The Hero

Moral and prudential goods

What is the difference between the two kinds of 'good' in the following two sentences:

A 'It was *good* of you to give up your day-off to help mezz out.'
B 'Your advice to take waterproofs with us was *good*.'

Well, One of them speaks about good as in 'not evil' where 'good' means 'to do the right thing'. This is known as 'moral good', whereas the other 'good' means 'that which produces a useful outcome'. This is known as 'prudential good'. Can you say which one of the above sentences you think is the *do-the-right-thing* 'good', and which you think is the *useful* 'good'?

What about these?

- 'Vegetables are *good* for you.'
- 'I feel *good* when I eat chocolate cake.'
- 'I want him on the team because he's a *good* footballer.'
- 'She is a *good* teacher and a *good* person.'
- 'I'm very *good* at being bad.'
- 'Hitler was a *good* leader.'
- 'Hitler was not a *good* man.'

> TQ: What kind of 'good' do you think we mean when we say, 'Odysseus is a good man'? Is it *moral good* or is it *prudential good*? Or is it both?

Provide examples from the Odyssey when giving your answer.

Further questions to think about:

- What kind of good do you think a hero has to be?
- Can it ever be bad to be good?
- Can being bad lead to good things? And vice versa: Can being good lead to bad things?
- What is good? (Socratic Question)
- Can you be good by accident?