind!
Roll on.

"Roll on, thou ball, roll on;
Through seas of inky air
Roll on.

It's true I've got no shirts to wear;
It's true my butcher's bills are due;
It's true my prospects all look blue—
But don't let that unsettle you—
Never you mind!
Roll on.

(It rolls on.)"

The incompleteness of the Stoic position is precisely this tendency to slight and ignore the external conditions out of which life is made. Its God is fate. (Instead of a living, loving will, manifest in the struggle with present conditions, Stoicism sees only an impersonal law, rigid, fixed, fatal, unalterable, unimprovable, uncompanionable. Man's only freedom lies in unconditional surrender to what was long ago decreed. Of glad and original coöperation with its beneficent designs, thus helping to make the world happier and better than it could have been had not the universal will found and chosen just this individual me, to work freely for its improvement, Stoicism knows nothing. Its satisfaction is staked on a dead law to be obeyed, not a live will to be loved. Its ideal is a monotonous identity of law-abiding agents who differ from each other chiefly in the names by which they chance to be designated. It has no place for the development of rich and varied individuality in each through intense, passionate devotion to other individuals as widely different as age, sex, training, and temperament can make them. Before we find the perfect guidance of life we must look beyond the Stoic as well as the Epicurean, to Plato, to Aristotle, and, above all, to Jesus.

Chapter 3

The Platonic Subordination
of Lower to Higher

The Nature of Virtue

EPICUREANISM tells us how to gain pleasure; Stoicism tells us how to bear pain. But life is not so simple as these systems assume. It is not merely the problem of getting all the pleasure we can; nor of taking pain in such wise that it does not hurt. It is a question of the worth of the things in which we find our pleasure, and the relative values of the things we suffer for. Plato squarely attacks that larger problem. He says that the Epicurean is like a musician who tunes his violin as much as he can without breaking the strings. The wise musician, on the contrary, recognizes that the tuning is merely incidental to the music; and that when you have tuned it up to a certain point, it is worse than useless to go on tuning it any more. Just as the tuning is for the sake of the music, and when you have reached a point where the instrument gives perfect music, you must stop the tuning and begin to play; so when you have brought any particular pleasure, say that of eating, up to a certain point, you must stop eating, and begin to live the life for the sake of which you eat. To the Stoic Plato gives a similar answer. The Stoic, he says, is like a physician who gives his patient all the medicine he can, and prides himself on being a better physician than others because he gives his patients bigger doses, and more of them. The wise physician gives medicine up to a certain point, and then stops. That point is determined by the health, which the medicine is given to promote. Precisely so, it is foolish to bear all the pain we can, and boast ourselves of our ability to swallow big doses of tribulation and pronounce it good. The wise man will bear pain up to a certain point; and when he reaches that limit, he will stop. What is the point? Where is the limit? Virtue is the point up to which the bearing of pain is good, the limit beyond which the bearing of pain becomes an evil. Virtue, then, is the supreme good, and makes everything that furthers it, whether pleasurable or painful, good. Virtue makes everything that hinders it, whether pleasurable or painful, bad. What, then, is virtue? In what does this priceless pearl consist? We have our two analogies. Virtue