

VIRTVS

On Duties, Book II

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA

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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Complete machine-assisted Plain English translation, made independently and directly from the Latin, without another English edition as input, and reviewed against the Latin. All 90 source sections retained. Latin: The Latin Library, Miller 1913, with eight repairs credited to the Perseus Project (CC BY-SA 4.0).

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

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GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Latin Library numbers 90 sections; Perseus numbers 89, joining the final sentence to section 89. The Latin Library base has eight documented repairs credited to the Perseus Project, CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>). Source collation and model review scope are recorded with the raw witnesses; no human specialist certification is claimed.

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Book II



- ¹ Marcus, my son, I think the previous book explained enough about how our duties come from moral goodness and every kind of virtue. Now I need to go through the duties concerned with our standard of living, our access to the things people use, and our resources and wealth. [As I said, this raises two questions: what is useful and what isn't, and, among useful things, which is more useful or most useful.] Before I start, though, I want to say a little about my plans and my reasons for them.
- ² My books have encouraged quite a few people not just to read but to write as well. Even so, I sometimes worry that some good men dislike the very name of philosophy and wonder why I put so much time and effort into it. While the republic was run by the people it had entrusted with that job, I gave it all my attention and thought. But then one man took control of everything. There was no room anywhere for advice or influence, and I'd lost the outstanding men who had worked with me to protect the republic. I didn't give myself over to grief—it would have destroyed me if I hadn't fought it. Nor did I turn to pleasures unworthy of an educated person.
- ³ If only the republic had stayed as it was at the start! If only it hadn't fallen into the hands of people who wanted not so much to change things as to wreck them! For one thing, I'd be putting more work into public action than into

writing, as I used to when the republic was still standing. For another, I'd be writing up my speeches, as I often did, rather than writing about my present subjects. But the republic no longer existed at all. It had once taken up all my attention, thought, and effort. With it gone, my writing for the courts and the Senate naturally fell silent.

- ⁴ I couldn't leave my mind idle. I'd been interested in these studies since childhood, and I decided that going back to philosophy was the most honorable way to put my troubles aside. As a young man, I'd spent a great deal of time learning it. Later, once I began pursuing public office and committed myself completely to the republic, philosophy got only the time left over after my friends and public business. I used all of that time for reading. There was no leisure to write.
- ⁵ So, amid these terrible troubles, I think I've managed at least one good thing: to put into writing subjects that our people didn't know enough about but that were especially worth knowing. What, in the gods' name, could anyone want more than wisdom? What's finer, better for a human being, or more worthy of one? People who seek it are called philosophers. If you translate the name, philosophy means nothing more than the pursuit of wisdom. The ancient philosophers defined wisdom as knowledge of divine and human affairs and of the causes that govern them. If someone criticizes the pursuit of that knowledge, I really don't understand what they could possibly think deserves praise.
- ⁶ Suppose you want enjoyment for your mind and a break from your worries. What could match the studies of people who are always looking for something that will help us live well and happily? Or suppose your concern is how to become steady and good. Either philosophy provides a method for achieving that, or nothing does. Even the smallest matters call for some skill. People who say there's no skill to handling the greatest ones haven't thought carefully about what they're saying and are badly mistaken about what matters most. But if goodness can be taught, where will you look for that teaching once you turn away from this kind of study? These points usually get a fuller discussion

when we encourage people to take up philosophy. I've done that in another book. Here I only needed to explain why, after losing my public duties, I chose this particular pursuit.

- ⁷ Some people challenge me on this, including learned, well-educated people. They ask whether I'm being consistent. I say we can't know anything for certain, yet I regularly discuss other subjects and am now setting out rules about duty. I wish they understood my position properly. I'm not someone whose mind wanders about in confusion, never finding anything to follow. What sort of mind would that be? Or rather, what sort of life would be possible if we had no basis for reasoning—or even for living? Other people say some things are certain and others uncertain. I disagree: I say some things are probable and others aren't.
- ⁸ So why shouldn't I follow what seems probable to me and reject what doesn't? I can do that without arrogantly claiming certainty, and without the rashness that is so completely at odds with wisdom. People in my school argue against every position. That's because we can't see clearly what's probable until the arguments on both sides have been tested against each other. I think I've explained this carefully enough in my books on the Academy. Now, my dear Cicero, you're studying a very old and distinguished philosophical tradition under Cratippus. He closely resembles the men who first developed its splendid ideas. Still, I didn't want you to be unfamiliar with my own views, which are close to yours. But let's get back to the plan.
- ⁹ I laid out five ways of examining duty. Two concerned honorable and morally good conduct. Two concerned the advantages of life—supplies, wealth, and resources. The fifth concerned how to choose when these things seemed to conflict. I've finished the part about moral goodness, and I very much want you to know it thoroughly. Our present subject is what we call useful. Ordinary usage has gone wrong with that word. It has gradually drifted so far off course

that people separate usefulness from moral goodness. They suppose something can be morally good without being useful, or useful without being morally good. No belief could have done greater damage to human life.

- 10 The most respected philosophers take a strict, morally sound approach here. They separate in thought three things that are actually joined together. They hold that anything just is also useful, and that anything morally good is also just. It follows that anything morally good is useful as well. People who don't fully understand this often admire the sly and calculating, mistaking dishonesty for wisdom. We need to free them from that mistake and completely redirect their expectations. They must understand that they can get what they want through honorable plans and just actions, not through deceit and dishonesty.
- 11 Some of the things that sustain human life aren't alive: gold, silver, things that grow from the soil, and other things of that sort. Others are living creatures with their own drives and desires. Among these, some lack reason and others use it. Horses, cattle, other livestock, and bees lack reason, but their work produces things people use and live on. Those who use reason fall into two groups: gods and human beings. Religious devotion and respect for what's sacred win the gods' goodwill. After the gods, and nearest to them in this respect, people can do the most to help other people.
- 12 The same division applies to things that hurt us or get in our way. But the gods aren't thought to harm us, so they're left out. Human beings are then considered the greatest source of harm to one another. Now, most of those lifeless things I mentioned are made available through human work. We wouldn't have them without human hands and skill, and we couldn't use them without people managing them. Medical care, shipping, farming, and the harvesting and storage of grain and other produce could never have existed without human work.
- 13 Nor could we export what we have in abundance or import what we lack unless people did those jobs. For the same reason, without human labor and hands, we couldn't quarry the stone we need or dig out iron, copper, gold, and silver

hidden deep underground. Think, too, about buildings, which keep out bitter cold and ease the discomfort of heat. How could people originally have obtained them? How could they later have replaced them when storms, earthquakes, or age brought them down? None of that would have happened if people living together hadn't learned to look to other people for help with these things.

- 14 Add water channels, diverted rivers, irrigation for fields, barriers against the waves, and artificial harbors. Where could we get those without human work? These examples, and many others, make something clear: none of the benefits and advantages we get from lifeless things would have been available without human hands and labor. And what benefit or convenience could we get from animals without help from people? It was people, of course, who first figured out how each kind of animal could help us. Even now, without people's work, we couldn't feed animals, tame them, protect them, or get what they produce at the right time. People also kill the animals that harm us and catch those that can be useful.
- 15 Why list all the many skills without which human life couldn't have existed at all? Without so many skills serving our needs, how would we help the sick? What enjoyment would healthy people have? How would we feed and clothe ourselves? These skills have developed human life so much that our way of eating and living is far removed from that of animals. Cities, too, could never have been built or populated without people coming together. That led to established laws and customs, then to a fair allocation of rights and definite rules for living. In turn, these made people gentler and gave them a sense of decency. Life became safer. And by giving and receiving, and by exchanging resources and benefits, we could meet every need.
- 16 I'm spending more time on this than I need to. Panaetius goes into detail about something everyone can see: no military commander or political leader has ever done anything great and beneficial without people's support. He names Themistocles, Pericles, Cyrus, Agesilaus, and Alexander, saying they couldn't

have achieved so much without other people's help. There's no need to bring in witnesses when the point isn't in doubt. People achieve enormous benefits by working together and agreeing on a purpose. But people also inflict every imaginable horror on one another. Dicaearchus, an important and prolific philosopher of Aristotle's school, wrote a book about the destruction of human life. He brings together the other causes: floods, epidemics, devastation, and even sudden swarms of wild animals. He explains how their attacks have wiped out whole populations. Then he compares these losses with those caused by human attacks—wars and civil unrest—and shows that people have killed far more people than all the other disasters combined.

- ¹⁷ So there's no question that people are our greatest source of both help and harm. That's why I see winning people over and getting their help for our purposes as a particular task of good character. We credit demanding practical skills with the benefits we get from working with lifeless materials or handling animals. But when people are ready and willing to help us improve our position, that willingness comes from the wisdom and character of exceptional men.
- ¹⁸ Good character mainly involves three things. First, understanding what's true and genuine in each case, what fits with each thing, what follows from it, what things develop from, and what causes each of them. Second, keeping our disturbed feelings—what the Greeks call “passions”—under control, and making our desires, which they call “impulses,” obey reason. Third, dealing sensibly and considerately with the people around us. Their support should let us meet our natural needs fully and abundantly. With their help, we should also ward off any harm that comes our way and punish those who have tried to hurt us, but only as far as fairness and humanity allow.
- ¹⁹ I'll explain shortly how we can learn to win people's support and keep it. First, though, there are a few things to say. Everyone knows how much luck can do, for good or bad. When its wind blows our way, it carries us where we want to go. When it blows against us, we're battered. The other accidents that luck

brings are less common. First come those caused by lifeless things: squalls, storms, shipwrecks, collapsing buildings, and fires. Then there are kicks, bites, and attacks from animals. These things, as I said, happen less often.

- 20 But consider the destruction of armies—three just recently—or the disasters that have so often struck many commanders, including, lately, a man of outstanding and exceptional ability. Think, too, of public resentment, and how it has so often driven deserving citizens from their country, ruined them, or forced them to flee. On the other side are success, public honors, commands, and victories. Although all these involve luck, neither the good outcomes nor the bad can happen without people's resources and active support. Once we understand that, we need to discuss how to attract and encourage people's help for our own benefit. If the discussion seems long, weigh its length against how useful it is. It may then seem rather short.
- 21 Whenever people help someone advance and gain recognition, they have a reason. They may feel affection for him because something has made them fond of him. They may respect him, admiring his character and thinking he deserves the greatest success. They may trust him and believe he'll look after their interests well. They may fear his power. Or they may expect something from him, as when kings or politicians who court the public offer handouts. Finally, they may be moved by payment or a reward. That last method is the dirtiest and most degrading, both for those it buys and for those who try to use it.
- 22 Something has gone badly wrong when people try to buy what they ought to achieve through character. Still, money is sometimes a necessary resource. I'll explain how to use it after discussing the methods more closely connected with good character. People also accept someone else's rule and authority for several reasons. Affection may lead them to do it, or the scale of the favors he has done them, or his exceptional standing. They may hope it will benefit them, or fear they'll otherwise be forced to obey. Promises and the prospect of gifts may lure them in. Or, finally, they may simply be hired, as we so often see in our own country.

- 23 If you want to protect your power and hold on to it, nothing helps more than being loved, and nothing hurts more than being feared. Ennius put it very well: “People hate the person they fear; whoever hates someone wants him dead.” If we didn’t already know that power can’t stand up to widespread hatred, recent events have taught us. Our country, beaten into submission by force, endured this tyrant and is still obeying him now that he’s dead. His death shows how destructive people’s hatred can be. So do the similar ends of other tyrants: hardly any have escaped that kind of death. Fear is a poor safeguard if you want something to last. Goodwill, by contrast, can be trusted to protect it forever.
- 24 Let rulers who have crushed people by force use brutality to keep them down, then, as masters do with slaves, if there’s no other way to hold them. But anyone who sets out to make people afraid of him in a free country is completely mad. Someone’s power may bury the laws, and freedom may be frightened into silence. Even so, they eventually show themselves again, whether through unspoken judgments or secret votes for public office. Freedom bites harder after it has been suppressed than when people have kept it all along. So let’s adopt the approach that works most widely and does most to protect not only our safety but also our resources and power: get rid of fear and hold on to affection. That’s the easiest way to achieve what we want, both privately and in public life. Anyone who wants to be feared must, in turn, fear the very people he frightens.
- 25 Think how fear must have tortured Dionysius the elder. He was so afraid of barbers’ razors that he singed his hair with a glowing coal. And what do you suppose life felt like for Alexander of Pherae? We read that he loved his wife Thebe very much. Yet whenever he went from dinner to her bedroom, he ordered a foreigner to walk ahead of him with a drawn sword—a man tattooed with Thracian markings, as the account specifically says. He also sent members of his bodyguard ahead to search her little chests and examine her clothes for hidden weapons. What a miserable man, trusting a tattooed foreigner more

than his own wife! And he wasn't wrong about her: she herself killed him because she suspected he had a mistress. No government, however powerful, can last under the pressure of fear.

²⁶ Phalaris is proof. His cruelty is more notorious than anyone else's. He wasn't killed in a plot, like the Alexander I just mentioned, or by a few men, like our own tyrant. The entire population of Agrigentum attacked him. And didn't the Macedonians abandon Demetrius and go over to Pyrrhus together? Didn't almost all the Spartans' allies suddenly desert them because their rule was unjust, then stand idly by and watch the disaster at Leuctra? In a matter like this, I'd rather recall foreign examples than our own. Still, while the Roman people maintained their rule by doing good rather than harm, we fought wars either for our allies or for supremacy. We ended those wars gently, or imposed only what was necessary. The Senate was a safe harbor and refuge for kings, peoples, and nations. Our public officials and commanders sought their greatest credit in one achievement: protecting the provinces and our allies fairly and faithfully.

²⁷ Back then, it would have been more accurate to call us the world's protectors than its rulers. We had already begun gradually weakening those habits and principles. After Sulla's victory, we abandoned them completely. Once such cruelty had been inflicted on citizens, people stopped thinking anything done to our allies could be unfair. In Sulla's case, then, a decent cause led to a disgraceful victory. He set up the auction spear and sold property in the Forum—the property of good men, wealthy men, and certainly fellow citizens. Yet he had the nerve to say he was selling his own war loot. The man who followed him had a wicked cause and won an even uglier victory. He didn't just confiscate individual citizens' property. He subjected whole provinces and regions to the same sentence of ruin.

²⁸ After foreign nations had been harassed and destroyed, we saw an image of Massilia carried in a victory parade as a sign of our lost empire. A triumph was celebrated over a city without whose help our commanders had never cele-

brated triumphs after wars beyond the Alps. I could recall many other crimes against our allies, if the sun had ever seen anything more shameful than this one. So we deserve our punishment. If we hadn't tolerated so many people's crimes without punishment, one man would never have gained such freedom to do whatever he wanted. His property passed to a few heirs, but his ambitions passed to many wicked men.

29 Civil wars will never lack a seed or a cause while ruined men remember that bloodstained auction spear and hope to profit from it again. Publius Sulla wielded it when his relative was dictator. Thirty-six years later, the same man was still beside an even more criminal auction spear. Another man, who had been a clerk under the earlier dictatorship, became the official responsible for the city treasury under this one. That should teach us that civil wars will never end while rewards like these are on offer. Only the city's walls are still standing—and even they now fear the worst crimes. We've lost the republic completely. To return to my point, we fell into these disasters because we preferred being feared to being cherished and loved. If this could happen to the Roman people when they ruled unjustly, what should individuals expect? Since goodwill clearly has great strength and fear has little, we must now discuss the easiest ways to gain the affection we want, together with respect and trust.

30 But we don't all need affection to the same extent. Whether we need many people to love us or can be satisfied with a few depends on the life each of us has chosen. So let's settle this first: our most basic and necessary need is close relationships with faithful friends who love us and admire what we do. In this one matter, there's very little difference between the most important men and ordinary people. Both need to secure it to much the same degree.

31 Not everyone needs the same amount of respect, fame, or goodwill from their fellow citizens. Still, having these helps in various ways, including making friends. I've discussed friendship in another book, called *Laelius*. Here let's talk about fame. I've written two books on that too, but it deserves some attention here because it's such a help when you have big responsibilities. Fame reaches

its fullest form when three things come together: people like you, they trust you, and they admire you enough to think you deserve recognition. To put it simply and briefly, you win these responses from the public much as you win them from individuals. But there's also a particular way to reach people collectively, almost as though you could flow into everyone's thoughts.

- ³² Let's start with goodwill, the first of those three things, and consider how to earn it. Helping people does the most to win it. Next comes a willingness to help, even if you happen to lack the means. People also feel a strong affection for someone with a reputation for generosity, helpfulness, fairness, trustworthiness, and all the qualities that make a person gentle and easy to deal with. What we call good and fitting conduct appeals to us in itself. Its character and beauty naturally move everyone, and it shines through especially clearly in the qualities I've just listed. So our own nature makes us love people we believe have those qualities. These are the strongest reasons for affection, though there can be other, less important ones.
- ³³ To earn trust, we need people to believe two things about us: that we have good judgment and that we're fair. We trust people we think understand more than we do. We believe they can anticipate what's ahead. When a situation becomes critical, they can find a way through and decide what to do on the spot. That's what people regard as genuinely useful, sound judgment. With fair and dependable people—in other words, good people—our trust means we don't suspect them of cheating us or doing us harm. We think they're exactly the people to entrust with our safety, our property, and our children.
- ³⁴ Of those two qualities, fairness does more to build trust. Even without good judgment, it carries considerable weight. Good judgment without fairness earns no trust at all. Once you take away someone's reputation for honesty, the more clever and resourceful he is, the more people dislike and suspect him. Put intelligence together with fairness, then, and its power to inspire trust has virtually no limit. Fairness without good judgment can still do a great deal. Good judgment without fairness can do nothing.

- ³⁵ You might wonder why I'm separating these qualities. All philosophers agree that anyone who has one virtue has them all, and I've often argued that myself. Yet now I'm speaking as though someone could be fair without also having good judgment. The explanation is that we use one level of precision when an argument examines the truth in detail, and another when everything we say is framed around ordinary people's ideas. Here we're using everyday language, as everyone does: we call some people brave, others good, and others sensible. When we're discussing public opinion, we have to use familiar words in their ordinary sense. Panaetius did the same. But let's get back to our subject.
- ³⁶ The third ingredient in fame was this: people must admire us and think we deserve recognition. In general, people admire anything they notice that's impressive and beyond their expectations. In a particular person, they admire good qualities they hadn't expected to find. They look up to people in whom they think they see unusually fine and outstanding virtues, and they praise them to the skies. But they look down on people they think have no goodness, no spirit, and no backbone. That doesn't mean they look down on everyone they think badly of. Someone they regard as wicked, abusive, dishonest, and well equipped to hurt others doesn't earn their contempt at all, though they certainly think badly of him. As I said earlier, contempt is for people who are, as the saying goes, "no use to themselves or anyone else"—people who make no effort, show no initiative, and take no care over anything.
- ³⁷ People admire those they believe are better than the rest in character. Such people seem free of everything shameful, especially the faults most others struggle to resist. Pleasure is a very persuasive mistress, and it draws most people away from doing what's right. Bring the burning torches of pain near them, and most become far more frightened than they should. Life and death, wealth and poverty—all these affect everyone deeply. But some people have the strength and greatness of mind to look down on both sides of these things. Then, when a great and honorable undertaking presents itself, it takes hold of them and draws them in completely. Who could see that without admiring how bright and beautiful good character is?

- ³⁸ That ability to rise above such things earns great admiration. Above all, people find something remarkable in fairness, the one virtue that earns someone the name of a good person. And they're right. You can't be fair if you're afraid of death, pain, exile, or poverty, or if you put their opposites ahead of treating people fairly. People especially admire someone who can't be swayed by money. Once they've seen that in a man, they consider him tested by fire. So fairness produces all three things I said fame requires. It wins affection because it seeks to help as many people as possible. It wins trust for the same reason. And it wins admiration because it dismisses and disregards the things most people chase in a fever of desire.
- ³⁹ In my view, every plan and way of life needs other people's support. Above all, we need people we can talk with freely and personally. That's hard to arrange unless you come across as a good person. Even someone living alone in the countryside needs a reputation for fairness. In fact, such people need it all the more. Without it, [they'll be regarded as unjust,] and with no protection around them, they'll suffer many wrongs.
- ⁴⁰ Fairness is also essential to the work of people who buy, sell, hire, rent out property, or enter into business agreements. Its power is so great that even people who live by crime and wrongdoing can't get along without some small share of it. A robber who steals or forcibly takes something from a member of his own gang leaves himself no place even among robbers. And unless a pirate captain divides the loot evenly, his partners will either kill him or desert him. Robbers are even said to have laws they obey and keep. By dividing their loot evenly, Bardulis, the Illyrian robber mentioned by Theopompus, built up great power. Viriathus of Lusitania built up much more. Even our armies and commanders gave way before him. Gaius Laelius, the man called the Wise, defeated and weakened him while serving as praetor. He checked his fierceness so thoroughly that the commanders who followed him inherited an easy war. If fairness is powerful enough to strengthen and increase even the resources of robbers, imagine what it can do where laws, courts, and an established government exist.

- ⁴¹ I believe kings of good character were originally appointed so that people could enjoy fair treatment. That wasn't true only among the Medes, as Herodotus tells us; it was true among our own ancestors too. When people with greater resources oppressed the poor, the poor turned for protection to one man of outstanding character. He protected the weak from harm and established fair arrangements that kept the highest and lowest under the same rules. Laws were established for the very same reason as kings.
- ⁴² People have always sought justice on equal terms. Without equality, it wouldn't be justice. If one good and fair man could provide that, they were satisfied with him. When they couldn't reliably get it that way, they devised laws that would always speak to everyone with exactly the same voice. Clearly, then, people used to choose rulers whose fairness the public thought highly of. If those rulers were also considered sensible, people believed there was nothing they couldn't achieve under their guidance. We must therefore develop and hold on to fairness in every way we can. We must do that for its own sake—otherwise it wouldn't be fairness—and because it increases our standing and fame. But money needs more than a plan for earning it. It also needs a plan for investing it so it can keep meeting our expenses, including generous spending as well as necessities. Fame likewise needs a sensible approach both to earning it and to putting it to use.
- ⁴³ Socrates made an excellent point when he called this the shortest route to fame, almost a shortcut: work at actually being the person you want to be taken for. Anyone who thinks he can build lasting fame through pretending, empty displays, dishonest talk, and even a false expression on his face is badly mistaken. Genuine fame puts down roots and spreads. Everything fake quickly falls away, like little flowers. Nothing put on can last. There are plenty of examples on both sides, but to keep this brief, one family will do. Tiberius Gracchus, the son of Publius, will be praised for as long as the memory of Rome's history survives. His sons, though, didn't win good people's approval while alive. Now

they're counted among those who were rightly killed. Anyone who wants genuine fame, then, must do what fairness requires. I explained those duties in the previous book.

- ⁴⁴ How can we make it easiest for people to see us as we really are? The most important thing, of course, is actually to be the people we want them to think we are. Still, a few practical rules are needed. Some people have a reason for being well known from early in life. They may inherit their father's name and standing, as I believe you have, my dear Cicero, or some chance event may bring them attention. Everyone's eyes turn toward such a person. People look into what he does and how he lives. It's as though he were standing in the brightest light: nothing he says or does can stay out of sight.
- ⁴⁵ Others grow up unknown because their families are humble and obscure. As soon as they reach young adulthood, they should set their sights high and pursue those aims through honorable efforts. They can do this with greater confidence because people don't resent the young; they actually want them to succeed. For a young man, then, the first opening toward fame is whatever distinction he can earn in war. Many of our ancestors stood out that way, since they were almost always fighting wars. You, however, came of age during a war in which one side had far too much criminal guilt and the other far too little good luck. Even so, when Pompey put you in charge of [one of the two] cavalry wings in that war, your riding, javelin throwing, and endurance of every military hardship won you high praise from that great man and from the army. That praise of yours fell with the republic. But I haven't taken up this discussion to talk about you personally. I'm dealing with the subject as a whole. So let's go on to what remains.
- ⁴⁶ What our minds achieve far outweighs what our bodies can do. That's true in other areas, and it's true here: people appreciate work done with intelligence and judgment more than work done with physical strength. To earn their approval, start by behaving modestly, honoring your parents, and caring about those close to you. Young men get noticed most easily, and in the best light, by

attaching themselves to respected, thoughtful men who serve the country well. If they spend plenty of time together, people expect them to become like the men they've chosen as examples.

- ⁴⁷ Spending his youth in Publius Mucius's household helped establish Publius Rutilius's reputation for honesty and legal knowledge. Lucius Crassus, though, didn't borrow anyone else's standing. While still very young, he made a great name for himself with that famous, much-admired prosecution. At an age when people usually get praise for practice speeches—as we're told Demosthenes did—Crassus showed that he could already do an excellent job in court. He could still have earned praise just by rehearsing at home.
- ⁴⁸ Speaking takes two forms: conversation and public argument. There's no doubt that public argument does more to make you famous. That's what we call eloquence. Still, it's hard to say just how much a friendly, approachable way of talking can win people over. We have letters from Philip to Alexander, from Antipater to Cassander, and from Antigonus to his son Philip. All three fathers were exceptionally shrewd men, according to the accounts we've received. They tell their sons to win the people's goodwill by speaking kindly and to put soldiers at ease by addressing them warmly. But a forceful speech before a crowd can spread someone's reputation far and wide. People greatly admire a speaker who has plenty to say and says it wisely. His listeners assume that he also understands more and has better judgment than other people. Nothing makes a stronger impression than a speech that combines seriousness with modesty, especially when the speaker is young.
- ⁴⁹ Many kinds of cases call for eloquence. In our country, plenty of young men have earned praise by speaking before judges, the people, or the senate. But courtroom speeches win the greatest admiration. There are two sides to that work: prosecuting and defending. Defending deserves more praise, but prosecutions have often met with approval too. I mentioned Crassus a little earlier.

Marcus Antonius did the same thing as a young man. Publius Sulpicius also made his name as a speaker through a prosecution, when he brought Gaius Norbanus to trial—a troublemaker who did the country no good.

50 But you shouldn't prosecute often, and never without a reason: to serve the country, as the men I just mentioned did; to get revenge, as the two Lucullus brothers did; or to stand up for people who need you, as I did for the Sicilians and Julius did for the Sardinians against Albucius. Lucius Fufius also showed what hard work he could do when he prosecuted Manius Aquilius. So do it once, or certainly not often. If someone has to do it more frequently, he should make that work a service to the country. There's nothing wrong with repeatedly calling its enemies to account. Even then, there must be a limit. Threatening many people with the loss of their lives seems heartless—almost inhuman. Besides putting you in danger yourself, it's a discredit to your name to become known as a professional accuser. That happened to Marcus Brutus, despite his very distinguished family. His father had been one of the leading experts in civil law.

51 Keep this rule firmly in mind too: never prosecute an innocent person on a charge that could cost them their life. There's no possible way to do that without committing a crime yourself. Nature gave us eloquence to protect people and keep them safe. What could be more inhuman than turning it into a weapon for ruining and destroying good people? But although you must avoid that, you needn't feel morally barred from occasionally defending someone guilty, provided he isn't utterly wicked and without respect for anything sacred. People want this, established practice permits it, and fellow feeling allows it too. A judge must always follow the truth in a case. A defense lawyer may sometimes argue for a plausible account even when it isn't quite true. I wouldn't dare write that, especially in a work about philosophy, if Panaetius, that deeply respected Stoic, didn't agree. Defending people is the best way to earn both a reputation and gratitude. It earns even more when you help someone who seems trapped and oppressed by a powerful opponent's resources. I've done

that often, including when I was young and defended Sextus Roscius of Ameria against the power of Lucius Sulla, who then controlled the country. As you know, that speech is still available.

- 52 I've now explained the duties that help young men earn a good name. Next comes helping others and giving generously. There are two ways to do this: give people in need your time and effort, or give them money. Money is easier, particularly if you're rich. But personal help is finer, more impressive, and more fitting for a brave, distinguished man. Both come from a generous wish to do someone a kindness. But one draws on your cash box; the other draws on your own character and abilities. Giving away your property drains the very source of your giving. Generosity then puts an end to generosity: the more people you've given to, the fewer you can help afterward.
- 53 Things work differently for people who help generously through their own effort—that is, through their abilities and hard work. First, the more people they help, the more helpers they'll have for further good work. Second, regularly helping others makes them readier and, you might say, better practiced at doing good for many people. In one letter, Philip rightly takes his son Alexander to task for trying to buy the Macedonians' goodwill. "What the hell," he asks, "made you think you could count on loyalty from people you'd bribed? Are you trying to make the Macedonians expect you to be their servant and supplier rather than their king?" "Servant and supplier" is well put: that's a degrading role for a king. Better still, he calls these handouts "bribery." They make the recipient a worse person and leave him all the readier to expect the same thing again.
- 54 Philip wrote that to his son, but let's take it as advice for everyone. There's no question, then, that helping through personal effort and hard work is more honorable, has a wider reach, and can benefit more people. Still, sometimes you should give money. You shouldn't reject that kind of kindness altogether. You should often share your resources with deserving people in need, but do it carefully and within limits. Many people have squandered their inheritance

through thoughtless giving. What could be sillier than making sure you can't keep doing something you enjoy? Handouts also lead to plunder. Once people have given so much that they're short themselves, they're driven to lay hands on other people's property. They wanted to win goodwill by being generous. Instead, the people they've given to feel less affection for them than the people they've taken from feel hatred.

55 So don't lock up your wealth so tightly that kindness can't get it open. But don't leave it open to everyone either. Set a limit that fits what you can afford. Remember the saying our people repeat so often that it's become a proverb: handouts have no bottom. How could there be a stopping point? Those used to receiving them want more, and everyone else wants the same. Broadly speaking, people who give freely fall into two groups: the wasteful and the genuinely generous. The wasteful pour money into feasts, distributions of meat, gladiator shows, games, and staged animal hunts. These things leave memories that soon fade, if they leave any at all. The genuinely generous use their resources to ransom people captured by pirates, take over friends' debts, help with the cost of marrying off daughters, or help people acquire property or increase what they have.

56 So I wonder what Theophrastus was thinking in his book about wealth. Much of it is excellent, but this part makes no sense: he goes on at length praising lavish, elaborate public entertainments. He thinks the reward of being rich is being able to afford such spending. To me, the kindness I've just given a few examples of brings a much greater and more reliable reward. Aristotle is far more sensible and gets much closer to the truth when he criticizes us for not being astonished at money poured out to please the crowd. He says, "Suppose people besieged by an enemy had to pay one mina for a sextarius of water. At first we'd find it unbelievable, and everyone would be amazed. But once people thought it over, they'd excuse it as a necessity. Yet these enormous losses and endless expenses don't particularly astonish us. They meet no need, add noth-

ing to anyone's standing, and give the crowd only a tiny, fleeting bit of pleasure. Even that is enjoyed by the least serious people, who forget the pleasure as soon as they've had enough of it."

57 He also draws the sound conclusion that "these things please boys, silly women, slaves, and free people who are very much like slaves. But a serious man who weighs what's done with sound judgment can't possibly approve." Still, I realize that in our country, even in the good old days, people came to expect our finest men to spend lavishly as aediles. Publius Crassus, who was rich both in nickname and in wealth, put on an enormous public entertainment as aedile. A little later, Lucius Crassus and Quintus Mucius—the most restrained of men—made their aedileship exceptionally splendid. Then came Gaius Claudius, son of Appius, and many afterward: the Lucullus brothers, Hortensius, and Silanus. But during my consulship, Publius Lentulus surpassed all his predecessors. Scaurus followed his example. Our friend Pompey's entertainments during his second consulship were particularly magnificent. You can see what I think about all of these.

58 All the same, you mustn't let people suspect you of being tightfisted. Mamercus was enormously rich, but skipping the aedileship cost him election as consul. So if the people demand this spending, and respectable men at least approve even if they don't ask for it, you should do it. Just keep it within your means, as I did myself. It's also justified when a public handout secures something more important and useful. Recently, for example, Orestes won great credit for the meals he provided in the side streets as his tithe. Nor was Marcus Seius blamed for selling the people a modius of grain for one as during a shortage. While aedile, he freed himself from deep, long-standing unpopularity at a cost that was neither disgraceful nor very large. And our friend Milo recently earned the highest praise by buying gladiators for the country's sake—its safety was bound up with my own—and crushing every one of Publius Clodius's attempts and violent outbursts.

- ⁵⁹ So this kind of generous spending is justified when it's necessary or useful. Even then, moderation is the best rule. Lucius Philippus, the son of Quintus, was exceptionally gifted and highly distinguished. He used to boast that he'd reached all the highest offices without paying for a single public show. Cotta and Curio said the same. I can make a similar boast, up to a point. My spending as aedile was very small compared with the high offices I won. Every voting group supported me, and I won each office as soon as I was eligible. None of the men I've just named managed that.
- ⁶⁰ Spending on walls, dockyards, harbors, aqueducts, and everything else that serves the country's practical needs is better too. People may enjoy a gift more when it's put straight into their hands, but they'll appreciate these public works more in the long run. Pompey makes me hold back when it comes to criticizing theaters, covered walkways, and new temples. But the most learned thinkers disapprove. They include Panaetius himself, whose ideas I've followed closely in these books, without translating his work, and Demetrius of Phalerum. Demetrius criticizes Pericles, the leading man in Greece, for pouring so much money into that magnificent gateway, the Propylaea. I've discussed this whole subject thoroughly in my books on government. So this kind of public giving is basically unsound, though circumstances can make it necessary. Even then, it must fit your resources and stay within reasonable limits.
- ⁶¹ Now take that other kind of giving, which comes from generosity. We shouldn't respond in the same way to different situations. Someone weighed down by misfortune isn't in the same position as someone who hasn't suffered a setback and simply wants to get ahead.
- ⁶² We should be more ready to help people in trouble, unless perhaps they deserve their trouble. Others want help not to escape hardship but to move up in life. We certainly shouldn't be tightfisted with them either. But we must take care and use good judgment when choosing suitable people. Ennius puts it very well:
"Good deeds given to the wrong people count as bad deeds to me."

⁶³ When you give to a good, grateful man, the return comes from others as well as from him. Generosity is deeply appreciated, provided it isn't reckless. Most people praise it all the more because the kindness of leading men gives everyone somewhere to turn. So we should try to help as many people as possible in ways their children and descendants will remember. That memory must leave them no room to be ungrateful. Everyone hates a person who forgets a kindness. They think that discouraging generosity hurts them too. They see the person responsible as an enemy of everyone with little money. This kind of kindness also benefits the state: buying captives out of slavery and improving poor people's circumstances. Crassus's speech describes at length how members of our senatorial order regularly did this. I put this tradition of kindness far above giving public entertainments. The first suits serious, great men. The second suits people who flatter the crowd, tickling its fickleness with pleasure.

⁶⁴ We should give generously without being harsh when collecting what we're owed. Be fair and easy to deal with in every transaction: selling, buying, renting, or leasing out property. The same goes for dealings with neighbors and questions about boundaries. Often let people have something you could legally insist on keeping. Avoid lawsuits as far as you can—perhaps even a little farther. Giving up a small part of your rights isn't just generous. Sometimes it pays too. Still, you must look after your property. Letting it slip away is disgraceful. But manage it without giving people grounds to call you stingy or greedy. Surely money's greatest benefit is that you can be generous without stripping yourself of your estate. Theophrastus was also right to praise hospitality. To my mind, it's entirely fitting for prominent people to welcome distinguished guests into their homes. Our city gains credit when visitors from abroad don't lack this kind of generosity here. Some people want considerable influence, gained honorably. Connections with guests can give them valuable support and goodwill in other countries. Theophrastus writes that Cimon in Athens welcomed even his fellow district members, the Laciads. He made a rule and instructed his estate managers accordingly: any Laciad visiting his country house was to be given everything.

- ⁶⁵ Help given through personal effort rather than money can serve the whole state or individual citizens. You can protect people's legal interests, give advice, and use your knowledge to help as many as possible. This does a great deal to increase both influence and goodwill. Our ancestors made many excellent arrangements. One was to give the highest standing to knowledge and interpretation of our very well-established civil law. Until the present upheaval, our leading men kept this expertise in their own hands. Now its prestige has been wiped out, just like public honors and every level of public distinction. This is especially shameful because of the man living when it happened. His knowledge easily surpassed that of all earlier men who had held equally high office. This kind of service, then, earns widespread gratitude. It's well suited to putting people in your debt through kindness.
- ⁶⁶ Closely connected with legal expertise is public speaking. It carries more weight, wins more gratitude, and brings greater distinction. What could surpass eloquence? Think of the audience's admiration, the hopes of people needing help, and the gratitude of those he has defended. Our ancestors therefore gave it the highest standing in civilian life too. An effective speaker can help and protect people far and wide if he's ready to work. He must willingly defend many people's cases without payment, as our national tradition requires.
- ⁶⁷ This subject would lead me to mourn here that public speaking has fallen silent, if not died altogether. But I'm afraid that would sound like a complaint about myself. Still, look at the speakers we've lost. How few now show promise, and how much fewer have real ability! Yet how many have the nerve to speak! Not everyone can be a legal expert or a good speaker. Not even many people can. But you can still help plenty of people through your own efforts. Ask favors for them. Recommend them to judges and officials. Watch over their interests. Approach the very people who give legal advice or defend cases, and ask for their help. People who do this earn a great deal of gratitude. Their efforts reach very widely.

- ⁶⁸ They hardly need reminding of this next point, since it's obvious. When trying to help some people, take care not to hurt others. People often harm someone they shouldn't harm, or someone it's unwise to offend. If they do it unknowingly, they're careless. If they know, they're reckless. When you offend someone unwillingly, explain yourself as best you can. Show why what you did was necessary and why you couldn't have acted differently. Then use other efforts and services to make up for the damage you've apparently done.
- ⁶⁹ When deciding whom to help, people usually consider either character or worldly position. It's easy to say that character matters more, and people commonly do say it. They claim to consider people's character, not their circumstances, when giving help. That sounds honorable. But who actually puts a poor, thoroughly good man's case first? Who doesn't prefer working to win the favor of someone successful and powerful? We're generally drawn toward whoever seems likely to repay us more readily and quickly. But we need to look more closely at how things really work. That poor man, if he's good, can certainly feel gratitude even if he can't repay a favor. Someone put it well: "If you still have the money, you haven't paid it back. If you've paid it back, you no longer have it. But you still have gratitude after returning a favor, and simply having gratitude already returns it." People who consider themselves wealthy, distinguished, and fortunate don't even want to owe anyone a favor. Even after receiving a very substantial kindness, they think they've done you a favor by accepting it. They also suspect that something is being demanded or expected of them. As for admitting they needed someone's protection, or being called that person's clients, they think that's as bad as death.
- ⁷⁰ A man with little money sees things differently. Whatever you've done for him, he thinks you considered him, not his circumstances. He tries to show gratitude not only to the person who helped him, but also to others he hopes will help. After all, he needs many people. If he happens to do a service in return, he doesn't talk it up. He even plays it down. Consider this too. Defend a wealthy, successful man, and the gratitude stays with him alone, or perhaps with his

children. But defend a poor man who's decent and unassuming, and all respectable people of modest means see protection available for themselves. They make up a great many of our citizens.

71 That's why I think kindness is better directed toward good people than toward successful people. Of course, we should try to meet the needs of every sort of person. But if we must choose between them, we should certainly take Themistocles's advice. Someone asked him about marrying a daughter to a good but poor man or a less reputable rich man. He replied, "I'd rather have a man who needs money than money that needs a man." But admiration for wealth has corrupted and twisted people's values. What does the size of someone's fortune matter to any of us? Perhaps it helps its owner. Even that isn't always true. But let's suppose it does help. Certainly, he'll have more to spend. How does that make him more honorable? If he's also a good man, don't let his wealth prevent you from helping him. Just don't let it count in his favor either. Base your whole judgment on what someone is like, not how rich he is. One final rule about giving help and personal service: don't push for anything unfair or support an injustice. Justice is the foundation of lasting esteem and a good reputation. Without it, nothing deserves praise.

72 We've discussed help directed toward individuals. Next we must discuss help for people collectively and for the state. Some of these benefits reach all citizens. Others reach particular people and earn even greater gratitude. We should certainly try to provide both kinds, if possible. Helping individuals deserves just as much attention. But it must benefit the state, or at least not harm it. Gaius Gracchus's grain distribution was lavish, so it drained the treasury. Marcus Octavius's was modest. The state could afford it, and ordinary people needed it. So it benefited both the citizens and the state.

73 Anyone governing a state must make this a first concern: everyone should keep what's theirs. The government mustn't take away private people's property. When Philippus was tribune, he proposed a land bill. He readily let it be rejected, though, showing great restraint on that point. But while promoting it, he

said plenty to please the crowd, including this disastrous claim: “There aren’t two thousand men in the state who own property.” That’s a deadly statement, aimed at equalizing people’s possessions. What greater disaster could there be? States and organized communities were established chiefly so people could keep what belonged to them. Nature did lead people to gather together. But they sought protection in cities because they hoped to keep their possessions safe.

74 We must also work to avoid having to impose a direct tax. That often happened in our ancestors’ time because the treasury was short and wars were frequent. We must plan far ahead to prevent it. But suppose some state finds itself forced to impose this burden. I’d rather make that gloomy prediction about another state than our own. Besides, I’m discussing states in general, not ours in particular. In that case, everyone must be made to understand that their safety depends on accepting what’s necessary. Everyone governing a state must also ensure a supply of life’s necessities. There’s no need to discuss how these supplies are usually obtained or how they should be obtained. That’s obvious. I only needed to touch on the subject.

75 Above all, anyone handling public business or holding public office must remove even the slightest suspicion of greed. Gaius Pontius the Samnite said, “If only fortune had saved me for those times! If only I’d been born when the Romans started taking bribes! I wouldn’t have let them rule much longer.” He certainly would have had many centuries to wait. This disease only recently invaded our state. So I’m quite happy that Pontius lived when he did, if he really had that much strength. It hasn’t yet been 110 years since Lucius Piso introduced a law for recovering money extorted by officials. There had been no such law before. But since then, there have been so many laws, each new one harsher than the last. So many people charged, so many convicted! Fear of trials stirred up a huge [Italian] war. Once laws and courts were swept aside, our allies were stripped and robbed on such a scale that our power rests on others’ weakness, not our own worth.

- ⁷⁶ Panaetius praises Africanus for keeping his hands off other people's wealth. Why shouldn't he? Still, Africanus had greater qualities than that. And the credit for his honesty belongs not just to him but to the times he lived in. Paulus captured the whole Macedonian treasury, an enormous fortune. He paid so much into the public treasury that one commander's spoils ended the direct tax levy. Yet all he brought home for himself was a name that would be remembered forever. Africanus followed his father's example: destroying Carthage didn't make him any richer. And what about Lucius Mummius, his fellow censor? Did leveling a fabulously wealthy city leave him better off? He chose to decorate Italy rather than his own house. Though, to my mind, making Italy more beautiful made his house look finer too.
- ⁷⁷ So, to pick up where I left off, there's no uglier fault than greed, especially in leading men and those running the state. Turning public affairs into a source of personal profit isn't just disgraceful. It's criminal and downright evil. Apollo's oracle at Delphi declared that nothing but greed would destroy Sparta. That warning seems meant not just for the Spartans but for every wealthy nation. People in charge of public affairs have no easier way to win public goodwill than by refusing to take what isn't theirs and keeping their appetites under control.
- ⁷⁸ Some men want to be seen as the people's champions. To achieve that, they push land schemes that would drive the current holders off their property, or argue that borrowers should have their debts forgiven. They're shaking the foundations of the state. First comes harmony, which can't survive taking wealth from some people and handing it to others. Then there's fairness: that disappears altogether if people aren't allowed to keep what's theirs. As I said earlier, the very point of a state and a city is to let everyone keep their own property safe, freely and without fear.
- ⁷⁹ While doing this damage to the state, they don't even win the gratitude they expect. The person whose property they've seized becomes their enemy. The recipient won't even admit to having wanted the gift. With canceled debts espe-

cially, he hides his delight, afraid people might think he hadn't been able to pay. But the injured person remembers what happened and makes no secret of his pain. Even if the people unfairly given something outnumber those unjustly deprived of it, that doesn't give them greater influence. What matters here isn't the head count but the weight each side carries. And where's the fairness in handing land held for many years, even centuries, to someone who never owned it, while making its owner lose it?

⁸⁰ It was for this sort of injustice that the Spartans expelled Lysander, their ephor, and killed King Agis—something they'd never done to a king before. Such bitter divisions followed that tyrants took power, leading citizens were driven out, and their superbly organized state fell apart. Nor did Sparta collapse alone. The troubles that began there spread like an infection and wrecked the rest of Greece too. And here at home, wasn't fighting over land what destroyed the Gracchi, sons of that great man Tiberius Gracchus and grandsons of Africanus?

⁸¹ Aratus of Sicyon, by contrast, deserves the praise he gets. Tyrants had held his city for fifty years. He set out from Argos, slipped into Sicyon, and took control. Having caught the tyrant Nicocles off guard and overpowered him, he brought back six hundred exiles who had once been the city's wealthiest people. His arrival freed his country. But he saw a serious problem over property and possessions. Other people now held the property of the exiles he'd brought back, and he thought it utterly wrong to leave those exiles in poverty. Yet undoing fifty years of possession didn't seem entirely fair either. Over that long period, many properties had come into people's hands through inheritance, purchase, or dowries, without any wrongdoing. He decided that the current holders shouldn't have their property taken away, but the former owners must receive satisfaction too.

⁸² He decided that settling the matter would take money. So he announced that he wanted to go to Alexandria and ordered that nothing be changed before he returned. He quickly reached Ptolemy, his host, who was the second king to

rule since Alexandria's founding. He explained that he wanted to free his country and laid out the situation. An outstanding man himself, he easily persuaded the wealthy king to help him with a large sum. He brought the money to Sicyon and chose fifteen leading citizens as his advisers. Together they examined the claims of both groups: those occupying property that belonged to others and those who'd lost their own property. He had the properties valued and worked out a settlement. He persuaded some current holders to prefer payment and give up possession. He convinced some former owners that receiving the value in cash was better than getting their property back. Agreement was restored, and everyone went away without a complaint.

83 What a man! He deserved to have been born in our republic! That's how to deal with fellow citizens—not by planting an auction spear in the Forum and having a crier offer their property for sale, as we've already seen twice. That Greek thought everyone's interests needed looking after, as you'd expect from a wise and outstanding man. For a good citizen, the wisest, most sensible policy is not to tear people's interests apart, but to hold everyone together through equal treatment. "Let them live rent-free in someone else's house." Why? I've bought it, built it, kept it up, and paid the expenses. Why should you enjoy my property against my wishes? What else is that but robbing some people of what's theirs and giving others what isn't?

84 But what do proposals to cancel debts amount to? You buy a farm with my money, you keep the farm, and I'm left without my money. We need to prevent debts from harming the state, and there are many ways to guard against that. If debts do arise, the answer isn't to make wealthy people lose what belongs to them while debtors profit from what belongs to someone else. Nothing holds a state together more firmly than trust. That trust can't exist unless people are required to repay what they've borrowed. The push to stop repayment was never stronger than during my year as consul. People of every kind and social rank tried to bring it about with weapons and military camps. I resisted them so successfully that this whole threat was removed from the state. Debts had never been greater, and repayment had never gone better or been easier. Once

people lost the hope of cheating their creditors, they had no choice but to pay. Yet the man who's now victorious was defeated then. He later carried out the very measures he'd planned when they served his own interests, although by then he no longer stood to gain anything. His craving to do wrong was so strong that doing wrong was itself a pleasure to him, even when he had no reason to.

- ⁸⁵ People who protect the state will therefore avoid that sort of giveaway—taking from some to give to others. Above all, they'll work to ensure that fair laws and fair court decisions let everyone keep what's theirs. People with little mustn't be cheated because they lack standing. Nor should envy stop the wealthy from keeping or recovering their own property. Beyond that, they'll use every opportunity, in war or at home, to expand the state's rule, territory, and revenues. That's the work of great men. That's what our ancestors regularly did. Anyone who pursues duties like these will bring enormous benefits to the state and earn himself widespread goodwill and fame.
- ⁸⁶ In these instructions about practical advantage, the Stoic Antipater of Tyre, who died recently in Athens, thinks Panaetius left out two things: looking after your health and your money. I imagine that great philosopher passed over them because they were straightforward. They're certainly useful. You keep healthy by knowing your own body and noticing what usually helps or harms it. Be restrained in everything you eat and in the way you live, giving up pleasures when that's needed to protect your body. Finally, draw on the skills of people whose expertise covers these matters.
- ⁸⁷ You should acquire household wealth in ways that involve nothing shameful. Care and thrift will help you preserve it, and those same habits will help it grow. Xenophon, a follower of Socrates, covered these matters very well in his book "Household Management." I translated it from Greek into Latin when I was about the age you are now. But on this whole subject—making money and investing it, and I wish I could add using it—some very fine men sitting at the

Middle Janus offer more useful discussions than any philosophers in any school. Still, you need to learn about these things. They concern practical advantage, the subject of this book.

- ⁸⁸ We often need to compare different advantages. This was the fourth topic, which Panaetius left out. We regularly compare benefits for the body with advantages outside it [and outside advantages with benefits for the body]. We also compare physical benefits with one another, and outside advantages with one another. To compare a bodily benefit with an outside advantage, you might prefer being healthy to being rich. [To compare an outside advantage with a bodily one, you might prefer wealth to exceptional physical strength.] Among physical benefits, you'd put good health ahead of pleasure, and strength ahead of speed. Among outside advantages, you'd put fame ahead of wealth, and income from city property ahead of income from country property.
- ⁸⁹ An example of this sort of comparison comes from Cato in his old age. Someone asked him what paid best in managing an estate. "Raising livestock well," he answered. What came second? "Raising livestock fairly well." Third? "Raising livestock badly." Fourth? "Plowing." Then the questioner said, "What about lending money at interest?" Cato replied, "What about killing a man?" This and many other examples should show us that people commonly compare advantages, and that it was right to add this as the fourth kind of inquiry into our duties.
- ⁹⁰ Next we'll work through what's left.