

This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1797 Excerpt: ...See above, p. if i. ARISTOTLES ETHICS. BOOK III. INTRODUCTION. T N this Book, Aristotle examines the specific distinctions between moral virtue and other habits of the mind. The habit of moral virtue implies the deliberate preference of one kind of conduct to another; and deliberate preference implies freedom of choice. Those actions are voluntary, which have their principle in ourselves; those are involuntary, which proceed from an external cause. Building on accurate definitions and solid distinctions, the philosopher proves, with equal perspicuity and energy, that our moral conduct is the proper object of praise or blame, of reward or punishment. His reasonings and speculations soar above and supersede the abstruse, or rather the frivolous question, introduced by his perverters the schoolmen, concerning the freedom of the human will j a question which continued to be agitated, long after their other subtillies were condemned to oblivion. With Aristotle, all will is free-will; since nothing can be more free than that which is voluntary: and although some actions originating in ourselves are considered as of a mixed nature, because they are performed reluctantly, though spontaneously, this happens merely because, of two evils, we naturally choose the least: such actions, how contrary soever to our will in their own nature, being nevertheless volun Vol. i. c c tary BOOK tary in reference to the unfortunate circumstances-in which we j happen to be placed. His work, hitherto, proceeds with great regularity. He began by proving that the happiness of man consists in the exercise of the moral and intellectual virtues; or, in his own technical language, that happiness is energy directed in the line of virtue. As his definition of happiness imp...

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