

Episode 191 - Cicero's On Ends - Book One - Part 02

Post by “Cassius” of September 16, 2023 at 6:35 AM

In reference to my Hedeia comment, from Chapter 12 of A Few Days In Athens:

[Quote from Hedeia from A Few Days In Athens Chapter 12](#)

“Judging from me as a specimen, you mean. And trust me now, father, I am the best. Do I not practice what you preach? What you show the way to, do I not possess? Look at my light foot, look in my laughing eye, read my gay heart, and tell — if pleasure be not mine. Confess, then, that I take a shorter cut to the goal than your wiser scholars, aye than your wisest self. You study, you lecture, you argue, you exhort. And what is it all for? as if you could not be good without so much learning, and happy without so much talking. Here am I — I think I am very good, and I am quite sure I am very happy; yet I never wrote a treatise in my life, and can hardly listen to one without a yawn.”

And as for Frances Wright not having Epicurus or the other leaders criticize Hedeia forcefully:

“You would make a strange world, were you the queen of it,” said Hermachus, laughing.

“Just as strange, and no stranger, than it is at present. For why? I should take it as I found it, and leave it as I found it. ‘Tis your philosophers, who would rub and twist, and plague and doctor it, and fret your souls out, to bring all its heterogeneous parts, fools, wits, knaves, simpletons, grave, gay, light, heavy, long-faced, and short-faced, black, white, brown, straight and crooked, tall, short, thin and fat, to fit together, and patiently reflect each other, like the acorns of an oak, or the modest wives and helpless daughters of the good citizens of Athens; ‘tis you, I say, who would make a strange world, were you kings of it — you who would shorten and lengthen, clip, pull, and carve men’s minds to fit your systems, as the tyrant did men’s bodies to fit his bed.”

“I grant there’s some truth, my girl, in thy nonsense,” said the master.

“And I grant that there is not a philosopher in Athens, who would have granted as much, save thyself. You will find my young hero,” turning to Theon, that my father philosophizes more sense, that is, less absurdity, than any man since the seven sages; nay! even than the seven sages philosophized themselves. He only lacks to be a perfectly wise man --”

“To burn,” said the master, “his books of philosophy, and to sing a tune to thy lyre.”

To keep comments together I will repeat that while Frances Wright does not (to my observation) criticize Hedeia's position more directly, Hedeia is the only character in the book who almost gets herself killed and has to be rescued by the others. I think that's probably a significant aspect of the role given to her in the book.