

THAT BRUTE BEASTS MAKE USE OF REASON.

ULYSSES, CIRCE, GRILLUS.

1. ULYSSES. All these things, Circe, I believe that I have learned and well remember. But I would willingly ask thee, whether thou hast any Grecians here, which being men thou hast transformed into wolves and lions.

CIRCE. Very many, dearest Ulysses, but wherefore do you ask the question?

ULYSSES. Because in good truth I am of opinion I should gain a high reputation among the Greeks, if by thy favor I could restore these men to human shape again, and not suffer them through any negligence of mine to wax old in the bodies of beasts, where they lead a miserable and ignominious life.

CIRCE. Surely, this man, fool as he is, believes it requisite that his ambition should be unfortunate not only to himself and his friends, but to those that nothing belong to him.

ULYSSES. Thou art now jumbling and mixing another villanous potion of twittle twattle, and wouldst plainly turn me into a beast too, if thou couldst make me believe that it were a misfortune to be transformed from a beast to a man.

CIRCE. What hast thou made thyself better than a beast, who, forsaking an immortal life, free from the miseries of old age, with me, art making such haste through

a thousand threatening calamities to a mortal and (as I may say) old wife, pursuing an empty good and a shadow instead of real truth, and all this, thinking to be more conspicuous and famous than thou art.

ULYSSES. Well, Circe, let it be as thou sayest; for why should we be always contending about the same thing? However, do me the favor to restore these men, and give them into my custody.

CIRCE. By Hecate, not so fast neither; these are no ordinary fellows. But ask them first whether they are willing. If they refuse, do you, being such an eloquent gentleman, discourse them and persuade them; if you cannot persuade them, being too hard for ye at your own weapon, then let it suffice ye that you have ill consulted your own and the good of your friends.

ULYSSES. Blessed woman, wherefore dost thou mock me thus? For how can they either talk or hear reason, so long as they are asses, hogs, and lions?

CIRCE. Be of good comfort, most ambitious of men; I will so order the business, that they shall both understand and discourse; or rather, let one suffice to hear and return answers instead of all the rest. Look ye, here is one at hand; pray talk to him.

ULYSSES. Prithee, Circe, by what name shall we call him? Who is this fellow of all the men in the world?

CIRCE. What's this to the purpose? Call him Gryllus, if you please; and for my part, I'll leave ye together, that ye may not suspect him for speaking contrary to his mind to please me.

2. GRYLLUS. Save ye, Mr. Ulysses.

ULYSSES. And you too, by Jove, Mr. Gryllus.

GRYLLUS. What is't your worship would have with me?

ULYSSES. Knowing you were all born men, I pity the condition ye are now in; and I pity ye the more, for that

being Greeks ye are fallen under this misfortune ; and therefore I made it my request to Circe that she would restore ye again to your former shape, as many of you as were desirous, to the end ye might return home again with us.

GRYLLUS. Hold, Mr. Ulysses, not a word more of this, I beseech your worship. For we all contemn thee, as one that none but fools call cunning, and as vainly vauntest thyself to be wiser than other men, and yet art afraid of being changed from worse to better ; like children that are frightened at physician's doses and hate going to school, although the medicines and the precepts make them healthy and learned of diseased and fools ; just so thou refusest to be transformed out of one thing into another. And now thy bones rattle in thy skin for dread of living with Circe, lest she should transform thee into a hog or a wolf ; and thou wouldst persuade us living in plenty of all enjoyments not only to forsake these blessings, but to abandon her that has so well provided for us, to sail along with thee, and to become men again, the most miserable of all creatures.

ULYSSES. In my opinion, Gryllus, this same wicked cup has not only deprived thee of thy shape, but of thy sense and reason too ; or else thou art got drunk with those opinions which are everywhere exploded as nasty and villanous, unless some voluptuous pleasure of custom and habit has bewitched thee to this body.

GRYLLUS. Neither of these, O king of the Cephalenians. But if thou art come hither to dispute, and not to rail and swagger, we shall soon convince thee, having experience of both manners of living, that our way is to be preferred before that which thou so much applaudest.

ULYSSES. Nay, then go on ; I'll listen with both ears to hear this paradox discussed.

3. GRYLLUS. Have at ye then, sir. But it behooves us

to begin first with those virtues which you so presumptuously assume to yourselves, and for which you so highly advance yourselves before the beasts, such as justice, prudence, fortitude, &c. Now answer me, thou the wisest among mortals; for I have heard thee telling a story to Circe of the territory of the Cyclops, that being neither ploughed nor planted by any person, it is so fertile and generously productive, that it bears all sorts of fruits and herbs spontaneously. Now which do you prefer, this country, or your own goat-feeding stony Ithaca, which being cultivated with great labor and hardship, yet answers the expectations of the husbandmen with only a mean and scanty return? Now take it not amiss that I forewarn ye lest your love to your country sway ye to give an answer contrary to truth.

ULYSSES. No, no, I will not lie for the matter; I must confess I love and honor my own country more; but I applaud and admire theirs far beyond it.

GRYLLUS. Hence we must conclude that it is so as the wisest of men has affirmed; that there are some things to be praised and approved, others to be preferred by choice and affection. And I suppose you believe the same concerning the soul. For the same reasons hold in reference to the soul as to the ground; that such a soul should be the best, that produces virtue like spontaneous fruit, without labor and toil.

ULYSSES. Grant all this.

GRYLLUS. Then you confess that the souls of beasts are the more perfect, and more fertilely endued for the production of virtue; seeing that without any command or instruction — as it were without sowing or ploughing — it produces and increases that virtue which is requisite for every one.

ULYSSES. Prithee, Gryllus, don't rave, but tell me what those virtues are that beasts partake of?

4. GRYLLUS. Rather what virtues do they not partake of in a higher degree than the wisest of men? Look upon fortitude in the first place, of which you vaunt and brag to have such a terrible share, being not ashamed of the magnificent titles of Ulysses the bold and city-stormer, when indeed, like a pitiful knave as thou art, thou dost only circumvent by tricks and artifices men that understand only the simple and generous way of making war, ignorant altogether of fraud and faith-breaking, and by that means coverest thy deceit with the name of virtue, which never admits of any such coney-catching devices. But do you observe the combats and warfare of beasts, as well one against another as against yourselves, how free from craft and deceit they are, and how with an open and naked courage they defend themselves by mere strength of body; and how, neither afraid of the law that calls them forth to battle nor the severe edicts against deserters, but only out of scorn to be overcome, they fight with obstinacy to the last for conquest and victory. For they are not vanquished when their bodies are worsted, neither does despair cowardize them, but they die upon the spot. And you shall see many times that the strength of many, while they are expiring, being retired and crowded together in some part of the body, still makes resistance against the victor, and pants and fumes till at length it fails like extinguished fire that goes out for want of fuel. But there is no crying for quarter, no begging of mercy, no acknowledgment of being beaten; nor will the lion be a slave to the lion, nor the horse to the horse, as one man is a slave to another, willingly and patiently embracing servitude, which derives its name (*δουλεία*) from that of cowardice (*δειλία*). On the other side, such beasts as men by nets and treacherous snares get into their power, if fully grown, rather choose to die than serve, refusing nourishment and suffering extremity of drought. But as for their young

ones, — being tractable and supple by reason of their age, and fed with the deceitful mixtures and food that men provide for them, their inbred fierceness languishing through the taste of preternatural delights, — they suffer that which is called domestication, which is only an effeminating of their natural fury.

Whence it is apparent that beasts are naturally inclined to be courageous and daring, but that the martial confidence of men is preternatural. Which, most noble Ulysses, you may chiefly observe from hence; for that in beasts Nature keeps an equal balance of strength; so that the female, being but little inferior to the male, undergoes all necessary toils, and fights in defence of her young ones. And thus you hear of a certain Cromyonian sow, which, though a female, held Theseus tack, and found him work sufficient. Neither had the wisdom of that same female Sphinx that sat on Phicium, with all her riddles and enigmas, availed her, had she not far excelled the Cadmeans in strength and fortitude. Not far from whence the Telmesian fox had his den, a great propounder of questions also; not to omit the female serpent that fought with Apollo for his oracle at Delphi. Your king also took the mare Aetha from the Sicyonian, as a bribe to discharge him from going to the wars; and he did well, thereby showing how much he esteemed a valiant and generous mare above a timorous coward. You yourself have also seen female panthers and lionesses little inferior to the males in strength and courage; when your own wife, though a Lacedaemonian, when you were hectoring and blustering abroad, sat at home in the chimney-corner, not daring to do so much as the very swallows in encountering those who plagued both her and her family. Why need I still speak of the Carian and Maeonian women? Whence it is apparent that fortitude is not natural to men, for then the women would partake of the same strength with men

So that the fortitude which you exercise is only constrained by law, not natural and voluntary, but subservient to the manners of the place and enslaved to reproach, a thing made up only of glorious words and adventitious opinion. And you undergo labor and throw yourself into danger, not out of real valor and boldness, but because ye are more afraid of other things. Therefore, as among thy own companions he that first makes haste to snatch up the light oar does it not because he contemns it, but because he is loath to be troubled with the more heavy; so he that endures a blow to avoid a wound, and defends himself against an enemy to preserve himself from wounds and death, does it not out of daring courage against the one, but out of fear of the other. Thus your fortitude is only a prudent fear; and your courage a knowing timidity, which understandingly does one thing to avoid another.

In short, if you believe yourselves superior to the beasts in fortitude, why do your poets call those that behave themselves most valiantly against their enemies wolf-breasted, lion-hearted, and compare them to wild boars; but never call the courage of lions man-like, or resemble the strength of a wild boar to that of a man? But as they call the swift wind-footed, and the beautiful Godlike-formed, hyperbolizing in their similes; so when they extol the gallantry of the stout in battle, they derive their comparisons from the superior in bravery. The reason is, because courage is as it were the tincture and edge of fortitude; which the beasts make use of unmixed in their combats, but in you being mixed with reason, like wine diluted with water, it gives way to danger and loses the opportunity. And some of you there are who deny that courage is requisite in battle, and therefore laying it aside make use of sober reason; which they do well for their preservation, but are shamefully beside the cushion, in point of strength and revenge. How absurd is it therefore

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