Memorabilia

XENOPHON

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Ἀπομνημονεύματα

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Memorabilia · Xenophon

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INTRODUCTION

Xenophon of Athens—soldier, horseman, historian—was a young follower of Socrates before he left in 401 BC to fight for the Persian prince Cyrus. Two years later Socrates was tried and executed for impiety and for corrupting the young. Years afterward, in exile, Xenophon wrote down what he remembered of the man: the *Memorabilia*, or "Recollections."

It opens as a defense. Socrates honored the gods, Xenophon insists, and made his companions better, not worse. Then come dozens of conversations, short and practical: Socrates talking to a son angry with his mother, to brothers who have fallen out, to a poor man with a houseful of relatives, to would-be generals and politicians, to a painter, an armorer, and the courtesan Theodote. Here too is the famous fable of Heracles choosing between Virtue and Vice.

Xenophon's Socrates is less the ironic questioner of Plato's dialogues than a shrewd, devout, generous adviser—a teacher of self-control, friendship and useful knowledge. Read beside Plato, he is our other main witness to who Socrates was.

Book I

The charges answered
Socrates honored the gods and did not corrupt the young; how he lived and taught self-control.

CHAPTER 1

Socrates honored the gods: his divine sign was a kind of divination, and he shunned speculation about nature.

1.1.1 I have often wondered what arguments Socrates' accusers could possibly have used to persuade the Athenians that he deserved death at the city's hands. The indictment against him ran something like this: Socrates does wrong by not recognizing the gods the city recognizes, and by bringing in other, new divinities; he also does wrong by corrupting the young.[1]

1.1.2 First, then, the claim that he didn't recognize the gods the city recognizes: what evidence could they possibly have used for that? He was plainly seen offering sacrifice, often at home and often at the city's public altars, and he made no secret of using divination. It was common talk that Socrates said the divine sign gave him signals, and this, I think, is the main reason they accused him of bringing in new divinities.[2]

1.1.3 Yet he was bringing in nothing newer than anyone else who believes in divination and relies on birds, chance utterances, omens and sacrifices. These people don't suppose that the birds, or the people they happen to meet, know what is good for

1 Socrates was tried and executed at Athens in 399 BC.
2 Socrates spoke of a private divine sign, an inner voice that warned him about what to do or avoid.

those consulting them. They think the gods signal it through these means, and that is what he believed too.

1.1.4 But most people say that the birds and the people they meet turn them away from something or urge them on to it. Socrates put it just as he understood it: it was the divine sign, he said, that gave the signal. And he told many of his companions in advance to do some things and not to do others, because the divine sign was forewarning him. Those who listened to him did well by it, and those who didn't came to regret it.

1.1.5 And yet who wouldn't agree that he wanted to look neither a fool nor a braggart to his companions? He would have looked like both if he had foretold things as revealed by a god and [also] been shown to be lying. Clearly, then, he wouldn't have made predictions unless he trusted that he would turn out to be right. And in such matters, whom would anyone trust but a god? And if he trusted the gods, how could he think there were no gods? What's more, he also did the following with his friends.[3]

1.1.6 Where matters were bound to turn out a certain way, he advised them to act in the way he thought would work best. But where it was unclear how things would turn out, he sent them to consult an oracle about whether to act at all.

1.1.7 He also said that anyone who means to run a household or a city well needs divination as well. To become a skilled builder, smith or farmer [or ruler of men], or an expert examiner of work like this, or a skilled calculator, household manager or general: all learning of this kind, he thought, could be acquired by human judgment;

1.1.8 but the most important things in these matters, he said, the gods reserve for themselves, and none of them is clear to human beings. A man who has planted a field well can't know who will harvest it. A man who has built a house well can't know who will live in it. A skilled general can't know whether it will benefit him to command, and a skilled statesman can't know whether it will benefit him to lead the city. A man who marries a

3 Words in square brackets are ones the editor, Gilbert, judged to be later additions to the text.

beautiful wife to enjoy her can't know whether she'll bring him grief, and a man who gains powerful in-laws in the city can't know whether they'll get him banished from it.

1.1.9 People who think none of these things belongs to the divine, and that everything depends on human judgment, are possessed, he said. But those who ask oracles about things the gods have let human beings decide for themselves by learning are possessed as well. Suppose someone asks whether it's better to take on, for his chariot team, a man who knows how to drive or one who doesn't. Or he asks whether it's better to take on, for his ship, a man who knows how to steer or one who doesn't. Or he asks about things one can find out by counting, measuring or weighing. Socrates believed that people who put such questions to the gods were doing something forbidden. He said that where the gods have given us the ability to act once we have learned how, we should learn. But where things are not clear to human beings, we should try to find them out from the gods through divination, for the gods give signs to those they are gracious to.

1.1.10 Moreover, he was always out in public. Early in the morning he went to the covered walks and the gymnasiums. When the marketplace was full he could be seen there, and for the rest of the day he was always wherever he would meet the most people. He talked most of the time, and anyone who wished could listen.

1.1.11 Yet no one ever saw Socrates do, or heard him say, anything impious or unholy. Unlike most of the others, he didn't even discuss the nature of the universe. He didn't investigate how what the sophists call the "cosmos" is arranged, or by what necessities each of the heavenly phenomena comes about. On the contrary, he showed that people who worried about such things were fools.

1.1.12 First he would ask about them whether they took up thinking about such matters because they believed they already knew enough about human affairs. Or did they think they were doing what they ought by leaving human things aside and investigating divine ones?

1.1.13 He was amazed that they couldn't see that these things are impossible for human beings to discover. Even those who pride themselves most on speaking about them don't hold the same opinions as one another, and behave toward each other like madmen.

1.1.14 Among madmen, some aren't afraid even of what is dangerous, while others fear even what isn't frightening. Some think there's nothing shameful in saying or doing anything at all, even in a crowd, while others think they shouldn't even go out among people. Some respect neither temple nor altar nor anything else divine, while others worship stones, any old bits of wood, and wild animals. It is the same with those who worry about the nature of the universe. Some think that what exists is only one thing, others that it is infinite in number. Some think everything is always in motion, others that nothing could ever be moved. Some think everything comes into being and perishes, others that nothing could ever come into being or perish.

1.1.15 He also asked this about them. People who learn the human arts expect to put what they have learned into practice for themselves and for anyone else they like. Do those who inquire into divine things likewise think that, once they know by what necessities each thing happens, they will produce winds and rain and seasons, and whatever else of that sort they need, whenever they like? Or do they have no such hope at all, and are they content merely to know how each of these things comes about?

1.1.16 That is what he said about people who busied themselves with these matters. He himself always talked about human things. He examined what is pious and what is impious, what is fine and what is shameful, what is just and what is unjust, what sound-mindedness is and what madness is, what courage is and what cowardice is, what a city is and what a statesman is, what rule over people is and what makes someone fit to rule people. He also talked about the other things that, in his view, make

those who know them true gentlemen, while those who don't know them could rightly be called slavish.[4]

1.1.17 Where his views weren't publicly known, it's no wonder the jurors misjudged him. But where everyone knew them, isn't it a wonder that the jurors didn't take them into account?

1.1.18 Once he was serving on the Council and had sworn the councilor's oath, which included a pledge to act in accordance with the laws. He became presiding officer in the Assembly just when the people wanted, against the laws, to put to death [nine generals], Thrasyllus, Erasinides and their colleagues, all by a single vote. He refused to put the motion to the vote, though the people were furious with him and many powerful men threatened him. He thought it more important to keep his oath than to gratify the people against what was just and to protect himself from those who threatened him.[5]

1.1.19 He believed that the gods care for human beings, though not in the way most people think. Most people believe the gods know some things and not others. Socrates held that the gods know everything: what is said, what is done, and what is silently planned. He also held that they are present everywhere and give signs to human beings about all human affairs.

1.1.20 So I wonder how the Athenians were ever persuaded that Socrates was not sound-minded about the gods. He never said or did anything impious [regarding the gods]. On the contrary, he said and did [about the gods] exactly the sort of things that would make anyone who said and did them both be, and be thought, the most pious of men.

4 "True gentleman" renders *kalos kagathos*, literally "beautiful and good," the standard Greek phrase for a man of fine character and good standing.

5 In 406 BC, after the naval victory at Arginusae, the Assembly tried the commanding generals together, against the law, for failing to rescue the shipwrecked. Socrates happened to be presiding that day.

CHAPTER 2

Xenophon answers the charge of corrupting the young, explaining Critias, Alcibiades and the accuser's other claims.

1.2.1 It also seems astonishing to me that some people were persuaded that Socrates corrupted the young. Besides what I've already described, he was, first of all, the most self-controlled of all men where sex and food were concerned. He was also better able than anyone to endure winter and summer and every kind of hardship. And he had trained himself to need so little that he owned very little, yet very easily had enough.

1.2.2 How, then, could a man like that have made others impious or lawless or gluttonous, or uncontrolled in sex, or soft in the face of hard work? On the contrary, he weaned many people off these things. He made them desire excellence and gave them hope that, if they took care of themselves, they would become true gentlemen;

1.2.3 and yet he never once promised to teach this. Rather, simply by being plainly such a man himself, he made those who spent time with him hope that by imitating him they would become like him.

1.2.4 Then again, he didn't neglect his own body, and he didn't praise those who neglected theirs. He disapproved of overeating and then overexerting. But he approved of working off, in sufficient measure, as much food as the soul gladly accepts. This regimen, he said, was healthy enough and didn't interfere with caring for the soul.

1.2.5 But he certainly wasn't fussy or showy in his clothes, his shoes, or the rest of his way of life. Nor did he make his companions greedy for money. He weaned them off their other desires, and he charged no money to those who desired his company.

1.2.6 By refraining from this he believed he was looking after his freedom. He called those who took fees for their company their own slave-dealers, because they had to converse with anyone from whom they [might] get their fee.

1.2.7 He was amazed that anyone who professed to teach excellence would charge money. Such a person did not think that gaining a good friend was the greatest profit. Instead he feared that the man who had become a true gentleman would not feel the greatest gratitude toward the one who had done him the greatest good.

1.2.8 Socrates never promised anyone anything of the kind. But he trusted that those of his companions who took up what he himself approved would be good friends to him and to one another all their lives. How, then, could such a man corrupt the young? Unless, of course, caring for excellence is corruption.

1.2.9 "But by Zeus," said the accuser, "he made his companions look down on the established laws. He said it was foolish to appoint the city's officials by lot with beans, when no one would be willing to use a ship's pilot chosen by beans, or a builder, or a pipe player, or anyone else for jobs like these. Mistakes in such jobs do far less harm than mistakes in running the city." Talk like this, he said, encouraged the young to despise the established constitution and made them violent.[6]

1.2.10 But I think that people who cultivate understanding, and believe they will be able to teach their fellow citizens what is beneficial, are the least likely to become violent. They know that violence brings enmity and danger, while persuasion achieves the same results safely and with goodwill. People who are forced hate you, as though they had been robbed. People who are persuaded love you, as though they had been done a favor. So violence is not the way of those who cultivate understanding. It belongs to those who have strength without judgment [to do such things].

1.2.11 What's more, a man who dares to use force would need quite a few allies, while a man who can persuade needs none, since he would believe he could persuade all on his own. And such people are least likely to end up killing anyone. Who would

6 Most Athenian officials were chosen by lot, with beans used in the drawing. Xenophon's "accuser" may be the pamphleteer Polycrates rather than one of the prosecutors at the trial.

rather kill someone than keep him alive as a willing follower to make use of?

1.2.12 "But," said the accuser, "Critias and Alcibiades were associates of Socrates, and the two of them did the city a great deal of harm. Critias was the greediest and most violent [and most murderous] of all the members of the oligarchy. Alcibiades, for his part, was the most uncontrolled and insolent [and violent] of all the men under the democracy."[7]

1.2.13 For my part, if those two did the city any harm, I won't defend them. But I will describe how their association with Socrates came about.

1.2.14 These two men were by nature the most ambitious of all the Athenians. They wanted everything to be done through themselves, and they wanted to become the most famous men of all. They knew that Socrates lived with complete self-sufficiency on the slenderest means. They knew he was the most self-controlled of men with regard to every pleasure. And they knew that in argument he could handle everyone who talked with him just as he liked.

1.2.15 Seeing this, and being the sort of men I've just described, why did they seek his company? Would anyone say it was because they desired Socrates' way of life and the moderation he had? Or was it because they thought that if they associated with him, they would become supremely capable in speech and action?

1.2.16 I myself believe that if a god had offered them the choice between dying and living their whole lives as they saw Socrates living, they would have chosen to die. They made this plain by what they did. As soon as they thought themselves superior to their companions, they leapt away from Socrates and went into politics, the very thing for which they had sought him out.

1.2.17 Perhaps someone might reply to this that Socrates should not have taught his companions politics before he taught them

7 Critias led the Thirty, the oligarchy that ruled Athens by terror in 404–403 BC. Alcibiades, a brilliant and reckless democratic leader, defected to Sparta during the Peloponnesian War.

moderation. I don't dispute that. But I see that all teachers show their pupils how they themselves do what they teach, and also win them over by argument. And I know that Socrates, too, showed his companions that he himself was a true gentleman, and that he discussed excellence and other human matters beautifully.

1.2.18 I also know that those two behaved sensibly as long as they kept company with Socrates. They did not do so out of fear that Socrates would fine them or beat them. They did so because at the time they thought this was the best way to behave.

1.2.19 Perhaps many of those who claim to pursue philosophy might say that a just man could never become unjust, or a sensible man insolent. In the same way, they might say, no one who has learned anything that can be learned could ever lose that knowledge. That isn't my view of these matters. I see that people who don't train their bodies can't do the work of the body, and in the same way people who don't train their souls can't do the work of the soul. They can neither do what they should nor refrain from what they shouldn't.

1.2.20 That's why fathers keep their sons away from bad people, even when the sons are sensible. Good company, they think, is training in excellence, while bad company undoes it. One of the poets bears witness to this when he says: "From the good you will learn good things; but if with the bad / you mingle, you will lose even the sense you have." Another bears witness when he says: "But a good man is sometimes bad, and at other times good."[8]

1.2.21 I bear witness to them too. I see that people who don't practice forget verses composed in meter, and in the same way those who neglect what their teachers have told them come to forget it. And when someone forgets words of advice, he has also forgotten the experiences that made his soul desire moderation. Once he has forgotten these, it's no wonder that he forgets moderation too.

8 The first quotation is from Theognis (lines 35–36); the source of the second is unknown.

1.2.22 I also see that people who have been drawn into heavy drinking, or have tumbled headlong into love affairs, are less able to attend to what they should and refrain from what they shouldn't. Many who were able to be careful with money before they fell in love can no longer manage it once they are in love. And when they have spent all their money, they no longer refrain from the kinds of gain they used to avoid because they thought them shameful.

1.2.23 So how can it not be possible for someone who was sensible before to stop being sensible later? And for someone who was able to act justly to become unable later? To me, at any rate, everything fine and good seems to depend on training, and moderation not least. Pleasures are planted together with the soul in the same body, and they persuade the soul to abandon moderation and gratify them and the body as quickly as possible.

1.2.24 So it was with Critias and Alcibiades. As long as they kept company with Socrates, they were able, with him as their ally, to master their ignoble desires. But once they had parted from him, Critias went into exile in Thessaly and kept company there with people who practiced lawlessness rather than justice. Alcibiades, for his part, was hunted by many grand women for his beauty. Because of his power in the city and among the allies, he was pampered by many powerful men [flattering him]. He was honored by the people and easily came first. Athletes in the gymnastic contests who easily come first neglect their training, and in the same way he too neglected himself.

1.2.25 With all this happening to them, they were puffed up over their birth, elated by their wealth, inflated by their power, and spoiled by many people. On top of all this they were [corrupted] and had long been separated from Socrates. What wonder is it, then, that they became arrogant?

1.2.26 And then, if they went wrong in some way, does the accuser blame Socrates for it? Socrates made them sensible while they were young, at the age when they would be expected to be at their most thoughtless and uncontrolled. Does the

accuser think he deserves no praise at all for that? That's certainly not how other matters are judged.

1.2.27 Take a pipe player, a lyre player, or any other teacher who has made his pupils competent. If they go to other teachers and turn out worse, is he blamed for it? Take a father whose son is sensible while spending time with one person, and later turns bad after associating with someone else. Does the father blame the first person? Doesn't he rather praise the first one all the more, the worse his son looks under the second? Why, even fathers who live with their sons are not blamed when their children go wrong, as long as they themselves are sensible.

1.2.28 That is how it would have been just to judge Socrates too. If he himself had done anything base, he would reasonably have been thought a bad man. But if he himself stayed sensible throughout, how could he justly be blamed for a badness that wasn't in him?

1.2.29 Still, if he did nothing bad himself but praised them when he saw them behaving badly, he would rightly be censured. Well, then: when he noticed that Critias was in love with Euthydemus and was trying to make use of him, the way people do who enjoy bodies for sex, he tried to turn him away from it. He told Critias that it was unworthy of a free man, and unbecoming to a true gentleman, to go begging to his beloved, in whose eyes he wanted to appear worth a great deal. Critias was pleading and entreating like a beggar for a handout, and a handout of nothing good at that.

1.2.30 Critias paid no attention to such words and would not be turned from his course. Socrates is then said to have remarked, in front of Euthydemus and many others, that Critias seemed to him to have the urge of a pig: he wanted to rub himself against Euthydemus the way piglets rub against stones.

1.2.31 These were the reasons Critias came to hate Socrates. When he was one of the Thirty and became lawgiver together with Charicles, he remembered it against him and wrote into the laws a ban on teaching the art of speech. He meant it as an insult to Socrates. Having no other way to get a hold on him, he

pinned on him the charge the multitude commonly brings against philosophers, and so slandered him before the people. I myself never heard Socrates do this, nor did I ever hear of anyone else who claimed to have heard him do it.[9]

1.2.32 The grudge came out into the open. The Thirty were putting many citizens to death, and not the worst of them, and were pushing many others into wrongdoing. Socrates remarked somewhere that it seemed amazing to him if a man put in charge of a herd of cattle, who was making the cattle fewer and worse, would not admit he was a bad cowherd. It was more amazing still if a man who had become leader of a city, and was making the citizens fewer and worse, felt no shame and did not think himself a bad leader of the city.

1.2.33 When this was reported to them, Critias and Charicles summoned Socrates, showed him the law, and forbade him to converse with the young. Socrates asked them whether he might put a question, in case there was anything in their orders he didn't understand.

1.2.34 They said he might. "Well then," he said, "I'm prepared to obey the laws. But I don't want to break one through ignorance without realizing it. So I'd like to learn this clearly from you. When you order me to keep away from the art of speech, is that because you think it goes with speaking correctly, or with speaking incorrectly? If it goes with speaking correctly, then clearly one would have to keep away from speaking correctly. If it goes with speaking incorrectly, then clearly one should try to speak correctly."

1.2.35 Charicles lost his temper with him. "Since you don't understand, Socrates," he said, "we'll give you an order that's easier to understand: don't converse with the young at all." And Socrates said, "Then so there's no doubt [about whether I'm doing anything other than what I've been ordered], define for me up to what age I should consider people young." And Charicles said, "For as long as they aren't allowed to sit on the

9 The Thirty were the oligarchic regime installed in Athens after its defeat by Sparta in 404 BC; Critias and Charicles were among its leaders.

Council, since they don't yet have understanding. So don't converse with anyone under thirty, either."

1.2.36 "Not even if I'm buying something," he said, "and the seller is under thirty? May I not ask him how much he wants for it?" "Oh, things like that, yes," said Charicles. "But you, Socrates, are in the habit of asking questions when you know perfectly well how most things stand. So don't ask those." "Then am I not to answer either," he said, "if a young man asks me something I know, like where Charicles lives or where Critias is?" "Things like that, yes," said Charicles.

1.2.37 And Critias said, "But you'll have to keep away from these, Socrates: your shoemakers and carpenters and smiths. In fact I think they're worn out by now, with you talking them to death." "Then also from what goes along with them," said Socrates, "the just, the pious, and all the rest of that kind?" "Yes, by Zeus," said Charicles, "and from cowherds too. Otherwise watch out that you don't make the cattle fewer yourself."

1.2.38 That made it plain that they were angry with Socrates because his remark about the cattle had been reported to them. I have now told what sort of association Critias had had with Socrates, and how the two stood toward each other.

1.2.39 I would maintain that nobody gets any education from someone he doesn't like. Critias and Alcibiades did not like Socrates during the time they kept company with him. From the very beginning they were bent on leading the city. Even while they were still with Socrates, there was no one they were keener to talk with than those most active in politics.

1.2.40 It is said, for instance, that Alcibiades, before he was twenty, had a conversation like this about laws with Pericles, who was his guardian and also the leader of the city:

1.2.41 "Tell me, Pericles," he said, "could you teach me what a law is?" "Certainly," said Pericles. "Then teach me, for the gods' sake," said Alcibiades. "When I hear certain people praised as law-abiding men, I think that nobody who doesn't know what a law is could rightly earn that praise."

1.2.42 "Well, Alcibiades," said Pericles, "there's nothing very difficult about what you want, if you want to know what a law is. Laws are all the things the people has met together, approved, and written down, declaring what must be done and what must not." "And does it think one must do good things, or bad ones?" "Good things, by Zeus, my boy," he said, "not bad."

1.2.43 "And if it isn't the people, but a few who meet and write down what must be done, as where there's an oligarchy, what are these?" "Everything that the controlling power in the city writes down," he said, "after deliberating about what must be done, is called law." "So if a tyrant controlling the city writes down for the citizens what they must do, is that law too?" "Whatever a tyrant writes down as ruler," he said, "is also called law."

1.2.44 "And what are force and lawlessness, Pericles?" he said. "Aren't they when the stronger compels the weaker to do whatever he likes, not by persuading him but by forcing him?" "I think so," said Pericles. "Then whatever a tyrant writes down and compels the citizens to do without persuading them is lawlessness?" "I think so," said Pericles. "I take back what I said, that whatever a tyrant writes down without persuading people is law."

1.2.45 "And what the few write down, not by persuading the many but by overpowering them, shall we call that force, or not?" "Everything that anyone compels another to do without persuading him," said Pericles, "whether he writes it down or not, seems to me force rather than law." "Then whatever the whole people writes down while overpowering the propertied, without persuading them, would be force rather than law?"

1.2.46 "You know, Alcibiades," said Pericles, "when we were your age, we were very clever at this sort of thing too. We used to practice and spin clever arguments about exactly the kind of things I think you're practicing now." And Alcibiades said, "I wish I'd been with you, Pericles, back when you were at your cleverest [at these things]."

1.2.47 So as soon as they supposed they were superior to those active in politics, they stopped going to Socrates. They didn't like him anyway, and if they did come, they resented being refuted for their mistakes. Instead they went in for the city's affairs, which was the very reason they had come to Socrates in the first place.

1.2.48 But Crito kept company with Socrates, and so did Chaerephon, Chaerecrates, Hermogenes, Simmias, Cebes, Phaedondas, and others who spent time with him. They did so not to become public speakers or courtroom pleaders, but to become true gentlemen and be able to deal well with household and household slaves, relatives and friends, city and citizens. And none of these men, younger or older, ever did anything bad or was ever accused of it.

1.2.49 "But Socrates," said the accuser, "taught people to treat their fathers with contempt. He persuaded those who kept company with him that he was making them wiser than their fathers. He claimed that the law allows a man to have even his father put in chains once he has convicted him of insanity. He used this as evidence that it was lawful for the more ignorant to be kept in chains by the wiser."

1.2.50 But Socrates thought that anyone who put another man in chains for ignorance would himself deserve to be put in chains by those who know what he doesn't. With cases like this in mind, he often examined how ignorance differs from madness. He thought it was to their own advantage, and their friends', that madmen should be kept in chains. But those who didn't know what they should, he thought, would rightly learn it from those who did.

1.2.51 "But Socrates," said the accuser, "made those who kept company with him hold not only their fathers but their other relatives too in low esteem. He told them that relatives are no help either to the sick or to people involved in lawsuits. The sick are helped by doctors, and litigants by those who know how to plead a case."

1.2.52 He also said that Socrates spoke of friends in the same way. He said it was no use their being well-disposed unless they could also be of help, and that only those who knew what was needed and could explain it deserved honor. So, the accuser said, by convincing the young that he himself was the wisest of men and the most capable of making others wise, he put those who kept company with him in such a frame of mind that, in their eyes, everyone else counted for nothing compared to him.

1.2.53 Now I know that he did say these things about fathers and other relatives and about friends. He also said that once the soul has left, the soul in which alone understanding arises, people carry out the body of even their nearest and dearest as fast as they can and put it out of sight.

1.2.54 He used to say, too, that even while he is alive, each person removes, or lets someone else remove, any part of his own body that is useless and unprofitable, though he loves his body above everything. People remove their own nails and hair and calluses. They let doctors cut and cauterize them, with toil and pain, and even think they ought to pay them a fee for it. And they spit the saliva out of their mouths as far as they can, because it does them no good staying inside and does them much more harm.

1.2.55 He said these things not to teach people to bury their fathers alive or cut themselves to pieces. He was showing that what lacks understanding is held in no honor. He urged people to take care to have as much understanding and be as useful as possible. That way, if a man wants to be honored by his father, his brother, or anyone else, he won't rely on being family and neglect himself, but will try to be useful to those he wants to be honored by.

1.2.56 The accuser also said that Socrates picked out the most wicked passages from the most famous poets and used them as evidence to teach his companions to be criminals and tyrants. One was Hesiod's line "Work is no disgrace; idleness is a disgrace." The accuser said Socrates explained this to mean that the

poet tells us to shrink from no work, whether unjust or shameful, but to do even that for gain.

1.2.57 But Socrates would first get agreement that being a worker is beneficial and good for a person, and being idle harmful and bad, so that working is good and idling bad. Then he would say that those who do something good are working and are [good] workers, while those who gamble or do anything else wicked and ruinous he called idle. On that basis the line "Work is no disgrace; idleness is a disgrace" would be right.

1.2.58 The accuser also said that Socrates often quoted the passage of Homer about Odysseus: Whenever he came upon a king or a man of note,
he would stand beside him and restrain him with gentle words:
"Good sir, it isn't right to try to frighten you like a coward;
sit down yourself, and make the rest of the people sit."
But whenever he saw a man of the people and found him shouting,
he would strike him with his staff and rebuke him with words:
"Good sir, sit still and listen to what others say,
who are better than you; you're unwarlike and weak,
never counted for anything in war or in council." The accuser said Socrates explained this to mean that the poet approves of beating common people and the poor.[10]

1.2.59 But Socrates didn't say that. If he had, he would have thought he himself deserved a beating. What he said was that some people are useful neither in word nor in deed, and can't help an army or a city or the people itself when there is need. Such people should be held in check by every means, especially if they are insolent as well, even if they happen to be very rich.

1.2.60 Socrates was plainly the opposite of all this: a friend of the people and a friend of humanity. He had many eager follow-

10 The lines come from *Iliad* 2.188–191 and 198–202, where Odysseus stops the Greek troops from rushing to their ships to sail home.

ers, citizens and foreigners alike, but he never charged any of them a fee for his company. He shared what was his with all of them ungrudgingly. Some of them took small portions from him for nothing and sold them to others at a high price. They weren't friends of the people as he was, since they refused to converse with anyone who had no money to give.

1.2.61 Socrates also brought the city credit in the eyes of the rest of the world, much more than Lichas did for Sparta, though Lichas became famous for it. Lichas used to give dinners for the foreigners visiting Sparta at the Gymnopaedia. Socrates spent what was his throughout his whole life and conferred the greatest benefits on everyone who wanted them, because he sent away the people who spent time with him better than they had been.[11]

1.2.62 To me, then, Socrates, being the man he was, seemed to deserve honor from the city rather than death. Anyone who considered the matter in terms of the laws would reach the same conclusion. Under the laws, the penalty is death for anyone caught stealing, stripping people of their clothes, cutting purses, breaking into houses, kidnapping people to sell as slaves, or robbing temples. Of all people, he kept furthest from these crimes.

1.2.63 What's more, he was never responsible for any harm to the city, whether a war that went badly, civil strife, treason, or anything else. In private life he never deprived anyone of good things or plunged anyone into bad ones. He was never even accused of any of the things I've mentioned.

1.2.64 So how could he be guilty under the indictment? The indictment said he did not recognize the gods, yet he was plainly more devoted to serving the gods than anyone. His accuser charged him with corrupting the young, yet he was plainly stopping those of his companions who had wicked desires from pursuing them. He urged them instead to desire the finest and most magnificent excellence, the kind by which cities and households

11 Lichas was a wealthy Spartan famous for his hospitality; the Gymnopaedia was a Spartan festival with dances and displays by naked youths.

are well run. Since he did all this, how did he not deserve great honor from the city?

CHAPTER 3

Socrates prays simply, sacrifices modestly, and keeps strict control over food, drink and sex.

1.3.1 In my view he also benefited those who spent time with him, partly by showing in action what kind of man he was, and partly through conversation. I'll now write down as much of this as I can recall. In matters concerning the gods, he plainly acted and spoke just as the Pythia answers those who ask how they should act about sacrifice, the care of their ancestors, or anything else of the kind. The Pythia's answer is that people who act according to the law of their city will be acting piously. Socrates both acted that way himself and urged others to do so, and he thought that those who acted otherwise were overly fussy and foolish.[12]

1.3.2 He prayed to the gods simply to give him good things, believing the gods know best what sorts of things are good. People who prayed for gold or silver or tyranny or anything like that were, he thought, praying for nothing different than if they prayed for a throw of the dice or a battle or anything else whose outcome was plainly uncertain.

1.3.3 When he offered small sacrifices from his small means, he thought he came off no worse than those who offered many large sacrifices from many large means. It wouldn't be right for the gods, he said, if they delighted more in large sacrifices than in small ones, since then offerings from the wicked would often please them more than offerings from the good. Nor would life be worth living for human beings if offerings from the wicked were more pleasing to the gods than offerings from the good. No, he believed that the gods delight most in honors from the most pious. He also admired this line: "Offer sacrifice to the immortal gods according to your means." And he said that

12 The Pythia was the priestess through whom Apollo gave his oracles at Delphi.

"according to your means" was fine advice for dealing with friends and guests and for the rest of one's way of life as well.

1.3.4 If he thought he had been given a sign by the gods, you could sooner have persuaded him to take a blind guide who didn't know the way instead of one who could see and knew it, than to act against the sign. He denounced the folly of others who act against signs from the gods to avoid people's disapproval. He himself thought nothing of every human consideration compared with counsel from the gods.

1.3.5 He trained both his soul and his body with a way of life that would let anyone who followed it live confidently and safely, barring some act of the gods, and never be short of so modest an outlay. He was so frugal that I doubt anyone could work so little that he didn't earn enough to satisfy Socrates. He ate only as much food as he enjoyed eating, and he came to his meals so ready for them that his appetite for food served him as relish. Any drink was pleasant to him, because he didn't drink unless he was thirsty.

1.3.6 If he was ever invited to dinner and chose to go, he found it very easy to avoid what most people find hardest, which is stuffing themselves past the point of fullness. Those who couldn't manage this he advised to beware of the things that tempt people to eat when they aren't hungry and drink when they aren't thirsty. These, he said, are what ruin stomachs and heads and souls.

1.3.7 He said jokingly that he thought Circe, too, turned people into pigs by feasting them on plenty of such things. Odysseus, thanks to Hermes' advice and his own self-control, refrained from touching such things past the point of fullness, and that, he said, was why he didn't become a pig.

1.3.8 This was the sort of thing he joked about, while being serious at the same time. When it came to sex, he urged people to keep well away from the beautiful, since he said it wasn't easy for anyone who touched them to stay sensible. Once, for instance, he learned that Critobulus, Crito's son, had kissed

Alcibiades' son, a beautiful boy. With Critobulus present, he asked Xenophon:[13]

1.3.9 "Tell me, Xenophon," he said, "didn't you think Critobulus was one of the sensible sort rather than the reckless, one of those who think ahead rather than the thoughtless and foolhardy?" "Certainly," said Xenophon. "Well, now you can think of him as the most hotheaded and reckless man alive. He'd turn somersaults onto knives, he'd leap into fire."

1.3.10 "And what did you see him do," said Xenophon, "that made you judge him like this?" "Didn't this fellow dare to kiss Alcibiades' son," he said, "a boy with a very handsome face and in the full bloom of youth?" "Well, if that's what a foolhardy act is," said Xenophon, "I think I'd face that danger myself."

1.3.11 "You poor wretch," said Socrates, "what do you think would happen to you if you kissed someone beautiful? Wouldn't you at once become a slave instead of a free man? Wouldn't you spend a great deal on harmful pleasures, have no time to attend to anything fine and good, and be forced to take seriously things not even a madman would take seriously?"

1.3.12 "Heracles!" said Xenophon. "What a terrible power you say a kiss has!" "Does that surprise you?" said Socrates. "Don't you know that venomous spiders, not even the size of a half-obol coin, just by touching people with their mouths, wear them down with pain and drive them out of their minds?" "Yes, by Zeus," said Xenophon, "because spiders inject something when they bite."

1.3.13 "You fool," said Socrates, "and don't you think beautiful people inject something when they kiss, just because you can't see it? Don't you know that this creature they call 'beautiful and in bloom' is more dangerous than spiders by just this much: spiders inject something by touching, but this creature doesn't even need to touch. If someone just looks at it, it injects something, even from very far away, that drives him mad. Perhaps that's why the Loves are called archers too, because the beautiful wound us even from far away. My advice to you, Xenophon,

13 Xenophon here refers to himself in the third person.

is that whenever you see someone beautiful, you run for your life. And you, Critobulus, I advise to go away for a year. Even in that much time you might only barely recover [from the bite]."

1.3.14 Accordingly, he thought that those who weren't steady where sex was concerned should engage in it only with partners the soul would not welcome unless the body were in real need, and who would cause no trouble when it was. He himself was plainly so well prepared in this regard that he found it easier to keep away from the most beautiful and youthful than others do from the ugliest and least in their prime.

1.3.15 In matters of food, drink, and sex, then, this was how he was prepared. He believed he took no less pleasure in them, and enjoyed them quite as fully, as those who go to great trouble over them, and that he suffered far less pain.

CHAPTER 4

Socrates shows Aristodemus, who scorns religion, how the design of living things proves the gods' care.

1.4.1 Some people, judging by what certain writers and speakers say about him, believe that Socrates was superb at urging people toward excellence but not capable of leading them on to it. They should consider not only how he questioned and refuted those who thought they knew everything, as a way of chastising them, but also the things he said as he spent his days with his companions. Then let them judge whether he was able to make those who spent time with him better.

1.4.2 First I'll tell what I once heard him say about the divine in a conversation with Aristodemus, nicknamed "the Small." He had found out that Aristodemus neither sacrificed to the gods nor used divination, and even laughed at those who did. "Tell me, Aristodemus," he said, "are there people you've admired for their wisdom?" "There are," he said.

1.4.3 And Socrates said, "Tell us their names." "Well, in epic poetry I've admired Homer most, in dithyramb Melanippides, in

tragedy Sophocles, in sculpture Polyclitus, and in painting Zeuxis."[14]

1.4.4 "Do you think those who make images without sense or motion are more admirable, or those who make living creatures with sense and activity?" "The ones who make living creatures, by far, by Zeus—provided, that is, that the creatures come about by design and not by some chance." "And of things that give no clue to what they exist for, and things that plainly exist for some benefit, which do you judge to be the works of chance and which of design?" "It stands to reason that things that come about for a benefit are the works of design."

1.4.5 "Then don't you think that the one who made human beings in the beginning gave them, for their benefit, the means by which they perceive each thing? He gave them eyes to see what can be seen and ears to hear what can be heard. And smells—if noses hadn't been added, what use would they be to us? What perception would there be of sweet and sharp things, and of all the pleasures that come through the mouth, if a tongue hadn't been built in to judge them?

1.4.6 "Besides these, don't you think the following also look like the works of forethought? Since sight is delicate, it has been fitted with eyelids for doors, which open when it needs to be used and close in sleep. So that even winds can't harm it, lashes have been planted as a sieve. The area above the eyes has been given eaves in the eyebrows, so that not even sweat from the head can do damage. The hearing takes in every sound yet never fills up. All animals have front teeth fit for cutting, and molars fit for taking the food from them and grinding it. The mouth, through which animals send in what they want, has been placed near the eyes and nose; and since what passes out of the body is unpleasant, its channels have been turned away [and carried off] as far as possible from the senses. When these things have been done

14 Melanippides was a leading fifth-century BC composer of dithyrambs, choral songs for Dionysus. Polyclitus and Zeuxis were the most celebrated sculptor and painter of the age.

with such forethought, are you really at a loss whether they are the works of chance or of design?"

1.4.7 "No, by Zeus," he said. "Looked at this way, they do seem very much like the handiwork of some wise craftsman who loves living things." "And what about planting in them the desire to have children, planting in mothers the desire to rear them, and giving the young who are reared the strongest longing to live and the strongest fear of death?" "Certainly these too look like the contrivances of someone who planned for living creatures to exist."

1.4.8 "And do you think you have something intelligent in yourself?" "Ask me, anyway, and I'll answer." "And you think there's nothing intelligent anywhere else? You know that you have in your body a small part of the earth, which is vast, and a little of the moisture, which is abundant. You know too that your body was put together from a small portion of each of the other elements, great as they surely are. Do you think, then, that mind alone exists nowhere, and that you somehow had the luck to snatch it up? And do you think that these things, so enormous and so countless, are kept in such good order by some kind of mindlessness?"

1.4.9 "No, by Zeus, for I don't see the ones in charge, the way I see the makers of the things that are made here." "But you don't see your own soul either, and it's in charge of your body. By that reasoning you could say that you do nothing by design and everything by chance."

1.4.10 And Aristodemus said, "Look, Socrates, I don't despise the divine. I just think it's too grand to need my service as well." "Then the grander it is," he said, "in seeing fit to look after you, the more it should be honored."

1.4.11 "Rest assured," he said, "if I believed the gods gave any thought to human beings, I wouldn't neglect them." "So you don't think they give any thought to us? First, they made the human being the only creature to stand upright, and being upright lets us see farther ahead, view what's above better, and suffer less harm. [And they put sight and hearing and a mouth in

us.] Then, to the other creatures that move on the ground they gave feet, which provide only the ability to get about, but to human beings they added hands as well, which accomplish most of the things that make us happier than they are.

1.4.12 "Again, though all animals have a tongue, they made the human tongue alone able to touch the mouth now here, now there, and so to articulate the voice and signal to one another everything we want. And what about giving the pleasures of sex to the other animals only for a fixed season of the year, but granting them to us continuously until old age?

1.4.13 "Nor was the god content to take care of the body alone. What matters most, he also implanted in the human being the most powerful soul. For what other creature's soul has perceived, first of all, that there are gods, who arranged the greatest and most beautiful things? What race besides human beings worships gods? What soul is more capable than the human soul of guarding against hunger or thirst or cold or heat, or of treating diseases, or of training its strength, or of working hard at learning? What soul is better able to remember whatever it hears or sees or learns?

1.4.14 "Isn't it perfectly clear to you that, compared with the other animals, human beings live like gods, superior by nature in body and soul alike? A creature with the body of an ox but a human mind couldn't do what it wanted, and creatures that have hands but no sense are no better off. And you, who have received both of these most precious things, don't think the gods care about you? What will they have to do before you believe they give you any thought?"

1.4.15 "When they send me advisers on what to do and what not to do, the way you say they send them to you." "And when the Athenians inquire about something through divination and the gods tell them," he said, "don't you think they're telling you too? Or when they send portents to give the Greeks warning, or all humankind? Do they single you out alone and set you aside in neglect?

1.4.16 "Do you think the gods would have implanted in human beings the belief that they can do us good and harm if they weren't able to? And that human beings, deceived for all time, would never have noticed? Don't you see that the oldest and wisest of human institutions, cities and nations, are the most god-fearing, and that the most sensible time of life is the most attentive to the gods?

1.4.17 "My good friend," he said, "understand that your own mind, which is in you, handles your body as it wishes. So you should believe that the understanding in the universe also disposes all things as it pleases. You shouldn't think that your eye can reach across many stades while the god's eye can't see everything at once, or that your soul can think about things here and things in Egypt and Sicily while the god's understanding isn't capable of attending to everything at once.

1.4.18 "With people, you find out who is willing to serve you in return by serving them, who will return a favor by doing them favors, and who has good sense by consulting them. If, in the same way, you put the gods to the test by serving them, to see whether they'll be willing to advise you about things hidden from human beings, you will learn that the divine is so great and of such a kind that it sees all things at once, hears all things, is present everywhere, and attends to all things at once."

1.4.19 To me, at any rate, it seemed that by saying these things he made his companions refrain from unholy, unjust, and shameful acts not only when other people could see them but also when they were alone, since they believed that nothing they did would ever escape the notice of the gods.

CHAPTER 5

Socrates argues that self-control is the foundation of excellence, and lack of it a kind of slavery.

1.5.1 Now if self-control too is a fine and good thing for a man to possess, let's consider whether he helped people advance toward it by saying things like this. Gentlemen, if war broke out

and we wanted to choose the man who would do most to keep us safe and defeat the enemy, would we choose someone we saw was mastered by his stomach, or wine, or sex, [or toil,] or sleep? How could we think such a man would either save us or overcome the enemy?

SOCRATES 1.5.2 And if, at the end of our lives, we wanted to entrust someone with educating our sons, or guarding our unmarried daughters, or preserving our property, would we consider the uncontrolled man trustworthy for the job? Would we entrust our livestock or our storerooms or the supervision of work to an uncontrolled slave? Would we be willing to take such a man as a servant or shopper even for free?

1.5.3 Surely, if we wouldn't even accept an uncontrolled slave, it must be worth taking care not to become that sort of person oneself. Grasping people take money from others and are thought to enrich themselves, but it's not like that with the uncontrolled man: he isn't harmful to others and beneficial to himself. He does harm to others, but far more harm to himself—if indeed the greatest harm is to ruin not only one's household but one's body and soul as well.

1.5.4 And in company, who could enjoy such a person, someone he knew cared more for fine food and wine than for his friends, and was fonder of prostitutes than of his companions? Shouldn't every man, recognizing that self-control is the foundation of excellence, establish it in his soul first of all?

1.5.5 For without it, who could learn anything good or practice it to any worthwhile degree? Or who, enslaved to pleasures, wouldn't end up in a shameful state in both body and soul? It seems to me, by Hera, [that a free man should pray not to end up with a slave like that, and] that someone enslaved to such pleasures should beg the gods to give him good masters. That's the only way such a man could be saved.

1.5.6 Saying such things, he showed himself even more self-controlled in his actions than in his words. He mastered not only the pleasures of the body but also the pleasure that money brings, believing that a man who takes money from just anyone

sets up a master over himself and is a slave in a slavery as shameful as any.

CHAPTER 6

Antiphon the sophist mocks Socrates' poverty and free teaching, and Socrates defends his way of life.

1.6.1 It's also worth not passing over the conversations he had with Antiphon the sophist. Once Antiphon, wanting to draw Socrates' companions away from him, came up to him while they were present and said this:[15]

ANTIPHON 1.6.2 Socrates, I thought that people who pursue philosophy were supposed to become happier. But you seem to me to have gotten the opposite out of philosophy. Just look at how you live: not even a slave would put up with living like that under a master. You eat the poorest food and drink the poorest drink. The cloak you wear is not only shabby but the same one summer and winter, and you always go without shoes or tunic.

1.6.3 And you don't take money, which cheers people when they get it and, once they have it, lets them live more freely and pleasantly. Teachers of other skills make their pupils imitate them. If you're going to shape your companions that way too, you should consider yourself a teacher of misery.

1.6.4 Socrates replied to this: Antiphon, you seem to have assumed that I live so miserably that, I'm convinced, you'd rather die than live as I do. Come, then, let's consider what you've noticed that's so hard about my life.

SOCRATES 1.6.5 Is it that people who take money have to produce the work they're paid for, while I, since I don't take it, don't have to converse with anyone I don't want to? Or do you look down on my way of life because the food I eat is less healthy than yours and gives less strength? Or because my provisions are harder to get than yours, being rarer and more expensive? Or because

15 Antiphon the sophist was a fifth-century BC thinker known from fragments of works such as *On Truth*. Whether he is the same man as the orator Antiphon is disputed.

what you get ready for yourself is more pleasant to you than what I get ready is to me? Don't you know that the person who most enjoys his food has the least need of fancy dishes, and the person who most enjoys his drink has the least craving for a drink he doesn't have?

1.6.6 As for cloaks, you know that people change them because of cold and heat, and they put on shoes so as not to be kept from walking by things that hurt their feet. So have you ever noticed me staying indoors because of the cold more than anyone else, or fighting with anyone over shade because of the heat, or not walking wherever I like because my feet hurt?

1.6.7 Don't you know that people who are naturally weakest in body, if they train, become stronger than the strongest who neglect training, in whatever they train for, and bear it more easily? And yet you don't think that I, who am always training my body to endure whatever comes along, bear everything more easily than you, who don't train?

1.6.8 And as for not being a slave to the stomach or to sleep and lust, do you think anything is more responsible for that than having other things more pleasant than these—things that not only delight us while we use them but also give us hope that they'll benefit us always? You certainly know this much: people who think nothing is going well for them aren't cheerful, while those who believe they're getting on well—in farming, or shipping, or whatever they happen to work at—are cheerful because they think they're doing well.

1.6.9 So do you think all these things give as much pleasure as believing that you yourself are becoming better and gaining better friends? Well, that's what I believe, and I always have. And if friends or the city need help, which man has more time to look after them—the one who lives as I do now, or the one who lives the way you call blessed? Which would go on campaign more easily—the man who can't live without an expensive diet, or the one who is satisfied with whatever is at hand? Which would be starved out by a siege sooner—the one who needs things that are

hardest to find, or the one who is content with whatever is easiest to come by?

1.6.10 You seem to think, Antiphon, that happiness is luxury and extravagance. But I believe that to need nothing is divine, and to need as little as possible is nearest to the divine; and the divine is best, so what is nearest to the divine is nearest to the best.

1.6.11 Another time Antiphon, in conversation with Socrates, said, "Socrates, I do think you're just, but not wise in any way whatever. And you seem to me to recognize this yourself: you don't charge anyone money for your company, at any rate. Yet your cloak or your house or anything else you own, if you thought it worth money, you wouldn't give to anyone for free, or even for less than it's worth.

1.6.12 "So clearly, if you thought your company was worth anything too, you would charge no less money for it than it was worth. You may well be just, then, since you don't deceive people for gain; but you can't be wise, since what you know isn't worth anything."

1.6.13 Socrates replied: Antiphon, among us it is held that youthful beauty and wisdom can alike be disposed of honorably or shamefully. If someone sells his beauty for money to anyone who wants it, people call him a prostitute; but if he makes a friend of a lover whom he knows to be a true gentleman, we consider him sensible. Wisdom is the same. People who sell it for money to anyone who wants it are called sophists [as if they were prostitutes]. But when someone takes a person he knows to be naturally gifted and makes him a friend by teaching him whatever good he has, we consider him to be doing what befits a citizen who is a true gentleman.

SOCRATES 1.6.14 So I myself, Antiphon, take as much pleasure in good friends as other people take in a good horse or dog or bird —even more. If I have anything good, I teach it, and I introduce them to others from whom I think they'll gain something toward excellence. The treasures that the wise men of old left behind written in books I unroll and go through together with

my friends, and if we see something good, we pick it out. And we count it a great gain if we become friends to one another. For my part, when I heard this, it seemed to me that he was blessed himself and that he led those who listened to him toward gentlemanly excellence.

1.6.15 And once again Antiphon asked him how he could think he was making others skilled in politics when he himself didn't take part in politics—if he really understood it. "Antiphon," he said, "in which way would I take more part in politics: by doing it alone, or by making it my concern that as many people as possible are capable of doing it?"

CHAPTER 7

Socrates warns that pretending to skills you lack brings ridicule and harm.

1.7.1 Let's also consider whether, by turning his companions away from pretense, he urged them to care for excellence. He always said that there was no finer road to a good reputation than the one by which a person becomes good at the very thing he wants to be thought good at. And he showed that this was true in the following way.

1.7.2 "Let's think," he said, "about what a man would have to do if he wanted to be thought a good pipe-player without being one. Wouldn't he have to imitate good pipe-players in everything outside the craft itself? First, since they own fine equipment and take many attendants around with them, he would have to do the same. Then, since many people praise them, he would have to get himself plenty of people to praise him. But he must never take on an actual performance, or he'll immediately be shown up as ridiculous—not only a bad pipe-player but a fraud as well. And spending a great deal, gaining nothing, and getting a bad name on top of it, how can his life be anything but laborious, unprofitable, and laughable?

1.7.3 "Likewise, if someone wanted to appear to be a good general or helmsman without being one, let's think what would

happen to him. If he wanted to be thought capable of these things and couldn't convince people, wouldn't that be painful? And if he did convince them, wouldn't it be still more miserable? For clearly a man who is appointed to steer a ship or command an army without knowing how would destroy the very people he least wanted to, and would come off shamefully and badly himself."

1.7.4 In the same way he showed that seeming to be rich or brave or strong without being so does a person no good. Such people, he said, are given tasks beyond their power, and when they can't carry them out, since they're thought capable, they get no forgiveness.

1.7.5 He called a man no small cheat if he got money or some article from someone by persuasion and then robbed him of it; but by far the greatest cheat, he said, was the man who, though worth nothing, had deceived people into believing he was fit to lead the city. So it seemed to me that by conversing in this way he also turned his companions away from putting on pretenses.

Book II

Friends and family
Prodicus' Choice of Heracles, a son and his mother, two quarreling brothers, and the worth of friends.

CHAPTER 1

Socrates questions Aristippus about training rulers and retells Prodicus' fable of Heracles choosing between Vice and Virtue.

2.1.1 It seemed to me that by saying things like the following he also urged his companions to practice self-control with regard to the desire for food and drink, sex and sleep, and with regard to cold, heat and toil. Learning that one of his companions was rather undisciplined [in such matters], he said, "Tell me, Aristippus: if you had to take on two young men and educate them, one so that he'd be capable of ruling and the other so that he wouldn't even lay claim to rule, how would you educate each of them? Shall we look into it starting from their food, as if from the alphabet?" And Aristippus said, "Food does seem to me a starting point, at any rate. Nobody could even stay alive without being fed."[1]

2.1.2 "Then it's likely that both of them would want to eat when the time comes?" "Likely enough," he said. "So which of them would we train to choose to do what's urgent rather than gratify his belly?" "The one being educated to rule, by Zeus," he said, "so that the city's business doesn't go undone during his time in office." "And when they want to drink," he said, "mustn't the abil-

1 Aristippus of Cyrene was a follower of Socrates, later associated with a philosophy of pleasure.

ity to hold out while thirsty be given to the same one?" "Certainly," he said.

2.1.3 "And being in control of sleep, so as to be able to go to bed late, get up early and stay awake if need be—which of the two should we give that to?" "That too to the same one," he said. "And what about being in control of sex," he said, "so as not to be kept by it from doing what needs doing?" "That too to the same one," he said. "What about not running away from hard work but enduring it willingly—which should we give that to?" "That too to the one being educated to rule," he said. "And what about learning any subject that helps one get the better of opponents—which would it be more fitting to give that to?" "Far more, by Zeus, to the one being educated to rule," he said, "since without that kind of learning none of the rest is any use."

2.1.4 "So don't you think someone educated like this would be less likely to be caught by his opponents than the other animals are? Some of them, I suppose, are lured by their bellies: even some that are very wary are still drawn to the bait by their desire to eat, and get caught; others are ambushed at the water." "Certainly," he said. "And aren't others caught through lust—quails and partridges, for instance, which are carried toward the female's call by desire and the hope of sex, lose all thought of danger, and fall into the snares?" He agreed to this too.

2.1.5 "So don't you think it's shameful for a human being to suffer the same fate as the most senseless of beasts? Take adulterers: they walk into enclosed quarters knowing that the adulterer risks the penalties the law threatens, and being ambushed, and, if caught, being outraged. With such bad and shameful things hanging over the adulterer, and with so many ways of relieving sexual desire without any fear, still to rush into danger—isn't that the mark of a man thoroughly cursed?"

2.1.6 "I think so," he said. "And given that most of the activities people most need to carry on take place in the open air—in war and farming, for instance, and not the least of the others—don't you think it's great negligence that most people are untrained to bear cold and heat?" He agreed to this too. "So don't you think

the man who's going to rule should train himself to bear these things easily as well?"

2.1.7 "Certainly," he said. "So if we place those who are in control of all these things among those fit to rule, won't we place those unable to do them among the ones who won't even lay claim to ruling?" He agreed to this too. "Well then: since you know which rank each of these two kinds belongs in, have you ever considered which of these ranks you would rightly place yourself in?"

2.1.8 "I have," said Aristippus, "and I certainly don't place myself in the rank of those who want to rule. In fact it seems to me the act of a very foolish man that, when providing for one's own needs is a big enough job, he isn't content with that but takes on the further task of supplying the other citizens with what they need. And to go short of much that he wants for himself, while, as the city's leader, he has to pay the penalty if he doesn't accomplish everything the city wants—how is that not great folly?

2.1.9 "For cities expect to treat their rulers the way I treat my household slaves. I expect my servants to provide me with necessities in abundance but not to touch any of them themselves; and cities think their rulers should supply them with as many good things as possible but keep their own hands off all of them. So those who want plenty of trouble for themselves and want to make trouble for others—I'd educate them that way and put them among those fit to rule. Myself, though, I place among those who want to live as easily and pleasantly as possible."

2.1.10 And Socrates said, "Then shall we look at this too: who live more pleasantly, the rulers or the ruled?" "Certainly," he said. "Well, first, among the peoples we know of: in Asia the Persians rule, while the Syrians, Phrygians and Lydians are ruled; in Europe the Scythians rule and the Maeotians are ruled; in Libya the Carthaginians rule and the Libyans are ruled. Which of these do you think live more pleasantly? Or among the

Greeks, to whom you yourself belong—which do you think live more pleasantly, those who hold power or those under it?"[2]

2.1.11 "But I, you see," said Aristippus, "don't place myself in slavery either. There seems to me to be a middle road between these, which I try to walk—not through rule, not through slavery, but through freedom, which is the road that leads most surely to happiness."

2.1.12 "Well," said Socrates, "if this road, just as it doesn't run through rule or through slavery, didn't run through people either, you might have a point. But if, living among people, you won't see fit either to rule or to be ruled, and won't willingly serve those who rule, I think you can see how the stronger know how to reduce the weaker to tears, both publicly and privately, and treat them as slaves.

2.1.13 "Or haven't you noticed people who, after others have sown and planted, cut down their grain and chop down their trees and besiege in every way the weaker who refuse to serve them, until they persuade them to choose slavery over war with the stronger? And in private life too, don't you know that the brave and powerful enslave the cowardly and powerless and reap the profit from them?" "But I, you see," he said, "so as not to suffer this, don't shut myself up inside any citizenship either: I'm a stranger everywhere."

2.1.14 And Socrates said: Now that's a formidable wrestling hold you're describing! Ever since Sinis and Sciron and Procrustes died, nobody wrongs strangers anymore—is that it? Yet as things are, those who take part in public life in their own countries make laws so as not to be wronged, and acquire friends to help them besides their so-called next of kin, and put walls around their cities, and acquire weapons to fend off wrongdoers, and on top of that they secure allies from outside; and those who have all these things are still wronged,[3]

2 "Libya" is the Greek name for Africa. The Maeotians lived around Lake Maeotis, the modern Sea of Azov.

3 Sinis, Sciron and Procrustes were legendary brigands who preyed on travelers on the road to Athens until Theseus killed them.

SOCRATES 2.1.15 while you, who have none of these things, who spend a great deal of time on the roads, where most people are wronged, and who, whatever city you arrive in, are weaker than all its citizens and just the sort that would-be wrongdoers most like to attack—do you still think you won't be wronged, just because you're a stranger? Or are you confident because the cities proclaim safe conduct for you, coming and going? Or because you think you'd make the kind of slave no master would profit from? For who would want to keep a man in his house who's unwilling to do any work but enjoys the most expensive way of living?

2.1.16 Let's look at this too: how masters treat servants of that kind. Don't they discipline their lust by starving them? Stop them stealing by locking up anything there is to take? Keep them from running away with chains? Drive the laziness out of them with beatings? Or what do you do yourself, when you find that one of your servants is like that?

2.1.17 "I punish him with every kind of misery," he said, "until I force him to serve. But look here, Socrates: those being trained in the art of kingship, which you seem to me to consider happiness—how are they any different from people who suffer hardship by necessity, if they're going to go hungry and thirsty and cold and sleepless and toil at everything else of that kind willingly? For my part, I don't see what difference it makes whether the same hide is flogged willingly or unwillingly, or in general whether the same body is besieged by all such things willingly or unwillingly—except that folly is added to the one who chooses to endure what's painful."

2.1.18 And Socrates said: What's this, Aristippus? Don't you think that in matters like these the voluntary differs from the involuntary, in that the man who goes hungry willingly can eat whenever he likes, and the man who goes thirsty willingly can drink, and so on, while the one who suffers these things by necessity isn't free to stop whenever he wants? Then again, the man who undergoes hardship voluntarily takes delight in his

toil, buoyed by good hope, the way hunters toil gladly in the hope of a catch.

SOCRATES 2.1.19 And prizes like those are worth little for the effort; but those who toil to win good friends, or to subdue enemies, or so that, having grown capable in body and soul, they may manage their own households well, do good to their friends and serve their country—how can we not think that they toil gladly for such ends and live in delight, admiring themselves and praised and envied by everyone else?

2.1.20 Besides, easy living and immediate pleasures can't produce physical fitness, as the trainers say, nor do they instill any knowledge in the soul worth speaking of; whereas efforts sustained through endurance bring people to accomplish fine and good deeds, as good men say. And Hesiod says somewhere: "Badness you can take by the heap,

and easily: smooth is the road, and she lives very near.
But before excellence the gods have set sweat,
the immortals; long and steep is the path to her,
and rough at first; but once you reach the summit,
then she is easy, hard though she is." Epicharmus bears witness too, in this line: "The gods sell us all good things for toil."[4]

And elsewhere [he says]: "You rascal, don't hanker after soft things, or you may get the hard ones."

2.1.21 Prodicus the wise, too, in his essay on Heracles, the one he performs for the largest audiences, expresses the same view about excellence. He puts it something like this, as far as I remember. He says that when Heracles was passing from boyhood into youth, the age when the young, now becoming their own masters, show whether they'll take the road of virtue

4 The verses are from Hesiod's *Works and Days*; Epicharmus was a Sicilian comic poet of the early fifth century BC.

through life or the road of vice, he went off to a quiet place and sat down, unsure which of the two roads to take;[5]

2.1.22 and two tall women appeared, coming toward him. One was lovely to look at, with the bearing of the freeborn: her skin was adorned with purity, her eyes with modesty, her posture with moderation, and she was dressed in white. The other had been fed up to plumpness and softness. She had painted her complexion to look whiter and rosier than it really was, and held herself to look straighter and taller than nature had made her. Her eyes were wide open, and she wore clothes through which her charms would best shine. She kept looking herself over, watching whether anyone else was looking at her, and often glancing back even at her own shadow.

2.1.23 As they came nearer to Heracles, the first one I mentioned kept on at the same pace, but the other, eager to get there first, ran up to Heracles and said: I see you, Heracles, unsure which road to take through life. Make me your friend, and I'll lead you [on] the pleasantest and easiest road. There's no delight you won't taste, and you'll live out your days without ever knowing hardship.

VICE 2.1.24 First of all, you won't worry about wars or affairs of any kind. You'll pass your time considering what delicious food or drink you might find, what you might see or hear to delight you, what you might smell or touch to give you pleasure, which beloved's company would please you most, how you might sleep most softly, and how you might come by all of this with the least effort.

2.1.25 And if there's ever any suspicion of a shortage of the means to these things, there's no fear that I'll lead you to provide them by toiling and suffering in body and soul. No, you'll make use of what others work for, holding back from nothing that might bring you some gain. For I give those who keep company with me license to profit from every source.

5 Prodicus of Ceos was a famous sophist. In his fable, which runs to 2.1.34, the personified Aretē and Kakia appear as "Virtue" and "Vice"; elsewhere aretē is rendered "excellence."

SOCRATES 2.1.26 When Heracles heard this, he said, "Lady, what is your name?" And she said, "My friends call me Happiness, but those who hate me [give me a nickname and] call me Vice."

VIRTUE 2.1.27 Meanwhile the other woman came up and said: I too have come to you, Heracles, because I know your parents and have observed your nature in the course of your upbringing. That makes me hope that, if you take the road that leads to me, you will become a very good worker of fine and noble deeds, and that I will appear still more honored and more distinguished for the good I bring. But I won't deceive you with preludes of pleasure; I will truthfully describe things as the gods have arranged them.

2.1.28 Of the things that are truly good and fine, the gods give none to human beings without toil and care. If you want the gods to be gracious to you, you must serve the gods; if you wish to be loved by friends, you must do good to your friends; if you desire to be honored by some city, you must benefit that city; if you think you deserve to be admired by all Greece for excellence, you must try to do good to Greece; if you want the earth to bear you abundant crops, you must tend the earth; if you think you should grow rich from livestock, you must take care of livestock; if you're eager to grow great through war and want to be able to free your friends and subdue your enemies, you must learn the arts of war from those who know them and practice how they should be used; and if you want to be strong in body too, you must accustom your body to serve your mind and train it with toil and sweat.

VICE 2.1.29 And Vice broke in, as Prodicus tells it, and said, "Do you see, Heracles, what a hard, long road to enjoyment this woman is describing to you? I will lead you to happiness by a short and easy road."

VIRTUE 2.1.30 And Virtue said: You wretch, what good do you have? Or what pleasure do you know, when you're unwilling to do anything for its sake? You don't even wait for the desire for pleasant things: you stuff yourself with everything before you

desire it, eating before you're hungry and drinking before you're thirsty. To eat with pleasure you contrive fancy cooking; to drink with pleasure you lay in expensive wines and run around in summer hunting for snow; to sleep with pleasure you provide not only soft bedding but [beds and] stands for the beds as well—for you desire sleep not because you've worked but because you have nothing to do. You force sex before there's any need, contriving every means and using men as women. That's how you train your friends: running riot by night, and sleeping through the most useful hours of the day.

2.1.31 Immortal though you are, you have been cast out by the gods and are dishonored by good men. The sweetest thing of all to hear—praise of yourself—you have never heard, and the sweetest sight of all you have never seen, for you have never yet beheld a single fine deed of your own. Who would believe anything you say? Who would help you when you're in need? Or who in his right mind would dare to join your band of revelers? Your followers are feeble in body while they are young, and senseless in soul when they grow old. They are kept sleek and idle through their youth, then trudge, withered and toiling, through old age, ashamed of what they have done and weighed down by what they still must do. They raced through the pleasures in their youth and laid up the hardships for old age.

2.1.32 But I keep company with gods, and I keep company with good human beings, and no fine deed, divine or human, happens without me. I am honored most of all, both among gods and among the men to whom I properly belong: a welcome fellow worker for craftsmen, a trusty guardian of households for masters, a kindly helper for servants, a good partner in the labors of peace, a steadfast ally in the deeds of war, the best companion in friendship.

2.1.33 My friends enjoy food and drink with pleasure and without fuss, because they wait until they desire them. Sleep comes to them sweeter than to those who never toil, and they neither resent leaving it nor neglect their duties on its account. The young delight in the praise of their elders, and the older

rejoice in the honors paid them by the young. They remember their past deeds with pleasure and take pleasure in doing their present ones well, being, thanks to me, dear to the gods, loved by their friends and honored by their countries. And when the destined end comes, they don't lie forgotten and dishonored, but live on in memory, flourishing and celebrated in song for all time. Such, Heracles, son of good parents, is the most blessed happiness that can be yours, if you labor to win it.

SOCRATES 2.1.34 That is roughly how Prodicus tells of Heracles' education by Virtue—though he dressed up the thoughts in even grander language than I have just now. So it would be worth your while, Aristippus, to take all this to heart and try to give some thought to the part of your life that lies ahead.

CHAPTER 2

Socrates shows his son Lamprocles, angry with his mother, how much he owes her.

2.2.1 Once, when he noticed that Lamprocles, his eldest son, was angry with his mother, he said, "Tell me, my boy, do you know that some people are called ungrateful?" "Certainly," said the young man. "And have you worked out what people do to get called by that name?" "I have," he said. "People who have been well treated and don't return the favor when they could are called ungrateful." "So don't you think the ungrateful are counted among the unjust?"[6]

2.2.2 "I do," he said. "And have you ever considered whether, just as enslaving friends is thought unjust but enslaving enemies just, so too being ungrateful is unjust toward friends but just toward enemies?" "Certainly I have," he said. "And I think that anyone who has been well treated by someone, friend or enemy, and doesn't try to return the favor is unjust."

2.2.3 "Well then, if that's how it is, wouldn't ingratitude be injustice pure and simple?" He agreed. "And so the greater the

6 Lamprocles was the eldest of the three sons of Socrates and his wife Xanthippe.

benefits someone has received without returning the favor, the more unjust he would be?" He agreed to this too. "Then whom," he said, "could we find who have been benefited more by anyone than children by their parents? Their parents brought them from not being into being, and gave them the chance to see so many beautiful things and to share in so many good things, all that the gods provide to human beings. And these seem to us so precious that we all shun leaving them behind more than anything else, and cities have made death the penalty for the greatest crimes, on the view that there is no greater evil whose fear could stop wrongdoing.

2.2.4 "And surely you don't suppose that people have children for the sake of sex, since the streets are full of those who can relieve us of that need, and so are the brothels. No, it's plain that we even look into what kind of women would give us the best children; and those are the women we come together with to have them.

2.2.5 "And the husband supports the woman who is to have his children with him, and prepares in advance for the children to come everything he thinks will help them in life, and as much of it as he can. The woman conceives and carries this burden, weighed down by it and risking her life, and sharing the food that nourishes her own body. After carrying it to term with great labor and giving birth, she nurses it and cares for it, though she has received nothing good from it beforehand, and though the infant neither knows who is treating it well nor can signal what it needs. She has to guess for herself what is good for it and what will please it, and tries to supply these; and she nurses it for a long time, enduring toil day and night, without knowing what gratitude she will get for any of it.

2.2.6 "And just bringing them up isn't enough. Once the children seem old enough to learn something, the parents teach them whatever good things for life they themselves have to offer, and for whatever they think someone else is better able to teach, they send them to that person at their own expense; and

they take every care, doing everything they can, to make their children turn out as good as possible."

2.2.7 To this the young man said, "But really, even if she has done all this and many times more besides, nobody could put up with her bad temper." And Socrates said, "Which do you think is harder to bear—the savagery of a wild beast or of a mother?" "I think a mother's," he said, "at least a mother like this one." "So has she ever done you any harm by biting or kicking you, the way many people have suffered from wild animals?"

2.2.8 "No, but by Zeus," he said, "she says things no one would want to hear for anything in the world." "And how many [unbearable] troubles," said Socrates, "do you think you've given her, being difficult in word and deed, day and night, ever since you were a little child—and how much grief when you were sick?" "But I've never said or done anything to her," he said, "that made her ashamed."

2.2.9 "Well then," he said, "do you think it's harder for you to listen to what she says than it is for actors when they say the most terrible things to each other in tragedies? And yet, I suppose, because they don't think that the speaker who reproaches is reproaching in order to punish, or that the one who threatens is threatening in order to do some harm, they take it easily. But you know perfectly well that whatever your mother says to you, she says it not only without meaning you any harm, but wishing you more good than she wishes anyone else—and you get angry? Or do you think your mother means you ill?"

2.2.10 "Certainly not," he said. "That I don't think." And Socrates said, "So this woman—who wishes you well, and takes as much care as she possibly can when you're sick to see that you get well and lack nothing you need, and who besides prays to the gods for many [good things] for you and pays her vows—you say she's difficult? For my part, I think that if you can't bear a mother like that, you can't bear what's good for you."

2.2.11 "Tell me," he said, "do you think there is anyone else you should show regard for? Or are you prepared to make no effort

to please anyone at all, and to obey neither a general nor any other official?"

2.2.12 "Yes, by Zeus, I do think so," he said. "So," said Socrates, "you want to please your neighbor too, so that he'll give you a light for your fire when you need it, and be a partner to you in good things, and if you happen to slip up, be close at hand to help you kindly?" "I do," he said. "And what about this? A fellow traveler on the road or at sea, or anyone else you might meet—would it make no difference to you whether he became your friend or your enemy, or do you think you should care about having their goodwill too?"

2.2.13 "I do," he said. "So you're prepared to take care with these people, but you don't think you should show regard for your mother, who loves you more than anyone? Don't you know that the city, too, pays no attention to any other kind of ingratitude and gives no judgment on it, but overlooks people who have been well treated and don't return the favor—yet if anyone fails to look after his parents, it imposes a penalty on him, and rejects him at his scrutiny and doesn't allow him to hold office, on the ground that the sacrifices offered on the city's behalf would not be offered piously if he offered them, and nothing else would be done well and justly if he did it? And, by Zeus, if someone doesn't tend his parents' graves after they die, the city looks into that too, in the scrutinies of officials.[7]

2.2.14 "So, my boy, if you're sensible, you'll beg the gods to forgive you if you have neglected your mother in any way, so that they don't regard you as ungrateful too and refuse to do you good; and you'll be careful with people, so that they don't all notice you neglecting your parents and hold you in contempt, and you end up exposed without a friend in the world. For if they took you to be ungrateful toward your parents, nobody would think that he'd get any gratitude for treating you well."

7 At Athens, every man chosen for office underwent a scrutiny (*dokimasia*) of his eligibility and conduct, which included questions about how he treated his parents.

CHAPTER 3

Socrates teaches Chaerecrates how to win back his brother Chaerephon by being the first to show kindness.

2.3.1 Once he noticed that Chaerephon and Chaerecrates, who were brothers and both acquaintances of his, were quarreling. When he saw Chaerecrates, he said: Tell me, Chaerecrates, you're surely not one of those people who think money more useful than brothers? And this when money has no sense and a brother has sense, when money needs help and a brother can give it, and besides, when money is plentiful and a brother is just one.[8]

SOCRATES 2.3.2 It's strange, too, if someone regards his brothers as a loss because he doesn't also own what his brothers own, but doesn't regard his fellow citizens as a loss because he doesn't also have what the citizens have. In that case people are able to reason that it's better to live among many and have enough in safety than to live alone and possess all the citizens' property at great risk; yet when it comes to brothers, they fail to see this very same thing;

2.3.3 and those who can afford it buy slaves to have helpers in their work, and acquire friends because they need allies, yet they neglect their brothers—as though friends could come from among fellow citizens but not from among brothers.

2.3.4 And surely, when it comes to friendship, being born of the same parents counts for a great deal, and so does being brought up together; even wild animals come to feel a kind of longing for those raised with them. Besides, other people also respect those who have brothers more than those who have none, and are less inclined to attack them.

2.3.5 And Chaerecrates said, "Well, Socrates, if the disagreement weren't a serious one, perhaps one ought to put up with one's brother and not avoid him over little things. A brother is a

8 Chaerephon was Socrates' devoted friend, famous for asking the Delphic oracle whether anyone was wiser than Socrates.

good thing, as you say yourself, when he is what he should be. But when he falls short in every way and is the complete opposite, why should anyone attempt the impossible?"

2.3.6 And Socrates said, "Tell me, Chaerecrates, is Chaerephon unable to please anyone, just as he can't please you, or are there people he pleases very much?" "That's exactly why, Socrates," he said, "I have every right to hate him: he can please others, but to me, wherever he is, he's always more of a loss than a benefit, in word and deed alike."

2.3.7 "Then is it the case," said Socrates, "that just as a horse is a liability to someone who doesn't know how to handle it but tries to use it anyway, so too a brother is a liability when someone tries to deal with him without knowing how?"

2.3.8 "But how could I not know how to deal with a brother," said Chaerecrates, "when I know how to speak kindly to someone who speaks kindly to me, and to treat well someone who treats me well? But a man who tries to annoy me in word and deed—I couldn't speak kindly to him or treat him well, and I won't even try."

2.3.9 And Socrates said, "That's an astonishing thing to say, Chaerecrates. If you had a dog that was good with sheep, and it was friendly to the shepherds but snarled at you when you came near, you'd forget about being angry and try to calm it by treating it well. Yet with your brother, who you say is a great good when he's what he should be toward you, and though you admit you know how to treat people well and speak kindly to them, you don't try to find a way to make him as good to you as he can be."

2.3.10 And Chaerecrates said, "I'm afraid, Socrates, that I don't have wisdom enough to make Chaerephon treat me as he should." "And yet," said Socrates, "to my mind you don't need to devise anything elaborate or new to use on him. I think that with means you already know yourself, you could catch him and make him think highly of you."

2.3.11 "Then tell me right away," he said, "if you've noticed that I know some love charm I've been unaware of knowing." "All

right, tell me," he said. "If you wanted to get one of your acquaintances to invite you to dinner whenever he offered a sacrifice, what would you do?" "Obviously I'd start by inviting him myself whenever I offered one."

2.3.12 "And if you wanted to persuade one of your friends to look after your affairs whenever you were away, what would you do?" "Obviously I'd be the first to try looking after his when he was away."

2.3.13 "And if you wanted to get a guest-friend to put you up whenever you came to his city, what would you do?" "Obviously I'd be the first to put him up whenever he came to Athens. And if I wanted him to be eager to help me accomplish whatever I'd come for, obviously I'd have to do that for him first, too."[9]

2.3.14 "So you've known all the love charms there are among human beings all along, and kept them hidden! Or are you hesitant," he said, "to make the first move, for fear of looking contemptible if you're the first to do your brother good? Yet surely the man who seems to deserve the most praise is the one who is quickest to harm his enemies and do good to his friends. Now if I thought Chaerephon better suited than you to lead the way to this friendship, I'd be trying to persuade him to make the first attempt at winning you as a friend. As it is, I think you're the one more likely to bring it off by taking the lead."

2.3.15 And Chaerecrates said, "That's a strange thing to say, Socrates, and not like you at all—telling me, the younger brother, to take the lead. Yet everywhere in the world the custom is the opposite: the elder takes the lead in everything, in word and deed alike."

2.3.16 "How so?" said Socrates. "Isn't it the custom everywhere for a younger man to step aside in the road when he meets an older one, to get up from his seat, to honor him with the soft bed, and to give way to him in speaking? My good friend, don't hesitate," he said, "but set about calming the man down, and he'll respond to you very quickly. Don't you see how keen he is

9 A guest-friend (*xenos*) was a man in another city bound to one by a lasting, often hereditary, tie of mutual hospitality.

on honor, and how generous in spirit? Worthless little people you couldn't win over better than by giving them something; but true gentlemen you'd best win over by treating them in a friendly way."

2.3.17 And Chaerecrates said, "And what if I do all this and he gets no better?" Socrates said: What else, except that you'll risk showing that you are good and love your brother, and that he is worthless and doesn't deserve kindness? But I don't think anything of the sort will happen. I believe that once he sees you challenging him to this contest, he'll be very competitive about outdoing you in treating you well, in word and deed.

SOCRATES 2.3.18 As things stand, he said, the two of you are in the same state as if a pair of hands, which the god made to help each other, were to give that up and turn to obstructing each other, or as if a pair of feet, made by divine dispensation to work together, were to neglect that and trip each other up;

2.3.19 wouldn't it be great stupidity and misery to use for harm what was made for benefit? And surely, it seems to me, the god made a pair of brothers for greater benefit to each other than hands, feet, eyes, and all the other things he made in pairs for human beings, as "brothers" of a kind. Hands, if they had to do things more than a fathom apart at the same time, couldn't do it; feet couldn't even reach things a fathom apart at the same time; and eyes, which seem to reach farthest, couldn't see what is in front and what is behind at the same time, even of things still closer. But two brothers who are friends, even when far apart, act together for each other's benefit.[10]

CHAPTER 4

Socrates complains that people care for their possessions more than for friends, the most valuable possession.

2.4.1 I once heard him discussing friends, too, in a way that I think would help anyone a great deal in acquiring friends and making

10 A fathom was the span of a man's outstretched arms, about six feet.

use of them. He said he had heard many people say that of all possessions the best [would] be a sure and good friend; but he said he saw most people caring about anything rather than acquiring friends.

2.4.2 For he said he saw them carefully acquiring houses and farms and slaves and livestock and furnishings, and trying to preserve what they had; but a friend, which they say is the greatest good, he saw most people giving no thought to how they might acquire one, or how they might keep the friends they had.

2.4.3 What's more, he said, when friends and slaves fell sick, he saw some people bringing in doctors for their slaves and carefully providing everything else needed for their health, while making light of their friends; and when both died, they were upset about their slaves and counted it a loss, but thought they had lost nothing over their friends. They left none of their other possessions untended or unchecked, yet neglected their friends when they needed care.

2.4.4 Besides this, he said, he saw that most people knew the number of their other possessions, even when they had a great many, but with their friends, few as they were, not only did they not know the number, but when they tried to list them for someone who asked, they would take back some of those they had just put among their friends—that's how much thought they gave to their friends.

2.4.5 And yet, compared with which other possession would a good friend not prove far better? What horse or what yoke of oxen is as useful as a good friend? What slave is as loyal and steadfast? Or what other possession is so useful in every way?

2.4.6 For a good friend puts himself at his friend's disposal wherever he falls short, whether in managing his private affairs or in public business. If he needs to do someone a good turn, he lends his strength; if some fear troubles him, he comes to his aid —now sharing the expense, now sharing the work, now helping to persuade, now using force—giving the greatest joy to his friends when they are doing well, and doing the most to set them right when they stumble.

2.4.7 Whatever each man's hands serve him in, his eyes foresee, his ears hear in advance, and his feet accomplish—in none of these does a friend fall short in doing him good. And often what a man has failed to accomplish for himself, or to see, or to hear, or to get done, his friend has managed for him. And yet some people try to look after trees for the sake of their fruit, while most are idle and slack in caring for the most productive possession of all, the one called a friend.

CHAPTER 5

Socrates asks Antisthenes whether friends, like slaves, differ in value, and urges each to be worth much.

2.5.1 I once heard another discussion of his, too, which seemed to me to urge the listener to examine himself and ask how much he was worth to his friends. Seeing one of his companions neglecting a friend who was hard pressed by poverty, he questioned Antisthenes in front of the neglectful man himself and many others:[11]

2.5.2 "Antisthenes," he said, "do friends have different values, the way slaves do? One slave, I suppose, is worth two minas, another [not even] half a mina, another five minas, another as much as ten; and Nicias son of Niceratus is said to have paid a talent for a manager for his silver mines. So this is what I'm asking," he said, "whether friends too have different values, just as slaves do."[12]

2.5.3 "Yes, by Zeus," said Antisthenes. "At any rate, I'd rather have one man as my friend than two minas; another I wouldn't value even above half a mina; another I'd choose over ten minas; and another I'd pay [beyond] all the money and effort in the world to have as my friend."

2.5.4 "Well then," said Socrates, "if that's how things are, it would be a good idea for each of us to examine himself and ask

11 Antisthenes was one of Socrates' closest followers, later regarded as a forerunner of the Cynics.

how much he actually happens to be worth to his friends, and to try to be worth as much as possible, so that his friends are less likely to betray him. For when I keep hearing," he said, "one man say that a friend betrayed him, and another that he was given up for a mina by a man

2.5.5 he thought was his friend, and all that sort of thing, I wonder whether, just as when someone sells a bad slave he lets him go for whatever he'll fetch, so too with a bad friend, when it's possible to get more than he's worth, it's tempting to sell him off. Good slaves, I notice, are hardly ever put up for sale, and good friends are never betrayed."

CHAPTER 6

Socrates and Critobulus discuss how to test, choose and win good friends.

2.6.1 He also seemed to me to teach people how to judge which friends are worth acquiring, by saying things like this. "Tell me, Critobulus," he said, "if we needed a good friend, how would we set about looking for one? Shouldn't we first look for someone who rules his belly, his love of drink, his lust, his sleep and his idleness? A man overpowered by these couldn't do what's needed either for himself or for a friend." "No, by Zeus, certainly not," he said. "So you think we should keep away from someone ruled by them?"[13]

2.6.2 "Absolutely," he said. "Well then," he said, "take a man who's extravagant and can't support himself. He's always in need of his neighbors. When he receives, he can't pay it back, and when he doesn't receive, he hates the one who won't give. Don't you think he too makes a difficult friend?" "Certainly," he said. "So we should keep away from him too?" "We certainly should," he said.

12 Nicias was a wealthy Athenian general who hired out large numbers of slaves to the silver mines; a talent was sixty minas.

13 Critobulus was the son of Socrates' old friend Crito, a wealthy young Athenian known for his good looks.

2.6.3 "And what about someone who's able to make money but craves a great deal of it, and is therefore hard to do business with—who enjoys receiving but doesn't want to pay back?" "To me," he said, "he seems even worse than the other one."

2.6.4 "And what about someone whose passion for making money leaves him no time for anything except what will bring him some profit?" "We should keep away from him too, I think: he'd be no use to anyone who had dealings with him." "And what about someone who's quarrelsome and ready to make lots of enemies for his friends?" "By Zeus, we should run from him too." "And suppose someone had none of these faults, but was content to receive kindness without a thought of returning it?" "He'd be useless too. But what sort of man, Socrates, should we try to make our friend?"

2.6.5 "The opposite of these, I think: someone who's self-controlled about the pleasures of the body. He also happens to be a good manager of his household and fair in his dealings, and he's competitive about never falling behind in doing good to those who do him good. That makes him worth having for those who deal with him."

2.6.6 "So how could we test for these qualities, Socrates, before we have dealings with him?" "With sculptors," he said, "we don't judge by going on what they say. When we see that someone has made his earlier statues well, we trust that he'll make the rest well too."

2.6.7 "So you mean," he said, "that a man who has evidently treated his earlier friends well is clearly going to do good to his later ones too?" "Yes, and it's the same with horses," he said. "When I see someone who has handled his earlier ones well, I think he'll handle others well too."

2.6.8 "Very well," he said. "And when someone seems to us worthy of friendship, how should we make him our friend?" "First," he said, "we should consult the signs from the gods, to see whether they advise making him a friend." "Well then," he said, "when someone seems right to us and the gods don't oppose it, can you tell me how he's to be hunted?"

2.6.9 "Not by running him down on foot like a hare, by Zeus," he said, "or by trickery like birds, or by force like wild boars. It's hard work to catch a friend against his will, and hard to keep him tied up like a slave. People treated that way become enemies rather than friends." "Then how do they become friends?" he said.

2.6.10 "They say there are certain incantations. Those who know them chant them over whomever they like and so make them their friends. And they say there are love potions too, which those who know them use on whomever they like, and so are loved by them."

2.6.11 "So where could we learn these?" he said. "You've heard from Homer what the Sirens chanted to Odysseus. It begins something like this: 'Come here, come, much-praised Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans.'" "So was this the incantation, Socrates," he said, "that the Sirens chanted to other people as well, holding them fast so that those they enchanted never left them?"

2.6.12 "No. That was how they enchanted people who were ambitious for excellence." "You're pretty much saying that you have to chant to each person the sort of thing he won't take, when he hears it, as mockery from the person praising him?" "Yes, because otherwise you'd make yourself hated and drive people away. Imagine praising a man who knows he's short and ugly and weak by telling him he's handsome and tall and strong." "Do you know any other incantations?"

2.6.13 "No. But I've heard that Pericles knew many, and by chanting them over the city he made it love him." "And how did Themistocles make the city love him?" "Not by chanting, by Zeus, but by hanging something good around its neck, like an amulet."[14]

2.6.14 "You seem to me to be saying, Socrates, that if we're going to acquire a good friend, we have to become good ourselves, in

14 Themistocles led Athens against the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC and built up its navy and walls.

both speech and action." "And did you think," said Socrates, "that even a bad man could acquire good friends?"

2.6.15 "Well," said Critobulus, "I've seen poor speakers who were friends of good public orators, and men unfit to be generals who were companions of highly capable commanders."

2.6.16 "Well then," he said, "on the point we're discussing, do you know any people who are useless themselves but can make useful friends?" "No, by Zeus, certainly not," he said. "But if a bad man can't acquire true gentlemen as friends, then what concerns me now is this: whether someone who has become a true gentleman himself can then readily be a friend to true gentlemen."

2.6.17 "What's troubling you, Critobulus, is that you often see men who do fine things and keep away from shameful ones, yet instead of being friends they quarrel with each other and treat one another worse than worthless people do."

2.6.18 "And it isn't only private individuals who do this," said Critobulus. "Cities too, even those that care most for what is fine and have least to do with what is shameful, are often hostile toward one another.

2.6.19 "When I think about this, I feel quite discouraged about acquiring friends. For I don't see bad men being able to be friends with one another. How could people who are ungrateful or careless or grasping or untrustworthy or uncontrolled become friends? So bad men, in my view, are altogether made by nature to be enemies of one another rather than friends.

2.6.20 "And yet, as you say, bad men could never be joined in friendship with good men either. How could people who do bad things become friends with those who hate such things? And if even those who practice excellence quarrel over first place in their cities, and envy and hate one another, who will still be friends? Among what people will there be goodwill and trust?"

2.6.21 "Well, Critobulus," said Socrates, "these matters are rather complicated. By nature people have some tendencies toward friendship. They need one another, they feel pity, they help each other by working together, and since they understand

this they feel gratitude toward one another. But they also have tendencies toward war. Since they consider the same things fine and pleasant, they fight over them, and when they disagree they set themselves against each other. Strife and anger are warlike too. The passion for getting more than one's share breeds ill will, and envy breeds hatred.

2.6.22 "Yet in spite of all this, friendship slips through and joins true gentlemen together. Because of their excellence they choose to possess a moderate amount without toil rather than to master everything through war. When they're hungry and thirsty, they can share food and drink without resentment. And though they take pleasure in love affairs with those in their youthful bloom, they can restrain themselves so as not to hurt those they shouldn't.

2.6.23 "They can share money lawfully, refraining from taking more than their share, and they can also help each other out. They can settle their disputes not only without hurt but to their mutual advantage, and they can keep anger from going so far that they'll regret it. Envy they remove altogether, by offering their own good things to their friends as if they belonged to them, and by regarding their friends' good things as their own.

2.6.24 "So isn't it likely that true gentlemen will also share political honors, and do so not only without harming one another but to one another's benefit? Those who want to be honored and hold office in their cities so that they'll have the power to steal money, use violence on people and live in luxury would be unjust and bad, and incapable of getting along with anyone else.

2.6.25 "But suppose someone wants to be honored in his city so that he won't be wronged himself and can help his friends to justice, and once in office tries to do some good for his country. Why couldn't such a man get along with another like him? Will he be less able to benefit his friends with true gentlemen beside him? Or will he be less able to do good to the city if he has true gentlemen as fellow workers?

2.6.26 "Even in athletic contests it's clear that if the strongest were allowed to band together against the weaker, they'd win

every contest and carry off every prize. That isn't allowed there. But in politics, where true gentlemen excel, no one stops you from benefiting the city together with whomever you like. So how can it not pay to acquire the best men as friends before taking part in public life, and to treat them as partners and fellow workers in what you do rather than as rivals?

2.6.27 "And this too is clear: if someone goes to war against someone else, he'll need allies, and more of them if he's up against true gentlemen. Those willing to be allies must be treated well, so that they'll be willing to exert themselves. And it's far better to do good to the best, who are fewer, than to the worse, who are more numerous, for bad men need many more benefits than good ones do.

2.6.28 "So take heart, Critobulus," he said. "Try to become good, and once you've become so, set about hunting true gentlemen. Perhaps I too could lend you a hand in the hunt for true gentlemen, because I'm so given to love. Whenever I desire people, I throw myself wholly and fiercely into loving them and being loved by them in return, longing for them and being longed for in return, desiring their company [and] having my company desired in return.

2.6.29 "And I can see that you'll need this too, whenever you want to form a friendship with anyone. So don't hide from me the people you'd like to befriend. Because I take pains to please those who please me, I don't think I'm inexperienced at hunting people."

2.6.30 And Critobulus said, "Well, Socrates, I've wanted to learn these lessons for a long time, especially if the same knowledge will serve me both for those who are good in soul and for those who are beautiful in body."

2.6.31 And Socrates said, "But Critobulus, my knowledge doesn't extend to making the beautiful hold still when you lay hands on them. I'm convinced that people run from Scylla for exactly this reason, that she laid hands on them. The Sirens, though, laid hands on no one but sang to everyone from a distance, and so, they say, everyone stayed and was enchanted listening to them."

2.6.32 And Critobulus said, "On the understanding that I won't lay hands on anyone, teach me whatever good method you have for acquiring friends." "Then you won't put your mouth to anyone's mouth either?" said Socrates. "Don't worry," said Critobulus, "I won't put my mouth to anyone's mouth—unless he's beautiful." "There, Critobulus," he said, "you've immediately said the opposite of what's good for you. The beautiful don't put up with that sort of thing, but the ugly even welcome it gladly, thinking they're being called beautiful for the sake of their souls."

2.6.33 And Critobulus said, "On the understanding that I'll kiss the beautiful and smother the good with kisses, go ahead and teach me the arts of hunting friends." And Socrates said, "Well then, Critobulus, when you want to become someone's friend, will you let me inform on you to him, and tell him that you admire him and want to be his friend?" "Accuse away," said Critobulus. "I don't know anyone who hates people who praise him."

2.6.34 "And if I add to the charges," he said, "that because you admire him you also feel goodwill toward him, won't you think I'm slandering you?" "No. I feel goodwill myself," he said, "toward people I take to feel goodwill toward me."

2.6.35 "Then I'll be able to say this about you," said Socrates, "to anyone you want to make your friend. Now suppose you also give me leave to say other things about you. You're attentive to your friends, and nothing gives you as much joy as good friends. You take pride in your friends' fine deeds no less than in your own, and you rejoice in your friends' good fortune no less than in your own. You never tire of finding ways for these things to come to your friends. And you've recognized that a man's excellence lies in outdoing his friends in doing them good and his enemies in doing them harm. If I can say all that, I think I'd make a very handy partner for you in the hunt for good friends."

2.6.36 "Why are you telling me this," said Critobulus, "as if it weren't up to you to say whatever you like about me?" "No, by Zeus, it isn't, as I once heard from Aspasia. She said that good matchmakers, when they report people's good qualities truth-

fully, are very skillful at bringing people together in marriage, but they won't give false praise, because those who've been deceived end up hating both each other and the woman who made the match. I'm convinced she's right about this, so I don't think I may say anything in your praise that isn't true."[15]

2.6.37 "So you're the kind of friend to me, Socrates," said Critobulus, "who'll help me if I already have something that fits me for acquiring friends. But if I don't, you wouldn't be willing to make something up and say it to help me." "Which do you think, Critobulus," said Socrates, "would help you more: my praising you falsely, or my persuading you to try to become a good man?

2.6.38 "If that isn't clear to you yet, look at it this way. Suppose I wanted to make you friends with a shipowner, and I praised you falsely, claiming you were a good helmsman. If he believed me and entrusted his ship to you though you didn't know how to steer, would you have any hope of not destroying both yourself and the ship? Or suppose I falsely persuaded the city as a whole to entrust itself to you as a capable general, judge and statesman. What do you think you and the city would suffer at your hands? Or suppose I falsely persuaded some citizens privately to entrust their affairs to you as a careful household manager. When you were put to the test, wouldn't you do them harm and look ridiculous as well?

2.6.39 "No, Critobulus. The shortest, safest and finest road is this: whatever you want to be thought good at, try actually to become good at it. And if you look into it, you'll find that all the qualities people call excellences grow through learning and practice. So I think, Critobulus, that we ought to practice the excellences. But if you see it some other way, tell me." And Critobulus said, "I'd be ashamed, Socrates, to argue against this. Nothing I said would be either fine or true."

15 Aspasia of Miletus, Pericles' partner, was famous for her intelligence.

CHAPTER 7

Aristarchus, with fourteen destitute kinswomen in his house, is persuaded to set them to paid work.

2.7.1 And then there were his friends' difficulties. Those that came from ignorance he tried to cure with good advice, and those that came from want, by teaching them to help one another as far as they could. Here too I'll tell what I know of him. Once, seeing Aristarchus looking gloomy, he said, "Aristarchus, you look as if something's weighing on you. You should share the load with your friends. Maybe we could lighten it for you a little."

2.7.2 And Aristarchus said, "Well, Socrates, I really am in a great deal of trouble. Ever since the city fell into civil war and many people fled to the Piraeus, the sisters, nieces and female cousins who were left behind have gathered at my house. There are so many of them that there are fourteen free people in the household. We get nothing from our land, because the enemy holds it, and nothing from our houses, because the city has emptied of people. Nobody buys furniture, and there's nowhere to borrow money either. I think you'd sooner find money by looking for it in the street than get it by borrowing. So, Socrates, it's hard to stand by and watch my family perish, but it's impossible to feed so many in times like these."[16]

2.7.3 When Socrates heard this, he said, "How is it, then, that Ceramon feeds a lot of people and not only manages to provide the necessities for himself and them, but even puts aside so much that he's getting rich, while you feed a lot of people and are afraid you'll all die for lack of necessities?" "Because, by Zeus," he said, "he feeds slaves and I feed free people."

2.7.4 "And which do you think are better," he said, "the free people in your house or the slaves at Ceramon's?" "I think the free people in mine," he said. "Then isn't it a disgrace," he said, "that he does well out of worse people, while you, with much

16 The civil war of 404–403 BC, when democratic exiles seized the Piraeus, Athens' port, against the oligarchy of the Thirty in the city.

better ones, are in difficulty?" "Of course, by Zeus," he said. "He feeds craftsmen, and my people were brought up as free people should be."

2.7.5 "Well," he said, "are craftsmen people who know how to make something useful?" "Certainly," he said. "And barley meal is useful, isn't it?" "Very." "What about bread?" "Just as much." "And what about men's and women's cloaks," he said, "and tunics, and capes, and work smocks?" "Yes," he said, "all of these are very useful too." "And do you mean the people in your house don't know how to make any of these?" "Oh no, they know how to make all of them, I think."

2.7.6 "Then don't you know that from just one of these, making barley meal, Nausicydes feeds not only himself and his servants but many pigs and cattle besides? He puts aside so much that he often performs public services for the city. Cyrebus keeps his whole household and lives in plenty by baking bread. Demeas of Collytus makes his living from making capes, Menon from making fine woolen cloaks, and most of the Megarians from making work smocks." "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "because these men buy foreigners and own them, so they can force them to do whatever work is fitting. My people are free, and my relatives."[17]

2.7.7 "So," he said, "because they're free and related to you, you think they should do nothing but eat and sleep? Among other free people, too, do you see those who live like that getting on better? Do you count them happier than those who devote themselves to the useful things they know? Or do you find that idleness and carelessness help people learn what they ought to know and remember what they've learned? That they keep their bodies healthy and strong and help them acquire and keep what's useful for life? And that work and diligence are no use at all?

2.7.8 "And when they learned the things you say they know, did they think these were of no use for life and that they'd never do any of them? Or, on the contrary, did they mean to devote them-

17 Public services (liturgies) were costly duties, such as funding a chorus or equipping a warship, laid on wealthy Athenians.

selves to them and benefit from them? Which way would people be more sensible, idling or busy with useful things? And which way would they be more just, if they worked or if they sat idle and deliberated about how to get their necessities?

2.7.9 "Besides, as things are now, I imagine you don't love them and they don't love you. You think they're a drain on you, and they see that you resent them. The danger is that the dislike will grow and the gratitude built up before will shrink. But if you see to it that they're kept busy, you'll love them, seeing that they're useful to you, and they'll be fond of you, sensing that you're pleased with them. You'll remember past kindnesses with more pleasure and so increase the gratitude for them, and as a result you'll be on friendlier and closer terms with each other.

2.7.10 "Now if they were going to do something shameful, they ought to choose death instead. But as it is, apparently they know the kinds of work that are thought finest and most fitting for a woman. And everyone does the work they know most easily, most quickly, best, and with the most pleasure. So don't hesitate," he said, "to propose to them the work that will pay off both for you and for them;

2.7.11 and, as you'd expect, they'll gladly go along with it." "Well, by the gods, Socrates," said Aristarchus, "I think you're so right that I've changed my mind. Before, I wouldn't consider borrowing, because I knew that once I'd spent what I got I'd have nothing to pay it back with. Now I think I'll bring myself to do it, to get the capital for the work."

2.7.12 After this the capital was found and wool was bought. The women had their lunch while they worked and their dinner when they'd finished. They were cheerful instead of gloomy, and instead of eyeing each other with suspicion they looked at each other with pleasure. They loved him as their protector, and he was fond of them because they were useful. In the end he came to Socrates and happily told him all this. He also said that they complained he was the only one in the house who ate without working.

2.7.13 And Socrates said, "Then why don't you tell them the story of the dog? They say that when animals could talk, the sheep said to her master, 'What you do is strange. We give you wool and lambs and cheese, and you give us nothing except what we get from the ground ourselves. But the dog, who gives you nothing of the kind, gets a share of the very food you eat yourself.'

2.7.14 "And when the dog heard this, they say, he said, 'Yes, by Zeus, and for good reason. I'm the one who keeps you yourselves safe, so that you aren't stolen by men or carried off by wolves. Why, if I didn't stand guard over you, you couldn't even graze, for fear of being killed.' And so, the story goes, the sheep too agreed that the dog should be given preference. So you tell them, too, that you're their guardian and protector in place of the dog, and that thanks to you no one wrongs them and they work and live in safety and comfort."

CHAPTER 8

Socrates advises Eutherus, an aging laborer, to find work as a steward before his strength fails.

2.8.1 Another time, seeing an old companion after a long while, he said, "Where have you turned up from, Eutherus?" "When the war ended, Socrates," he said, "I came home from abroad. But just now I've come from right here. We were stripped of our property across the border, and my father left me nothing in Attica, so now that I'm living at home I'm forced to earn my living by working with my body. And I think that's better than begging from anyone, especially since I have nothing to borrow against."[18]

2.8.2 "And how long do you think your body will be strong enough to earn your living for wages?" he said. "Not long, by Zeus," he said. "And yet when you get older," he said, "clearly

18 The Peloponnesian War ended with Athens' defeat in 404 BC, and Athenians lost the properties they had held abroad.

you'll need money to spend, but no one will be willing to pay you for physical labor."

2.8.3 "That's true," he said. "So," he said, "isn't it better to take up right now the sort of work that will still support you when you're older? You could go to someone who has more property, [someone] who needs a person to help him look after it. By supervising the work, helping bring in the harvest and helping to watch over the estate, you'd benefit him and be benefited in return."

2.8.4 "I'd find it hard to put up with being a slave, Socrates," he said. "And yet those who lead their cities and take care of public affairs aren't thought any more like slaves for it. They're thought more like free men."

2.8.5 "In general, Socrates," he said, "I don't at all like being answerable to anyone." "And yet, Eutherus," he said, "it isn't at all easy to find work you can't be blamed for. It's hard to do anything without making any mistakes. And even if you do it without mistakes, it's hard not to run into an unreasonable judge. Why, even with the people you say you work for now, I wonder whether it's easy to get through without reproach.

2.8.6 "So you should try to avoid people who like to find fault and seek out those who are fair-minded. Take on the tasks you can do and steer clear of the ones you can't. And whatever you do undertake, see to it as well and as eagerly as you can. That way, I think, you'd be least likely to be blamed and most likely to find relief from your want. You'd live most easily and safely, with the most to last you into old age."

CHAPTER 9

Crito, harassed by blackmailers, takes on Archedemus as a protector, to the benefit of both.

2.9.1 I know that he once heard Crito say how hard life in Athens was for a man who wanted to mind his own business. "Right now, for instance," he said, "some people are taking me to court.

It isn't because I've wronged them. It's because they think I'd rather pay up than have trouble."

2.9.2 And Socrates said, "Tell me, Crito, do you keep dogs to fend the wolves off your sheep?" "Certainly," he said. "It pays me better to keep them than not." "Then wouldn't you keep a man too, one who'd be willing and able to fend off the people who try to wrong you?"

2.9.3 "Gladly," he said, "if I weren't afraid he'd turn on me himself." "What?" he said. "Don't you see that it's much pleasanter to profit by doing favors for a man like you than by making an enemy of you? You can be sure there are men of that sort here who'd be very proud to have you as a friend."

2.9.4 After this they found Archedemus, a very capable speaker and man of action, but poor. He wasn't the kind to make a profit any way he could. He was honest, and he said it was very easy to get money out of informers. So whenever Crito was bringing in grain or oil or wine or wool or any other farm produce useful for life, he would set some aside and give it to him. Whenever he made a sacrifice, he invited him, and he looked after him in all such ways.[19]

2.9.5 Archedemus regarded Crito's household as a refuge for himself and paid him every attention. Before long he found that one of the informers harassing Crito had many crimes to his name and many enemies. He summoned him to a public trial, in which it would be decided what penalty he should suffer or pay.

2.9.6 The man knew he had many wicked things on his conscience, and he did everything he could to get rid of Archedemus. But Archedemus wouldn't let go until he had dropped his case against Crito and given Archedemus money as well.

2.9.7 After Archedemus had pulled this off, and other things like it, many of Crito's friends asked him to lend them Archedemus as a guardian too. It was just as when a shepherd

19 Informers (sycophants) were people who brought or threatened lawsuits in Athens for profit, often to extort a settlement.

has a good dog and the other shepherds want to pasture their flocks near him to get the benefit of the dog.

2.9.8 Archedemus was glad to oblige Crito, and not only was Crito left in peace, but his friends were too. And if any of the people Archedemus had made enemies of reproached him for flattering Crito because Crito did him good, Archedemus said, "Which, then, is shameful? To receive kindness from good people, return it, and so make such people your friends while being at odds with the wicked? Or to try to wrong true gentlemen and make them your enemies, while working with the wicked to try to make them your friends, and associating with them instead?" As a result Archedemus became one of Crito's friends and was honored by Crito's other friends.

CHAPTER 10

Socrates urges Diodorus to help his poor friend Hermogenes, who will repay him well.

2.10.1 I know too that he had a conversation like this with Diodorus, a companion of his. "Tell me, Diodorus," he said, "if one of your slaves runs away, do you take steps to get him back?"

2.10.2 "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "and I call on others to help too, by announcing a reward for his return." "And what if one of your slaves is sick?" he said. "Do you look after him and call in doctors so he won't die?" "Certainly," he said. "And if one of your acquaintances, who is much more useful than your slaves, is in danger of perishing from want," he said, "don't you think it's worth your while to see that he's saved?

2.10.3 "And you know that Hermogenes isn't ungrateful. He'd be ashamed if he were helped by you and didn't help you in return. And yet to have an assistant who is willing, well-disposed and dependable [and capable of doing what he's told], who is not only capable of doing what he's told but able to be useful on his own initiative, to look ahead and plan ahead—that, I think, is worth many slaves.

2.10.4 "Good household managers, mind you, say that the time to buy is when you can get something of great value for little. And right now, the way things are, you can acquire good friends very cheaply."

2.10.5 And Diodorus said, "Well, you're right, Socrates. Tell Hermogenes to come to me." "No, by Zeus," he said, "I won't. I don't think it's any finer for you to summon him than to go to him yourself, or that this will do him any more good than it does you."

2.10.6 So Diodorus went off to Hermogenes. Without spending much, he gained a friend who made it his business to look for ways, by word or by deed, to help Diodorus and give him pleasure.

Book III

Ambition and skill
Advice to would-be generals and politicians, artists and craftsmen, and to the courtesan Theodote.

CHAPTER 1

A young man returns from a teacher of generalship knowing only tactics, and Socrates shows what he lacks.

3.1.1 I'll now describe how he helped those who aspired to fine things by making them work at what they aspired to. Once he heard that Dionysodorus had come to the city, offering to teach generalship. He then spoke to one of his companions, who he saw wanted to win that office in the city:[1]

3.1.2 "It's a disgrace, young man, for someone who wants to be a general in the city to neglect learning how when he has the chance. A man like that would deserve to be penalized by the city far more than someone who took a contract for statues without having learned to sculpt them.

3.1.3 "In the dangers of war the whole city is entrusted to the general, so great good is likely to come of his success and great harm of his failure. How, then, could a man not deserve to be penalized if he neglects to learn this but takes pains to get elected?" By saying things like this, he persuaded him to go and learn.

3.1.4 When he came back having learned, Socrates teased him: "Don't you think, gentlemen, that just as Homer called Agamem-

1 Dionysodorus was a traveling teacher who appears, with his brother Euthydemus, in Plato's *Euthydemus*.

non 'stately,' this man too looks statelier now that he's learned generalship? Someone who has learned to play the lyre is a lyre-player even when he isn't playing, and someone who has learned to heal is still a doctor even if he doesn't practice. In the same way, this man will go on being a general from now on, even if nobody elects him. But the man without the knowledge is neither a general nor a doctor, not even if the whole human race elects him.[2]

3.1.5 "But tell us," he said, "so that if any of us commands a regiment or a company under you, we'll know more about warfare: where did he start when he taught you generalship?" And the young man said, "At the same point where he finished. Tactics was what he taught me, and nothing else."

3.1.6 "But that," said Socrates, "is only a tiny part of generalship. A general must be able to get ready what's needed for war and to provide the soldiers with supplies. He must be inventive, hardworking, careful, enduring, and quick-witted; kindly and harsh, straightforward and crafty, watchful and thieving, lavish and grasping, generous and greedy, cautious and aggressive. And there are many other qualities, some from nature and some from knowledge, that a man must have if he is going to be a good general.

3.1.7 "It's a fine thing to be good at tactics too, since an army in order is far superior to one in disorder. Stones, bricks, timber, and tiles thrown down in a heap are no use at all. But when the materials that neither rot nor crumble, the stones and the tiles, are placed at the bottom and on top, and the bricks and timber in the middle, the way they're put together in building, then they become a valuable possession: a house."

3.1.8 "That's a very apt comparison, Socrates," said the young man. "In war, too, you have to put the best men in front and at the rear and the worst in the middle, so that they're led by the one group and pushed along by the other."

3.1.9 "Fine," he said, "if he also taught you to tell the good men from the bad. If not, what good is what you learned? Suppose he

had told you to put the finest silver first and last and the worst in the middle without teaching you to tell genuine coin from counterfeit. That would have been no good to you at all." "No, by Zeus," he said, "he didn't teach me that. So we'd have to judge the good and the bad ourselves."

3.1.10 "Then why don't we consider how we might avoid mistakes about them?" he said. "I'd like that," said the young man. "So if we needed to seize money, wouldn't we be arranging things correctly if we put the greediest for money in front?" "I think so." "And what about men who are going to face danger? Shouldn't the most ambitious be put in front?" "Those are certainly the ones," he said, "who are willing to face danger for the sake of praise. And they aren't hard to spot. They stand out everywhere, so they'd be easy to find."

3.1.11 "But did he teach you only how to draw up troops," he said, "or also where and how to use each formation?" "Not at all," he said. "And yet there are many situations where it isn't right to draw up or lead troops in the same way." "No, by Zeus," he said, "he didn't explain any of that." "Then by Zeus," he said, "go back and ask him again. If he knows and has any shame, he'll be ashamed to take your money and send you away short."

CHAPTER 2

Socrates argues that a good leader's whole task is to make his people happy.

3.2.1 Once he met a man who had been elected general. "Why do you think Homer called Agamemnon 'shepherd of the people'?" he said. "Isn't it because a shepherd must see to it that his sheep are safe, have what they need, and serve the purpose they're kept for? In the same way a general must see to it that his soldiers are safe, have what they need, and achieve the purpose they go on campaign for. And they go on campaign so that by defeating the enemy they may be happier.

2 In the *Iliad* (3.170) Priam, watching from the walls of Troy, calls Agamemnon "stately."

3.2.2 "Or why else did Homer praise Agamemnon like this: 'Both a good king and a mighty spearman'? Isn't it because he would be a mighty spearman not if he alone fought well against the enemy, but if he made the whole army do the same, and a good king not if he managed only his own life well, but if he made the people he ruled happy too?[3]

3.2.3 "A king, after all, is chosen not to take good care of himself, but so that those who chose him may prosper through him. Everyone goes on campaign so that their life may be as good as possible, and they elect generals for this reason: to lead them toward that goal.

3.2.4 "So the man in command must provide this for those who elected him general. It isn't easy to find anything finer than that, or anything more shameful than its opposite." In this way he examined what the excellence of a good leader is. He stripped away everything else and left just this: making happy those he leads.

CHAPTER 3

Socrates questions a newly elected cavalry commander about horses, riders, training and persuasion.

3.3.1 I know that he once had a conversation like this with a man who had been elected cavalry commander. "Could you tell us, young man," he said, "why you wanted to be cavalry commander? Surely it wasn't to ride at the head of the cavalry. The mounted archers get that honor. At any rate, they ride out ahead even of the cavalry commanders." "That's true," he said. "Nor, surely, was it to be well known. Even madmen are known to everybody."[4]

3.3.2 "That's true too," he said. "Then is it because you think you could improve the cavalry and hand it back to the city in better shape, and, if cavalry were ever needed, lead them and do the city some good?" "Very much so," he said. "And by Zeus,"

3 The line is *Iliad* 3.179.

4 Athens kept a small corps of mounted archers alongside its citizen cavalry.

said Socrates, "that is a fine thing, if you can do it. And the office you've been elected to has charge, I take it, of horses and riders." "Yes, it does," he said.

3.3.3 "Come, then, tell us this first: how do you plan to make the horses better?" And he said, "Well, I don't think that's my job. Each man has to look after his own horse privately."

3.3.4 "Then," said Socrates, "suppose some of them present their horses to you with such bad hooves or legs, or so weak, and others so underfed that they can't keep up, others so unruly that they won't stay where you post them, and others such kickers that you can't post them at all. What use will the cavalry be to you then? Or how will you be able to do the city any good leading horses like that?" And he said, "You're right, and I'll try to look after the horses as best I can."

3.3.5 "Well, then, won't you try to make the riders better too?" he said. "I will," he said. "So first, won't you make [them] quicker at mounting their horses?" "I have to, at any rate," he said. "If any of them fell off, he'd have a better chance of getting away safely that way."

3.3.6 "And another thing: if you ever have to face danger, will you tell them to lure the enemy onto the sand where you usually ride? Or will you try to hold your exercises on the kind of ground where wars are actually fought?"

3.3.7 "That would be better, anyway," he said. "And another thing: will you take some care to have as many as possible throwing javelins from horseback?" "That would be better too," he said. "And have you thought about sharpening the riders' spirits and rousing their anger against the enemy, which makes them braver?" "If I haven't, I'll certainly try to now," he said.

3.3.8 "And have you given any thought to how you'll get the riders to obey you? Without that, neither horses nor riders are of any use, however good and brave they are." "You're right," he said. "But how could anyone best encourage them to do that, Socrates?"

3.3.9 "You surely know this much: in any matter, people are most willing to obey those they consider best. In sickness they

most readily obey the man they think the best doctor. On a ship [the passengers] obey the man they think the best pilot, and in farming the man they think the best farmer." "Certainly," he said. "Then it's likely," he said, "that in horsemanship too, the others will be most willing to obey whoever is seen to know best what has to be done."

3.3.10 "So if I'm clearly the best of them, Socrates," he said, "will that be enough to make them obey me?" "Yes," he said, "if on top of that you teach them that obeying you will be finer and safer for them." "And how shall I teach them that?" he said. "Much more easily, by Zeus," he said, "than if you had to teach them that bad things are better and more profitable than good ones."

3.3.11 "Are you saying," he said, "that a cavalry commander, besides everything else, has to make a point of being able to speak?" "Did you think," he said, "that you were supposed to command cavalry in silence? Haven't you realized this? All the finest things we've learned under our laws, the things by which we know how to live, we learned through speech. If anyone learns any other fine subject, he learns it through speech. The best teachers make the most use of speech, and those who know the most important things [best] are the finest at discussion.

3.3.12 "Or haven't you realized this: whenever a single chorus is formed from this city, like the one sent to Delos, no chorus from anywhere else rivals it, and no other city brings together such a fine body of men as this one?[5]

3.3.13 "That's true," he said. "And yet the Athenians don't surpass others so much in good voices, or in size and strength of body, as in love of honor, which more than anything spurs men on to what is fine and honored." "That's true too," he said.

3.3.14 "So don't you think," he said, "[that] if someone took care of the cavalry here too, it would also far surpass the others in its equipment of arms and horses, in its discipline, and in its readiness to face danger against the enemy, if the riders thought that by doing this they would win praise and honor?"

5 Athens regularly sent a sacred delegation with a chorus to the festival of Apollo on the island of Delos.

3.3.15 "Likely enough," he said. "Then don't hesitate," he said, "but try to urge the men on to this. You'll benefit from it yourself, and so will your fellow citizens, thanks to you." "By Zeus, I'll try," he said.

CHAPTER 4

Nicomachides scorns a businessman elected general, and Socrates argues that good managers make good generals.

3.4.1 Once he saw Nicomachides coming away from the elections and asked him, "Who's been elected general, Nicomachides?" And he said, "Isn't it just like the Athenians, Socrates? They didn't elect me—me, who've worn myself out serving whenever my name was on the call-up list, as company commander and as regimental commander, and who have so many wounds from the enemy"—and as he spoke he bared himself and showed the scars of his wounds—"but they elected Antisthenes," he said, "who has never even served as a hoplite, has done nothing remarkable in the cavalry, and knows nothing except how to make money!"[6]

3.4.2 "Well," said Socrates, "isn't that a good thing, if he'll be able to supply the soldiers with provisions?" "Merchants are able to make money too," said Nicomachides, "but that doesn't mean they could be generals."

3.4.3 And Socrates said, "But Antisthenes is also eager to win, and that's a good quality for a general to have. Don't you see that every time he's been a chorus sponsor, he has won with all his choruses?" "No, by Zeus," said Nicomachides, "but leading a chorus is nothing like leading an army."[7]

3.4.4 "And yet," said Socrates, "though Antisthenes had no experience of singing or of training choruses, he still proved able to find the best people for those jobs." "Then in the army

6 This Antisthenes is a wealthy Athenian, not the philosopher of that name. Athens elected ten generals each year.

7 A chorus sponsor (*chorēgos*) was a wealthy citizen who paid to train and costume a chorus that competed for his tribe at a festival.

too," said Nicomachides, "he'll find others to draw up the troops for him, and others to do the fighting."

3.4.5 "Well," said Socrates, "if in war, as with choruses, he finds and picks out the best people, he would likely win the prize here too. And he would likely be more willing to spend money on a victory in war shared with the whole city than on a choral victory shared with his tribe."

3.4.6 "Are you saying, Socrates," he said, "that it's the same man's job to be a good chorus sponsor and a good general?" "What I'm saying," he said, "is that whatever a man is in charge of, if he knows what's needed and can provide it, he would be a good leader, whether he's in charge of a chorus, a household, a city, or an army."

3.4.7 And Nicomachides said, "By Zeus, Socrates, I never thought I'd hear you say that good household managers would make good generals." "Come, then," he said, "let's examine the tasks of each, so that we can see whether they're the same or differ in some way." "By all means," he said.

3.4.8 "So," he said, "isn't it the task of both to make those under them obedient and willing to follow orders?" "Very much so," he said. "And what about assigning each job to the people suited to it?" "That too," he said. "And punishing the bad and honoring the good is a job for both, I think."

3.4.9 "Absolutely," he said. "And how could it not be good for both to win the goodwill of those under them?" "That too," he said. "And do you think it's in the interest of both to gain allies and helpers, or not?" "It certainly is," he said. "And shouldn't both be good at protecting what they have?" "Very much so," he said. "So shouldn't both also be careful and hardworking in their own tasks?"

3.4.10 "All these things," he said, "belong to both alike. But fighting doesn't belong to both." "But surely both have enemies?" "Yes, they certainly do," he said. "So isn't it in the interest of both to get the better of them?"

3.4.11 "Certainly," he said. "But you're passing over this: if there has to be fighting, what use will household management be?"

"Surely that's where it will be of most use," he said. "The good household manager knows that nothing is so profitable and gainful as beating the enemy in battle, and nothing so unprofitable and costly as being defeated. So he will eagerly seek out and prepare whatever helps toward victory, and carefully look out for and guard against whatever leads to defeat. If he sees that his preparations are fit to win, he'll fight with energy; and, not least, if he's unprepared, he'll take care not to join battle."

3.4.12 "Don't look down on men who are good at managing households, Nicomachides," he said. "Looking after private affairs differs from looking after public ones only in scale; in other respects they're much alike. And the most important point is this: neither gets done without people, and private affairs aren't carried on through one set of people and public affairs through another. Those who take care of public affairs deal with no other people than the ones private householders deal with. Those who know how to deal with people handle both private and public affairs well, and those who don't go wrong in both."

CHAPTER 5

Socrates and the younger Pericles discuss how Athens might recover its ancient excellence.

3.5.1 Once, when he was talking with Pericles, the son of the great Pericles, he said, "You know, Pericles, I have hopes that with you as general the city will become better and more glorious in war, and will defeat its enemies." And Pericles said, "I'd like what you describe, Socrates, but how it could come about I can't see." "Then would you like us," said Socrates, "to talk it through and look at how far it's already possible?"[8]

3.5.2 "I would," he said. "Well then, you know," he said, "that in numbers the Athenians are no fewer than the Boeotians?" "Yes, I know." "And do you think more good, fine bodies could be picked out from the Boeotians or from Athens?" "In that respect

8 The younger Pericles, son of Pericles and Aspasia, was one of the generals executed after the naval battle of Arginusae in 406 BC.

too I don't think we fall short." "And which of the two do you think are better disposed toward one another?" "The Athenians, I'd say. Many of the Boeotians are taken advantage of by the Thebans and are hostile to them, but at Athens I see nothing of the kind."

3.5.3 "And then they are the most ambitious and most high-minded of all people—qualities that, more than anything, spur men to face danger for glory and for their country." "In these things too the Athenians can't be faulted." "And again, no people can claim greater or more numerous fine deeds of their ancestors than the Athenians. Many are lifted up by this and urged on to care for excellence and to become brave."

3.5.4 "All that you say is true, Socrates. But you can see that ever since the disaster of the thousand with Tolmides at Lebadea, and the one with Hippocrates at Delium, the reputation of the Athenians has been humbled in relation to the Boeotians, and the pride of the Thebans has risen against the Athenians. So the Boeotians, who before didn't dare to face the Athenians even on their own soil without the Spartans and the other Peloponnesians, now threaten to invade Attica on their own; and the Athenians, who used to ravage Boeotia [when the Boeotians were on their own], are afraid the Boeotians will lay Attica waste."[9]

3.5.5 And Socrates said, "Yes, I'm aware that's how things stand. But it seems to me the city is now in a better frame of mind for a good man to lead it. Confidence breeds carelessness, laziness and disobedience, while fear makes people more attentive, more obedient and more disciplined.

3.5.6 "You can see this from people on ships too. When they have nothing to fear, I suppose, they're full of disorder; but as soon as they're afraid of a storm or of the enemy, they not only do everything they're told, but even fall silent, waiting for the next order, like a chorus."

3.5.7 "Well," said Pericles, "if they're really most ready to obey now, this would be the time to say how we might urge them to

fall in love again with their ancient excellence, glory and happiness."

3.5.8 "Well then," said Socrates, "if we wanted them to lay claim to money that others held, the best way to spur them to go after it would be to show them that it had belonged to their fathers and was rightfully theirs. But since we want them to make it their concern to be first through excellence, we must show in turn that this has belonged to them above all from long ago, and that if they cared for it they would be the strongest of all."

3.5.9 "So how might we teach this?" "I think by reminding them —they've heard it already—that the most ancient of their ancestors we know of were the best of men."

3.5.10 "Do you mean the judgment between the gods, which Cecrops and his people were given to decide because of their excellence?" "Yes, I do—and the rearing and birth of Erechtheus too, and the war in his time against the peoples of the whole adjoining mainland, and the one in the time of the Heraclidae against those in the Peloponnese, and all the wars fought in the time of Theseus. In all of them our ancestors plainly proved the best of the people of their day;[10]

3.5.11 and, if you like, there's what their descendants did later, the men who lived not long before us: sometimes fighting on their own against the masters of all Asia and of Europe as far as Macedonia, who had acquired greater power and resources than anyone before them and had accomplished the greatest deeds; and sometimes excelling on land and sea together with the Peloponnesians. These too, of course, are said to have far surpassed the people of their day."[11]

3.5.12 "So they are," he said. "And that's why, when there were many migrations in Greece, they stayed in their own land; many

9 Tolmides' force was destroyed by the Boeotians near Lebadea (at Coronea) in 447 BC, and Hippocrates' army at Delium in 424 BC.

10 In Athenian legend Cecrops, an early king, judged the contest between Athena and Poseidon for Attica, and Erechtheus was born from the earth and reared by Athena. Athens later sheltered the Heraclidae, Heracles' children, against Eurystheus.

11 The Persians, in the wars of 490–479 BC.

who were in dispute over their rights entrusted the decision to them, and many who were being abused by stronger powers took refuge with them."

3.5.13 And Pericles said, "And it amazes me, Socrates, how the city ever slid into decline." "I think," said Socrates, "that just as some athletes, because they far outclass everyone and come out on top, grow lazy and fall behind their rivals, so the Athenians too, having far surpassed others, neglected themselves and so became worse."

3.5.14 "So now," he said, "what could they do to recover their ancient excellence?" And Socrates said, "I don't think it's any secret. If they found out what their ancestors' practices were and followed them no worse than they did, they would become no worse than they were. If not, then by imitating those who are first now and following the same practices, they would be no worse than them if they followed them in the same way, and better if they did so more diligently."

3.5.15 "You're saying," he said, "that gentlemanly excellence is a long way off for our city. After all, when will Athenians respect their elders as the Spartans do, when they start with their own fathers in showing contempt for older men? Or when will they train their bodies the way the Spartans do, when they not only neglect their own fitness but even laugh at those who take care of theirs?

3.5.16 "And when will they obey their officials the way the Spartans do, when they actually take pride in despising them? Or when will they be of one mind like that? Instead of working together for their common advantage they abuse one another and envy one another more than they envy the rest of mankind; above all they quarrel in private gatherings and public ones alike, bring more lawsuits against one another than anyone, and would rather profit from one another that way than help one another. They treat public affairs as if they belonged to someone else, fight over them in turn, and take the greatest delight in having the power to do such things.

3.5.17 "From all this, much mischief and badness are growing up in the city, and much hostility and mutual hatred among the citizens; and because of it I'm always very much afraid that some evil too great to bear may befall the city."

3.5.18 "Pericles," said Socrates, "don't by any means think that the Athenians are sick with so incurable a wickedness. Don't you see how well disciplined they are in the navy, how orderly they are in obeying the officials at athletic contests, and how in choruses they serve their trainers as readily as anyone?"

3.5.19 "Yes, and that's exactly what's so amazing," he said, "that people like that obey those in charge of them, while the heavy infantry and the cavalry, who are thought to be the pick of the citizens for gentlemanly excellence, are the most disobedient of all."

3.5.20 And Socrates said, "And the Council of the Areopagus, Pericles—isn't it made up of men who have passed the scrutiny?" "Certainly," he said. "Then do you know of any people who try cases and do everything else more finely, more lawfully, more solemnly or more justly?" "I've no complaint against them," he said. "Then you shouldn't lose heart," he said, "as though the Athenians were undisciplined."[12]

3.5.21 "And yet in military matters," he said, "where moderation, discipline and obedience are needed most, they pay no attention to any of them." "Perhaps," said Socrates, "that's because in these matters the people commanding them are the ones who know least. Don't you see that no one tries to direct lyre players, chorus singers or dancers without knowing how, or wrestlers or pankration fighters either? Everyone who directs them can show where they learned the things they're in charge of. But most generals improvise.

3.5.22 "Not that I think you're that sort. I think you could say just as readily when you began to learn generalship as when you began to learn wrestling. And I think you've inherited many of your father's stratagems and keep them safe, and have gathered

12 The Council of the Areopagus was made up of former archons, all of whom had passed the official scrutiny of their fitness for office.

many more from every quarter where something useful for generalship could be learned.

3.5.23 "I also think you take great pains not to be ignorant, without realizing it, of anything useful for generalship; and if you notice that you don't know something of the sort, you look for those who do, sparing neither gifts nor favors, so as to learn from them what you don't know and to have good helpers."

3.5.24 And Pericles said, "I can see, Socrates, that you're not saying this because you think I already attend to these things, but because you're trying to teach me that a man who is going to be a general must attend to all of them.

3.5.25 "I do agree with you about that, though." "Have you noticed this, Pericles," he said, "that great mountains stand in front of our country, stretching toward Boeotia, and the passes through them into our land are narrow and steep, and that the middle of the country is girdled by rugged mountains?" "Certainly," he said.

3.5.26 "Well, and have you heard that the Mysians and Pisidians, who hold very strong positions within the King's territory and are lightly armed, are able to raid the King's territory and do a great deal of damage, while living free themselves?" "Yes, I've heard that too," he said.[13]

3.5.27 "And don't you think," he said, "that if Athenians, up to the age when they're still nimble, were armed with lighter weapons and held the mountains in front of our country, they would be a menace to our enemies and would have built a great bulwark for the country's citizens?" And Pericles said, "I think all this is useful too, Socrates."

3.5.28 "Well then," said Socrates, "if you like these ideas, set your hand to them, my good friend. Whatever of them you accomplish will bring honor to you and good to the city; and if you can't manage some of them, you'll neither harm the city nor disgrace yourself."

13 "The King" is the king of Persia; the Mysians and Pisidians were hill peoples of Asia Minor who never fully submitted to him.

CHAPTER 6

Socrates shows young Glaucon, eager to lead the city, that he knows nothing of its affairs.

3.6.1 Glaucon, the son of Ariston, was trying to address the people, eager to become a leader of the city though he was not yet twenty years old. None of his other relatives or friends could stop him, though he kept getting dragged off the speakers' platform and making himself a laughingstock. Socrates, who was well disposed toward him for the sake of Charmides son of Glaucon and of Plato, was the only one who stopped him.[14]

3.6.2 Meeting him, he first got him to stop and listen by saying something like this: "Glaucon," he said, "so you've made up your mind to lead our city?" "I have, Socrates," he said. "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "and it's a fine thing, if anything in human life is. Clearly, if you achieve it, you'll be able to get whatever you want for yourself, and to help your friends; you'll raise up your father's house and make your country greater; you'll be famous first in the city, then in Greece, and perhaps, like Themistocles, among the barbarians as well;[15]

3.6.3 wherever you are, all eyes will be on you." Hearing this, Glaucon swelled with pride and was glad to stay. After that Socrates said, "So this much is clear, isn't it, Glaucon: if you want to be honored, you have to benefit the city?" "Certainly," he said. "Then for the gods' sake," he said, "don't keep it from us, but tell us where you'll start doing good to the city."

3.6.4 When Glaucon fell silent, as though he were only now considering where to begin, Socrates said, "If you wanted to build up a friend's household, you'd try to make it richer; in the same way, will you try to make the city richer too?"

3.6.5 "Certainly," he said. "And it would be richer if it had more revenues?" "That seems likely, anyway," he said. "Then tell us,"

14 This Glaucon was Plato's brother; Charmides, son of an elder Glaucon, was their uncle.

he said, "where do the city's revenues come from now, and how large are they? Clearly you've looked into it, so that if some of them are falling short you can make them up, and if some are being overlooked you can add them." "No, by Zeus," said Glaucon, "I haven't looked into that."

3.6.6 "Well, if you've left that out," he said, "tell us the city's expenses. Clearly you intend to cut out the unnecessary ones among those too." "No, by Zeus," he said, "I haven't found time for that yet either." "Then we'll put off making the city richer," he said, "since how can someone take care of expenditure and revenue without knowing what they are?"

3.6.7 "But, Socrates," said Glaucon, "it's also possible to make the city rich at the enemy's expense." "Yes, by Zeus, very much so," said Socrates, "if you're stronger than they are; but if you're weaker, you might lose what you have as well." "That's true," he said.

3.6.8 "Then the man who is going to give advice on whom to make war against," he said, "needs to know both the city's strength and the opponents', so that if the city's is greater he can advise taking on the war, and if it's weaker than the opponents', he can persuade people to be cautious."

3.6.9 "You're right," he said. "First, then," he said, "tell us the city's land and naval forces, and then the opponents'." "No, by Zeus," he said, "I couldn't tell you offhand, just like that." "Well, if you've got it written down, bring it," he said. "I'd very much like to hear it." "No, by Zeus," he said, "I haven't written it down yet either."

3.6.10 "Then we'll hold off on advising about war, at least to begin with," he said. "Perhaps it's because these matters are so large that you haven't examined them yet, just starting out in leadership as you are. But the defense of the country—I'm sure you've already given that some thought, and you know how many guard posts are well placed and how many aren't, and how many guards are enough and how many aren't; and you'll

15 Themistocles, the victor of Salamis in 480 BC, ended his life honored at the Persian court.

advise strengthening the well-placed posts and doing away with the superfluous ones."

3.6.11 "Yes, by Zeus," said Glaucon, "I'd do away with all of them, given the way they're guarded—so that things get stolen from the countryside." "But if someone does away with the guard posts," he said, "don't you think anyone who wants to will be free to plunder openly too? But tell me," he said, "did you go and examine this yourself, or how do you know they're badly guarded?" "I'm guessing," he said. "Then on this too we'll give advice when we're no longer guessing but actually know?"

3.6.12 "Perhaps that would be better," said Glaucon. "As for the silver mines," he said, "I'm sure you haven't been there, so you can't say why less revenue comes in from them now than before." "No, I haven't been," he said. "Just as well, by Zeus," said Socrates. "The place is said to be unhealthy, so when you have to give advice about it, that excuse will serve you." "You're making fun of me," said Glaucon.[16]

3.6.13 "But this, at least, I'm sure you haven't neglected," he said. "You've looked into how long the grain grown in our country can feed the city, and how much more it needs each year, so that the city never runs short without your noticing, and you can give advice about necessities from knowledge, and come to the city's help and save it." "That's an enormous task you're describing," said Glaucon, "if one is going to have to attend to things like that as well."

3.6.14 "And yet," said Socrates, "no one could run even his own household well unless he knows everything it needs and attends to supplying all of it. But since the city is made up of more than ten thousand households, and it's hard to look after so many at once, why haven't you tried first to build up one, your uncle's? It needs it. If you can manage that one, you can take on more; but if you can't help one, how could you possibly help many? It's like

16 The state-owned silver mines at Laurium in southern Attica were a major source of Athenian revenue.

someone who couldn't carry one talent: isn't it obvious he shouldn't even try to carry more?"[17]

3.6.15 "But I would help my uncle's household," said Glaucon, "if he were willing to listen to me." "And then," said Socrates, "when you can't persuade your uncle, you think you'll be able to make all the Athenians, your uncle included, listen to you?"

3.6.16 "Be careful, Glaucon," he said, "that in your desire for good repute you don't end up with the opposite. Or don't you see how risky it is to say or do things you don't know about? Think of the others you know who are like that, who are evidently saying and doing things they don't know about: do you think they get more praise or more blame for it, more admiration or more contempt?

3.6.17 "Think too of those who know what they're saying and what they're doing. You'll find, I believe, that in every field of activity those who are well thought of and admired come from among the most knowledgeable, and those with a bad name and held in contempt come from among the most ignorant.

3.6.18 "So if you want to be well thought of and admired in the city, try as hard as you can to achieve real knowledge of what you want to do. If you surpass the others in this when you set about handling the city's affairs, I wouldn't be surprised if you got what you desire quite easily."

CHAPTER 7

Socrates urges the able but shy Charmides not to fear speaking before the Assembly.

3.7.1 Seeing that Charmides, the son of Glaucon, was a man of note and far more capable than those who were then active in politics, but shrank from coming before the people and taking part in the city's affairs, he said, "Tell me, Charmides, if someone were able to win at the crown games, and so be honored himself and make his country more famous in Greece,

17 A talent was a weight of about 26 kilograms (57 pounds), also used as a large unit of money.

but wouldn't compete, what sort of man would you think he was?" "Clearly," he said, "a soft one and a coward."[18]

3.7.2 "And if someone," he said, "were capable of making the city greater by attending to its affairs, and of being honored for it himself, but shrank from doing it, wouldn't he rightly be thought a coward?" "Perhaps," he said, "but why are you asking me this?" "Because," he said, "I think you're capable but shrink from attending to things—and to things you're bound to take part in, as a citizen at any rate."

3.7.3 "And in what activity," said Charmides, "did you observe this capability of mine, that you pass such a judgment on me?" "In your meetings," he said, "with the men who handle the city's affairs. Whenever they consult you about something, I see you giving good advice, and whenever they make a mistake, criticizing them rightly."

3.7.4 "It's not the same thing, Socrates," he said, "to talk in private and to contend in front of the crowd." "And yet," he said, "a man who can count counts no worse in a crowd than alone, and those who play the lyre best on their own are the best in front of a crowd too."

3.7.5 "But don't you see," he said, "that shame and fear are inborn in people, and come over them much more in crowds than in private company?" And he said: That is just what I've set out to show you. You aren't ashamed before the wisest or afraid of the strongest, and yet you're ashamed to speak in front of the most foolish and the weakest.

SOCRATES 3.7.6 Which of them are you ashamed of—the fullers, the cobblers, the carpenters, the smiths, the farmers, the merchants, or the people in the marketplace who trade and think about how to buy cheap and sell dear? These are all the people the Assembly is made of.

3.7.7 How do you think what you're doing differs from a man who is better than the trained athletes being afraid of amateurs?

18 The crown games were the great festivals, such as the Olympic and Pythian, where the prize was a wreath.

You talk easily with the leading men in the city, some of whom look down on you, and you're far ahead of those who make a business of addressing the city; yet among people who have never given a thought to politics, and have never looked down on you, you shrink from speaking for fear of being laughed at.

3.7.8 "What?" he said. "Don't you think the people in the Assembly often laugh at those who speak rightly?" And he said: So do the others. That's why I'm surprised at you: you handle those men easily when they do it, yet you think you won't be able to deal with these people in any way at all.

SOCRATES 3.7.9 My good man, don't be ignorant of yourself, and don't make the mistake most people make. Most people are eager to look into other people's affairs and never turn to examining themselves. So don't shirk this; strain all the harder to pay attention to yourself. And don't neglect the city's affairs, if there's anything that can be made better through you. If they go well, not only the other citizens but your friends and you yourself will benefit, and not a little.

CHAPTER 8

Socrates answers Aristippus' trick questions about the good and the beautiful, and describes a well-built house.

3.8.1 When Aristippus tried to refute Socrates, just as he himself had earlier been refuted by him, Socrates wanted to benefit those who were with him. So he answered not like people who are on their guard in case their argument gets twisted somewhere, but like a man fully convinced that he was doing what he should.

3.8.2 Aristippus asked him whether he knew of anything good. His plan was that if Socrates named any such thing, like food or drink or money or health or strength or daring, he would show that it was sometimes bad. But Socrates knew that when something troubles us, we need whatever will put a stop to it, and he answered in the way that it is actually best to act:

3.8.3 "Are you asking me," he said, "whether I know of anything good for a fever?" "No, I'm not," he said. "For sore eyes, then?" "Not that either." "For hunger?" "Not for hunger either." "Well then," he said, "if you're asking me whether I know of anything good that isn't good for anything, I don't know of one," he said, "and I don't need one."

3.8.4 Another time Aristippus asked him whether he knew of anything beautiful. "Yes, many things," he said. "Then are they all like one another?" he asked. "Far from it. Some are as unlike as they can possibly be." "Then how," he said, "could something unlike the beautiful be beautiful?" "Why, by Zeus," he said, "because there's a man who is beautiful for running, and another, unlike him, who is beautiful for wrestling. And there's a shield, beautiful for protecting you, which is as unlike as can be to the javelin, beautiful for flying hard and fast."

3.8.5 "That's no different," he said, "from the answer you gave me when I asked whether you knew of anything good." "Do you think," he said, "that the good is one thing and the beautiful another? Don't you know that everything is beautiful and good with respect to the same things? First, excellence isn't good with respect to some things and beautiful with respect to others. Then, people are called 'beautiful and good' in the same sense and with respect to the same things. People's bodies, too, look beautiful and good with respect to the same things. And everything else people use is considered beautiful and good with respect to the same things: whatever it is well suited for."

3.8.6 "So is a dung basket beautiful too?" he asked. "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "and a golden shield is ugly, if for their own jobs the one is well made and the other badly." "Are you saying," he said, "that the same things are both beautiful and ugly?"

3.8.7 "Yes, by Zeus, I am," he said, "and good and bad too. Often what is good for hunger is bad for a fever, and what is good for a fever is bad for hunger. Often what is beautiful for running is ugly for wrestling, and what is beautiful for wrestling is ugly for running. For all things are good and beautiful with respect to

what they are well suited for, and bad and ugly with respect to what they are badly suited for."

3.8.8 And when he said that the same houses are both beautiful and useful, he seemed to me to be teaching how houses ought to be built. He went about examining it like this: "Shouldn't someone who means to have the house he ought to have contrive to make it as pleasant to live in and as useful as possible?"

3.8.9 When this was agreed: "So it's pleasant to have it cool in summer and warm in winter?" And when they agreed to this too: "Now in houses that face south, the winter sun shines in under the porches, while in summer it passes right over our heads and over the roofs and gives shade. So if it's good for things to happen this way, you should build the south side higher, so that the winter sun isn't shut out, and the north side lower, so that the cold winds don't blow in."

3.8.10 To sum it up, the place where the owner could most pleasantly take refuge in every season, and where he could store his possessions most safely, would reasonably be the most pleasant and the most beautiful dwelling. Paintings and ornate decoration take away more enjoyment than they provide. For temples and altars, he said, the most fitting site was the one that was most conspicuous and least trodden. It's pleasant to pray as you catch sight of them, and pleasant to approach them in a state of purity.

CHAPTER 9

Socrates gives his views on courage, wisdom, madness, envy, leisure, true rulers and doing well.

3.9.1 Another time he was asked whether courage could be taught or came by nature. "I think," he said, "that just as one body is born stronger than another for hard work, so one soul is by nature sturdier than another in the face of danger. For I see people brought up under the same laws and customs differing greatly from one another in daring.

3.9.2 "Still, I believe that every nature grows in courage through learning and practice. It's clear that Scythians and Thracians wouldn't dare to take up shields and spears and fight it out with Spartans. And it's obvious that Spartans wouldn't be willing to compete with Thracians using light shields and javelins, or with Scythians using bows.

3.9.3 "And I see the same in everything else too: people differ from one another by nature, and they improve a great deal through application. From this it is clear that everyone, the more gifted and the duller by nature alike, should learn and practice whatever they want to become notable at."

3.9.4 He did not distinguish wisdom from moderation. Someone who recognized what is fine and good and made use of it, and who knew what is shameful and guarded against it, he judged to be both wise and sensible. When he was further asked whether he thought that people who know what they ought to do but do the opposite are wise and uncontrolled, "No more," he said, "than I think them unwise and uncontrolled. For I believe that everyone chooses, out of the courses open to them, what they think is most advantageous to themselves, and does that. So I hold that those who don't act rightly are neither wise nor sensible."

3.9.5 He said that justice, too, and all the rest of excellence is wisdom. Just actions, and everything done through excellence, are fine and good. Those who know these things would never choose anything else instead of them, and those who don't understand them can't do them, and even if they try, they go wrong. So [too] the wise do what is fine and good, while those who aren't wise can't, and even if they try, they go wrong. Since, then, just actions and all other fine and good actions are done through excellence, it is clear that justice and all the rest of excellence is wisdom.

3.9.6 Madness, he said, was the opposite of wisdom. Yet he did not consider ignorance madness. But not knowing oneself, and supposing and believing that one knows what one doesn't, he reckoned to be very close to madness. Most people, he said,

don't call someone mad who is mistaken about things that most people don't know. It is someone mistaken about things most people do know that they call mad:

3.9.7 for if someone thinks he's so tall that he stoops when he passes through the gates in the city wall, or so strong that he tries to lift houses or attempts anything else that everyone can see is impossible, they say he is mad. Those who are only slightly wrong don't seem mad to most people. Rather, just as they call a strong desire "love," so they call a great derangement "madness."

3.9.8 When he examined what envy was, he found it to be a kind of pain. It was not, however, the pain we feel at our friends' misfortunes or at our enemies' good fortune. The only envious people, he said, are those who are distressed at their friends' successes. When some people were surprised that anyone who cared for someone could be pained at his success, he reminded them that many people are so disposed toward certain others that they can't stand by when they are doing badly, but help them in their misfortunes, and yet are pained when they prosper. This, though, would not happen to a man of understanding. It is fools who always suffer from it.

3.9.9 When he examined what leisure was, he said he found that most people are doing something. Even people playing board games and people clowning around are doing something. And yet all of these, he said, are at leisure, since they are free to go and do something better than this. No one, though, has leisure to go from better things to worse. And if anyone did, he said, he was doing wrong, since he had no time to spare for it.

3.9.10 Kings and rulers, he said, are not the people who hold scepters, or the people chosen by whoever happens along, or the people appointed by lot, or the people who have used force or deceit. They are the people who know how to rule.

3.9.11 For whenever someone agreed that it is the ruler's part to order what should be done and the subject's part to obey, he would point out that on a ship the one who knows how rules, while the shipowner and everyone else on board obey the one

who knows. The same goes for landowners in farming, for the sick in illness, for people in training, in physical exercise, and for everyone else who has something that needs care. If they think they know how to take care of it themselves, they do so. If not, they obey those who know, not only when these are present, but they even send for them when they are away, so that by obeying them they may do what is needed. And in wool-spinning, he pointed out, women actually rule men, because they know how to work wool and the men don't.

3.9.12 If someone objected that a tyrant is free not to obey those who give him good advice, "And how," he said, "could he be free not to obey, when a penalty lies in store if anyone fails to obey the person who speaks well? In whatever matter someone fails to obey good advice, he will surely go wrong, and when he goes wrong, he will pay the penalty."

3.9.13 And if someone said that a tyrant is free even to put a man of good sense to death, "Do you think," he said, "that someone who puts to death the best of his allies goes unpunished, or gets off with some trivial penalty? Do you think a man who does this is more likely to survive, or to come to ruin, and very quickly at that?"

3.9.14 When someone asked him what he thought was the best pursuit for a man, he answered, "Doing well." Asked again whether he thought good luck was a pursuit too, "I think luck and doing are complete opposites," he said. "Hitting on something you need without looking for it is what I think good luck is. But doing something well after learning and practicing it is what I call doing well, and the people who pursue this seem to me to do well."

3.9.15 And he said that the best people and the dearest to the gods are, in farming, those who do the work of farming well; in medicine, those who do medical work well; in politics, those who do political work well. But someone who does nothing well, he said, is neither useful for anything nor dear to the gods.

CHAPTER 10

Socrates talks with a painter, a sculptor and an armorer about portraying character and making things fit.

3.10.1 Moreover, whenever he conversed with any of those who had crafts and practiced them for a living, he was useful to them too. Once, for instance, he visited Parrhasius the painter, and in conversation with him he said, "Parrhasius, isn't painting a representation of the things we see? At any rate, you painters use your colors to reproduce bodies hollow and raised, dark and bright, hard and soft, rough and smooth, young and old, and you imitate them."[19]

3.10.2 "That's true," he said. "And when you portray beautiful figures, since it isn't easy to come across a single person who is flawless in every respect, you bring together from many people the most beautiful features of each, and that's how you make whole bodies look beautiful."

3.10.3 "Yes, that's what we do," he said. "Well then," he said, "do you also reproduce the character of the soul, at its most winning, most pleasant, most friendly, most longed for, and most lovable? Or can't that even be imitated?" "How could it be imitated, Socrates," he said, "when it has no proportion and no color, none of the things you just mentioned, and isn't visible at all?"

3.10.4 "Well, doesn't a person look at some people kindly and at others with hostility?" "I think so," he said. "Then can't that at least be imitated in the eyes?" "Certainly," he said. "And when their friends fare well or badly, do you think people who care and people who don't have the same expression on their faces?" "No, by Zeus, not at all," he said. "When things go well they look radiant, and when things go badly they look gloomy." "So these can be represented too?" he said.

3.10.5 "Certainly," he said. "And then nobility and generosity, meanness and servility, moderation and understanding,

19 Parrhasius of Ephesus was among the most celebrated painters of the late fifth century BC.

insolence and vulgarity all show through in people's faces and in their postures, whether they're standing still or moving." "That's true," he said. "So these can be imitated too?" "Certainly," he said. "Then which do you think it is more pleasant to look at: people through whom fine, good, and lovable characters show, or people through whom shameful, wicked, and hateful ones do?" "By Zeus, Socrates," he said, "there's a big difference."

3.10.6 Once he visited Clito the sculptor, and in conversation with him he said, "Clito, I can see, and I know, that the runners and wrestlers and boxers and pankration fighters you make are beautiful. But the thing that most captivates people through their eyes, the look of being alive—how do you work that into your statues?"

3.10.7 When Clito was at a loss and didn't answer quickly, he said, "Is it by modeling your work on the figures of living people that you make your statues look more alive?" "Certainly," he said. "So by reproducing the parts of the body that the postures pull down and pull up, squeeze together and draw apart, stretch tight and let go slack, you make them look more like the real thing and more convincing?"

3.10.8 "Very much so," he said. "And doesn't reproducing the feelings of bodies in action give the viewers a certain delight?" "It's likely, at any rate," he said. "Then the eyes of fighters should be made menacing, and the look of victors in their joy should be imitated?" "Absolutely," he said. "So," he said, "the sculptor must represent the workings of the soul in the figure."

3.10.9 When he visited Pistias the breastplate maker, and Pistias showed Socrates some well-made breastplates, he said, "By Hera, Pistias, the breastplate is a fine invention: it covers the parts of a person that need protection without keeping him from using his hands.

3.10.10 "But tell me, Pistias," he said, "why do you sell your breastplates for more, when you make them neither stronger nor more costly than others do?" "Because, Socrates," he said, "I make them better proportioned." "And this proportion," he said, "do you show it by measure or by weight when you price them

higher? For I don't suppose you make them all equal or all alike, not if you make them to fit." "Oh, by Zeus, I do make them to fit," he said. "A breastplate is no use without that."

3.10.11 "And aren't people's bodies, some of them, well proportioned, and others ill proportioned?" "Certainly," he said. "Then how do you make a breastplate that fits an ill-proportioned body well proportioned?" "The same way I make it fit," he said;

3.10.12 "for one that fits is well proportioned." "You seem to me," said Socrates, "to mean 'well proportioned' not in itself but in relation to the wearer. It's as if you were to say that a shield is well proportioned for whoever it fits, and the same with a cloak; and on your account everything else seems to work the same way.

3.10.13 "And perhaps there's another advantage, and no small one, that comes with fitting." "Teach me, Socrates," he said, "if you have something." "Breastplates that fit," he said, "press down less with their weight than ill-fitting ones of the same weight. Ill-fitting ones either hang entirely from the shoulders or press hard on some other part of the body, and they become hard and uncomfortable to wear. But those that fit have their weight shared out, some on the collarbones and shoulder pieces, some on the shoulders, some on the chest, some on the back, some on the belly, and they seem almost not a load to carry but something attached to you."

3.10.14 "You've named the very reason," he said, "why I think my work is worth so much. Still, some people prefer to buy decorated and gilded breastplates." "Well," he said, "if that's why they buy ones that don't fit, it seems to me they're buying a nuisance, decorated and gilded.

3.10.15 "But," he said, "since the body doesn't stay still, but is sometimes bent and sometimes straight, how could breastplates made to an exact fit fit?" "They couldn't at all," he said. "So you mean," he said, "that the ones that fit aren't the exact ones, but the ones that don't hurt in use." "You're saying that yourself, Socrates," he said, "and you've understood it quite correctly."

CHAPTER 11

Socrates visits the courtesan Theodote and teases her about how to hunt and keep friends.

3.11.1 There was once a beautiful woman in the city named Theodote, the kind who would keep company with any man who could win her over. One of those present mentioned her and said that the woman's beauty was beyond words. He said that painters went to her house to make her portrait, and that she showed them as much of herself as was beautiful. "Then we'd better go and look," said Socrates, "since what's beyond words certainly can't be grasped by hearing about it." And the man who had told them said, "Follow me, then, and quickly."[20]

3.11.2 So they went off to Theodote's, found her posing for a painter, and looked at her. When the painter had finished, Socrates said, "Gentlemen, should we be more grateful to Theodote for showing us her beauty, or she to us for looking at it? If the showing does her more good, isn't she the one who owes us gratitude? And if the sight does us more good, aren't we the ones who owe it to her?"

3.11.3 When someone said that this was fair, he went on, "Well then, she's already earning our praise, and once we spread the word to more people she'll benefit even more. But we already long to touch what we've seen, and we'll go away with an itch and miss her once we've gone. It follows that we should be the ones paying court and she the one being courted." And Theodote said, "Well, by Zeus, if that's how things are, I should be the one grateful to you for looking."

3.11.4 After this Socrates noticed several things. She herself was expensively dressed. Her mother was there with her, in clothes and with attendants of no ordinary kind. She had many good-looking maids, and they weren't neglected either. And the house was lavishly furnished in every other way. "Tell me, Theodote,"

20 Theodote was a well-known Athenian courtesan (*hetaira*), a woman who lived on the gifts of the men who kept company with her.

he said, "do you own a farm?" "Not I," she said. "Then perhaps a house that brings in rent?" "Not a house either," she said. "Some craftsmen, then?" "No craftsmen either," she said. "So where do you get your living?" he asked. "If someone becomes my friend and wants to be good to me," she said, "that's my living."

3.11.5 "By Hera, Theodote," he said, "that's a fine property to own, and far better than flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle: a herd of friends. But tell me," he said, "do you leave it to chance whether a friend comes flying to you like a fly, or do you also contrive something yourself?"

3.11.6 "And how could I find a contrivance for that?" she said. "Much more fittingly than spiders do, by Zeus," he said. "You know how they hunt for their living. They weave fine webs, of course, and whatever falls into them they use for food."

3.11.7 "So you advise me to weave myself a trap as well?" she said. "Well, you certainly shouldn't think you'll catch the most valuable prey there is, friends, with no skill at all. Don't you see that even people hunting something of little value, like hares, use plenty of tricks?

3.11.8 "Hares feed at night, so the hunters get dogs trained for night work and hunt them with those. Hares run off by day, so they acquire other dogs that pick up the scent along the way from the feeding grounds to their beds and find them. Hares are so fast that they escape even when running in the open, so the hunters get still other dogs, fast ones, to catch them in the chase. And since some hares escape even these, they set nets across the paths they flee along, so that they run into them and get tangled up."

3.11.9 "Then with what sort of thing could I hunt friends?" she said. "By Zeus," he said, "if instead of a dog you get someone who'll track down rich men with an eye for beauty, and once he's found them, will contrive a way to drive them into your nets."

3.11.10 "And what nets do I have?" she said. "One, of course," he said, "and one that wraps itself around a man very well: your body. And in it a soul. With your soul you learn how to please

with a look and to delight with what you say. You learn that you should welcome gladly the man who takes care of you and shut out the one who is only self-indulgent; that when a friend falls ill you should visit him with real concern; that when he does something fine you should share his delight with all your heart; and that you should give yourself, with your whole soul, to the man who cares deeply for you. As for loving, I'm sure you know how to do it not only tenderly but kindly. And I'm sure you convince your friends that you're fond of them not by word but by deed." "No, by Zeus," said Theodote, "I don't contrive any of this."

3.11.11 "And yet," he said, "it makes a great difference to deal with a person naturally and in the right way. You can neither catch nor keep a friend by force. This creature is caught and made to stay by kindness and pleasure."

3.11.12 "That's true," she said. "Then first," he said, "you should ask those who care for you only for the kinds of things that will cost them the least trouble to do. Then you should repay them by pleasing them in the same way. That's how they'd be most likely to become your friends, to love you for the longest time, and to do you the greatest kindnesses.

3.11.13 "And you'd please them most if you gave what you have when they want it. You see that even the most delicious foods seem unappetizing if they're served before a man has an appetite, and if he's already full they're even nauseating. But if they're served after hunger has been worked up, they seem very delicious, even if they're fairly plain."

3.11.14 "So how could I work up hunger in those who come to me?" she said. "By Zeus," he said, "first, if you neither offer anything to those who are full nor remind them, until they've gotten over their surfeit and want again. Then, when they do want, remind them, with the most modest manner, and by not seeming eager to give yourself, and by holding back, until they want it as badly as possible. At that point the same gifts are worth far more than if you give them before they desire them."

3.11.15 And Theodote said, "Then why don't you become my partner in hunting friends, Socrates?" "I will, by Zeus," he said,

"if you persuade me." "And how could I persuade you?" she said. "You'll look for a way yourself and contrive it," he said, "if you need anything from me."

3.11.16 "Then come and visit often," she said. And Socrates, making fun of his own lack of any occupation, said, "But Theodote, it isn't at all easy for me to find the time. I have lots of private and public business that keeps me busy. And I have lady friends too, who won't let me leave them day or night, because they're learning love potions and spells from me."

3.11.17 "Do you know about these things too, Socrates?" she said. "Why else do you think Apollodorus here and Antisthenes never leave my side?" he said. "And why do Cebes and Simmias come to me all the way from Thebes? You can be sure this doesn't happen without plenty of love potions and spells and love wheels."[21]

3.11.18 "Then lend me your love wheel," she said, "so I can work it on you first." "No, by Zeus," he said, "I don't want to be drawn to you. I want you to come to me." "All right, I'll come," she said. "Just let me in." "I'll let you in," he said, "unless there's someone dearer to me than you inside."[22]

CHAPTER 12

Socrates tells Epigenes, young and out of shape, why everyone should keep his body fit.

3.12.1 Seeing Epigenes, one of his companions, who was young and in poor physical shape, he said, "What an amateur's body you have, Epigenes!" And he said, "Well, I am an amateur, Socrates." "No more than those who are about to compete at Olympia," he said. "Or do you think it's a small contest, the fight for your life against the enemy, which the Athenians will hold whenever the occasion arises?

3.12.2 "And yet quite a few men die in the dangers of war because their bodies are in poor condition, or save themselves

21 Apollodorus and Antisthenes were devoted followers of Socrates. Cebes and Simmias were Thebans who appear in Plato's *Phaedo*.

shamefully. Many are taken alive for this very reason. Once captured, they either spend the rest of their lives as slaves, if it turns out that way, in the harshest slavery, or they fall into the most painful straits. Sometimes they pay a ransom greater than everything they own, and then live out the rest of their lives short of necessities and suffering hardship. And many gain a shameful reputation because their bodily weakness makes them look like cowards.

3.12.3 "Or do you look down on these penalties for poor condition, and think you'd bear such things easily? And yet I think that what a man who looks after his bodily fitness has to endure is far easier and more pleasant than these. Or do you think that poor condition is healthier and more useful for everything else than good condition? Or do you look down on what good condition brings?

3.12.4 "And yet everything that happens to those in good bodily condition is the opposite of what happens to those in bad. Those in good condition are healthy and strong. Because of this, many of them come through the struggles of war safely and with honor, and escape every danger. Many help their friends and do their country good. For this they are thought to deserve gratitude, win a great reputation and gain the finest honors, and [for this reason] they live out the rest of their lives more pleasantly and more finely, and leave their children better means to start out in life.

3.12.5 "Just because the city doesn't train for war at public expense, you mustn't neglect it privately as well; you should take care of it all the same. You can be sure that in no other contest and in no undertaking will you be worse off for having your body better prepared. The body is useful for everything people do, and in every use of the body it makes a big difference to have it in the best possible condition;

3.12.6 for even where the body seems least needed, in thinking, who doesn't know that here too many people go badly wrong

22 The *iynx* was a love charm: a wryneck bird bound to a wheel, or a small spinning wheel, believed to draw a desired person to the one who spun it.

because their bodies aren't healthy? Forgetfulness, despondency, irritability and madness often assail many people's minds because their bodies are in poor condition, so badly that they even drive out the knowledge they had.

3.12.7 "But those whose bodies are in good condition are quite safe, and in no danger of suffering anything like this, at least not because of poor bodily condition. More likely, good condition is [also] useful for producing the opposite of what poor condition brings. And for the sake of the opposites of the things just mentioned, what wouldn't a sensible person endure?

3.12.8 "It's shameful, too, to grow old through neglect before you've seen yourself become the finest and strongest you could be in body. And you can't see that if you neglect it, because it won't happen on its own."

CHAPTER 13

Socrates gives short, sharp replies to everyday complaints about rudeness, food, servants and travel.

3.13.1 Once someone was angry because he had greeted a man and gotten no greeting in return. "It's funny," Socrates said. "If you'd met someone in worse bodily shape, you wouldn't be angry. But because you've run into someone whose soul is rather boorish, that upsets you."

3.13.2 When another man said he got no pleasure from eating, he said, "Acumenus teaches a good remedy for that." The man asked, "What is it?" "Stop eating," he said. "He says that once you stop, you'll live more pleasantly, more cheaply and more healthily."[23]

3.13.3 Another man, again, said that the water he drank at home was warm. "So when you want a warm bath," he said, "it'll be ready for you." "But it's too cold to bathe in," the man said. "Then do your servants mind drinking it and bathing in it?" he asked. "No, by Zeus," he said. "In fact I've often been amazed at how happily they use it for both." "And which is warmer to

23 Acumenus was a well-known Athenian physician.

drink," he asked, "the water at your house or the water at the shrine of Asclepius?" "The water at the shrine of Asclepius," he said. "And which is colder to bathe in, yours or the water at the shrine of Amphiaraus?" "The water at Amphiaraus'," he said. "Then bear in mind," he said, "that you may well be harder to please than your servants and the sick."[24]

3.13.4 When someone was punishing his attendant harshly, Socrates asked why he was angry with the servant. "Because," he said, "he's an utter glutton and an utter dolt, as greedy for money as he is lazy." "Have you ever stopped to consider which of you needs more beatings, you or the servant?"

3.13.5 When someone was afraid of the journey to Olympia, he said, "Why are you afraid of the trip? Don't you walk around nearly all day at home? On the way there you'll take a walk and then have lunch, take a walk and then have dinner and rest. Don't you know that if you laid end to end the walks you take in five or six days, you could easily get from Athens to Olympia? It's also more pleasant to set out a day early than a day late. Being forced to stretch your daily stages beyond a reasonable length is hard, while spending one day more on the road makes things much easier. So it's better to hurry when setting out than on the road."

3.13.6 Another man said he was worn out after walking a long way, and Socrates asked him whether he had been carrying a load as well. "No, by Zeus, not I," he said, "only my cloak." "Were you traveling alone," he said, "or did an attendant come along with you?" "He came along," he said. "Empty-handed, or carrying something?" "Carrying, by Zeus," he said, "the bedding and the rest of the baggage." "And how did he [at all] come through the journey?" "Better than I did, it seems to me," he said. "Well then," he said, "if you'd had to carry his load, how do you think you'd have fared?" "Badly, by Zeus," he said, "or rather, I couldn't have carried it at all." "So being able to bear so much less hard

24 Both were healing sanctuaries visited by the sick: the shrine of Asclepius in Athens and that of the hero Amphiaraus at Oropus, each with its own spring.

work than your slave—does that seem to you the mark of a man in training?"

CHAPTER 14

Socrates teaches manners at shared dinners and mocks those who eat only the fancy dishes.

3.14.1 Whenever some of those meeting for dinner brought a little relish and others a lot, Socrates would tell the slave either to put the small portion into the common share or to divide it out among everyone. Those who had brought a lot were then ashamed both to take no part in what was put in common and not to put in their own in return; so they put theirs into the common share too. And since they got no more than those who brought little, they stopped spending a lot on relish.[25]

3.14.2 Once he noticed that one of his fellow diners had stopped eating bread and was eating the relish by itself. The conversation was about names, and what sort of action each name was given for. "Gentlemen," he said, "could we say for what sort of action a man is called a relish-eater? Everyone eats relish with their bread when there is some, but I don't suppose that's what gets people called relish-eaters." "Certainly not," said one of those present.[26]

3.14.3 "Well then," he said, "if someone eats the relish by itself without bread, not for training but for pleasure, does he seem to be a relish-eater or not?" "If he isn't," the man said, "it's hard to see who else would be." And another of those present said, "What about someone who eats a lot of relish with a little bread?" "To me," said Socrates, "he too seems to deserve the name of relish-eater. And when other people pray to the gods for plenty of crops, he'd naturally pray for plenty of relish."

3.14.4 When Socrates said this, the young man, thinking the remarks had been aimed at him, didn't stop eating his relish, but

25 "Relish" (*opson*) was anything eaten with the staple bread or barley cake—above all fish, but also meat or vegetables.

26 A "relish-eater" (*opsophagos*) was the Greek word for a glutton for fancy food.

took some bread as well. And Socrates, noticing this, said, "You people next to him, keep an eye on him and see whether he'll treat the bread as relish or the relish as bread."

3.14.5 Another time, seeing one of his fellow diners tasting several relishes with a single mouthful of bread, he said, "Could there be any cookery more extravagant, or more ruinous to the dishes, than what's cooked up by the man who [eats many things at once and] takes all kinds of flavors into his mouth at once? By mixing more things than the cooks do, he makes it more expensive. And by mixing what they don't mix because it doesn't go together, he goes wrong, if they do it right, and undoes their art;

3.14.6 and isn't it absurd to provide yourself with cooks who know their business best, and then, without even laying claim to that art yourself, rearrange what they've made? There's another consequence for the man who has gotten used to eating many things at once. When many aren't available, he'll feel he's missing something, because he longs for what he's used to. But the man used to sending his one mouthful of bread down with one relish could make do with just one, without distress, when many weren't available."

3.14.7 He also said that in Athenian speech *euōcheisthai*, "to feast," was used for "eating," and that the *eu*, "well," was added for eating things that would harm neither soul nor body and weren't hard to come by. And so he credited feasting, too, to those who lived orderly lives.[27]

27 *Euōcheisthai* begins with *eu*, "well," and Socrates hears it as "eating well."

Book IV

Education and death
The young Euthydemus humbled, piety, justice with Hippias, dialectic, and how Socrates died.

CHAPTER 1

Socrates adapted his teaching to different natures, from the gifted to the proud and the rich.

4.1.1 Socrates was so beneficial in every matter and in every way that anyone who looked into it, even someone of modest perception, could see that nothing was more beneficial than being with Socrates and spending time in his company, anywhere and in any matter whatever. Even remembering him when he wasn't there did no small good to those who were used to being with him and who valued him. Whether he was joking or in earnest, he was just as profitable to those who spent time with him.

4.1.2 He would often say, for instance, that he was in love with someone. But it was clear that what drew him was not bodies naturally endowed with youthful beauty but souls naturally well suited to excellence. He judged good natures by how quickly they learned whatever they turned their minds to, how well they remembered what they had learned, and whether they desired all the kinds of learning by which one can manage a household and a city well and, in short, deal well with human beings and human affairs. He thought that people like this, once educated, would not only be happy themselves and manage their own households well, but would also be able to make other people and whole cities happy.

4.1.3 He did not approach everyone in the same way. Those who thought they were good by nature and looked down on learning he taught that the natures that seem best are the ones most in need of education. He pointed out that the most gifted horses, spirited and vigorous as they are, become the most serviceable and the best if they are broken in young, but if they are left unbroken they become the hardest to control and the worst. And the most gifted dogs, hard-working and keen to go after game, become the best and most useful for hunting if they are well trained, but if they go untrained they turn out useless, crazed and utterly disobedient.

4.1.4 In the same way, he said, the most gifted human beings, with the strongest souls and the greatest capacity for carrying through whatever they take in hand, become the best and most beneficial if they are educated and learn what they ought to do, since they accomplish the most and the greatest goods. But if they stay uneducated and ignorant, they become the worst and most harmful. Not knowing how to judge what they ought to do, they often set their hands to wicked undertakings, and because they are grand and forceful they are hard to restrain and hard to turn aside. That is why they accomplish the most and the greatest evils.

4.1.5 Then there were those who prided themselves on their wealth, thought they needed no education besides, and supposed their wealth would be enough for them to accomplish whatever they wanted and to be honored by people. He brought them to their senses by saying this. A man is a fool if he thinks he will tell beneficial things from harmful ones without having learned how. He is a fool, too, if he can't tell them apart but thinks that, because his wealth gets him whatever he wants, he will be able to do what is to his advantage. He is an idiot if, unable to do what is to his advantage, he thinks he is doing well and that he has provided himself [either finely or] adequately with what he needs for life. And he is an idiot also if he thinks his wealth will get him a reputation for being good at something

when he knows nothing, or a good name when he is thought good for nothing.

CHAPTER 2

Socrates humbles the young Euthydemus, proud of his books, until he admits he knows nothing.

4.2.1 I will now relate how he dealt with those who thought they had received the best education and prided themselves on their wisdom. He had learned that Euthydemus the handsome had collected many writings of the most celebrated poets and sophists. On the strength of these, Euthydemus already believed he surpassed those of his own age in wisdom, and he had high hopes of surpassing everyone in the ability to speak and act. Socrates noticed that, being so young, he didn't yet go into the marketplace, but when he wanted to get some business done he would sit in a harness-maker's shop near the marketplace. So, to begin with, Socrates went there too, taking some of his companions with him.

4.2.2 First, someone asked whether it was through associating with one of the wise men or by nature that Themistocles so far surpassed his fellow citizens that the city looked to him whenever it needed a capable man. Socrates, wanting to stir Euthydemus up, said it was naive to think that in crafts of little worth people don't become accomplished without competent teachers, but that presiding over a city, the greatest work of all, comes to people of its own accord.[1]

4.2.3 Another time, when Euthydemus was there, Socrates saw him withdrawing from the group and taking care not to seem to admire Socrates for his wisdom. "Gentlemen," he said, "it's quite clear from what our Euthydemus here is up to that when he comes of age and the city puts some matter up for debate, he won't hold back from giving advice. And it seems to me he has prepared a fine introduction for his public speeches, taking care

1 Themistocles was the Athenian statesman and general who led the Greek fleet to victory over the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC.

not to seem to learn anything from anyone. Obviously, when he begins to speak, he will open like this:

4.2.4 "'Men of Athens, I have never learned anything from anyone. When I heard that certain people were capable speakers and men of action, I never sought to meet them, nor did I take any trouble to have one of the experts as my teacher. Quite the opposite: I have spent my whole life avoiding not only learning anything from anyone, but even seeming to. Nevertheless, I will advise you of whatever comes into my head of its own accord.'

4.2.5 "This would be a suitable way to open for people who want the city to give them a post as a doctor, too. It would be fitting for them to begin their speech like this: 'Men of Athens, I have never learned the art of medicine from anyone, nor have I sought to have any doctor as my teacher. I have spent my whole life taking care not only to avoid learning anything from doctors, but even to avoid seeming to have learned this art. Nevertheless, give me the post as doctor. I'll try to learn by taking my chances on you.'" Everyone present laughed at the introduction.[2]

4.2.6 By now it was clear that Euthydemus was paying attention to what Socrates said, but he was still careful not to utter a word himself, thinking that by keeping silent he was clothing himself in a reputation for moderation. Socrates, wanting to put a stop to this, said, "It's astonishing. People who want to become capable at playing the lyre or the pipes or at riding, or at anything else of the kind, try to practice whatever they want to be able to do as constantly as possible—and not on their own, but under those reputed to be the best. They do and endure everything so as to do nothing without their teachers' judgment, believing they could never amount to anything otherwise. Yet among those who want to become able to speak and act in public affairs, some think that without preparation or effort they will suddenly, all by themselves, be able to do it.

4.2.7 "And yet these things are evidently harder to accomplish than those, to the degree that more people busy themselves with

them and fewer succeed. So it's clear that those who aim at these need more effort, and more intense effort, than those who aim at the others."

4.2.8 At first, then, Socrates said things like this while Euthydemus listened. But when he noticed that Euthydemus was more willing to stay while he conversed and listened more eagerly, he went to the harness-maker's shop alone. When Euthydemus sat down beside him, he said, "Tell me, Euthydemus, is it really true, as I hear, that you've collected many writings by men who are said to have been wise?" And Euthydemus said, "Yes, by Zeus, Socrates, and I'm still collecting them, until I have as many as I possibly can."

4.2.9 "By Hera," said Socrates, "I do admire you for choosing to possess treasures of wisdom rather than of silver and gold. Clearly you think silver and gold make people no better, while the thoughts of wise men make those who possess them rich in excellence." Euthydemus was delighted to hear this, thinking Socrates believed he was going about the pursuit of wisdom the right way. Socrates noticed that he was pleased by this praise, and said:

4.2.10 "And what is it you want to become good at, Euthydemus, that you collect these writings?" Euthydemus fell silent, considering what to answer, so Socrates went on: "A doctor, perhaps? There are plenty of medical writings too." And Euthydemus said, "No, by Zeus, not I." "Then do you want to become an architect? That too takes a man of judgment." "No, not I," he said. "Then do you long to become a good geometer, like Theodorus?" "Not a geometer either," he said. "Then do you want to become an astronomer?" When he denied this too, Socrates said, "A rhapsode, then? They tell me you own the complete epics of Homer." "No, by Zeus, not I," he said. "I know rhapsodes are very precise about the verses, but they themselves are complete idiots."[3]

2 Greek cities appointed and paid public doctors, who were chosen by the Assembly.

3 Theodorus of Cyrene was a celebrated mathematician. Rhapsodes were professional performers who recited Homer.

4.2.11 And Socrates said, "Surely, Euthydemus, you're not aiming at the excellence that makes people good at politics and at managing households, capable of ruling, and beneficial both to others and to themselves?" And Euthydemus said, "I want that excellence very much, Socrates." "By Zeus," said Socrates, "you're aiming at the finest excellence and the greatest art. It belongs to kings and is called the kingly art. But," he said, "have you considered whether it's possible to be good at these things without being just?" "Yes, I certainly have," he said, "and it isn't possible to become a good citizen without justice."

4.2.12 "Well then," he said, "have you achieved that?" "I think, Socrates, I'd turn out to be no less just than anyone." "Do the just have works, the way carpenters do?" "Of course they do." "So just as carpenters can display their works, could the just set out theirs?" "What," said Euthydemus, "do you think I can't set out the works of justice? Yes, by Zeus, and those of injustice too, since you can see and hear quite a few of those every single day."

4.2.13 "Then would you like us to write a delta here and an alpha here," said Socrates, "and then put whatever seems to us a work of justice under the delta, and whatever seems a work of injustice under the alpha?" "If you think we need that, go ahead." Socrates wrote the letters as he had said and asked, "Well, there is such a thing as lying among people, isn't there?"[4]

4.2.14 "There certainly is," he said. "Which side shall we put it on, then?" "Clearly," he said, "on the side of injustice." "And there is deceiving too, isn't there?" "Very much so," he said. "Which side shall we put this on?" "This too clearly goes on the side of injustice," he said. "What about stealing?" "That too," he said. "And enslaving people?" "That too." "And none of these will be placed on the side of justice, Euthydemus?"

4.2.15 "That would be outrageous," he said. "What about this: if someone is elected general and enslaves an unjust, hostile city, shall we say he does wrong?" "Certainly not," he said. "Won't we say he acts justly?" "Of course." "And what if he deceives them

4 Delta and alpha are the first letters of the Greek words for justice (*dikaiosynē*) and injustice (*adikia*).

while at war with them?" "That's just too," he said. "And if he steals and plunders their property, won't he be acting justly?" "Of course," he said, "but at first I took you to be asking these questions about friends only." "So everything we placed on the side of injustice would have to be placed on the side of justice too?"

4.2.16 "It seems so," he said. "Then, now that we've placed them so, would you like us to draw a new distinction: that it is just to do things like this to enemies but unjust to friends, and that toward friends, at any rate, one must be as straightforward as possible?"

4.2.17 "By all means," said Euthydemus. "Well then," said Socrates, "suppose a general sees that his army is despondent, lies to them that allies are approaching, and with this lie stops the soldiers' despondency—which side shall we put this deception on?" "On the side of justice, I think," he said. "And suppose someone has a son who needs medicine and won't take it, and he tricks him by giving him the medicine as if it were food, and by using this lie makes him healthy—where should this deception go?" "I think that one goes in the same place," he said. "What about this: suppose a friend is despondent, and someone, afraid he may kill himself, steals or snatches away his sword or something of the kind—which side should this go on?" "That too, by Zeus," he said, "goes on the side of justice."

4.2.18 "You're saying," he said, "that one shouldn't be straightforward in everything even with friends?" "No, by Zeus, one certainly shouldn't," he said, "and I take back what I said earlier, if I'm allowed." "You certainly ought to be allowed," said Socrates, "far rather than placing things incorrectly."

4.2.19 "Now, so that we don't leave this unexamined either: of those who deceive their friends to do them harm, which is more unjust, the one who does it deliberately or the one who does it involuntarily?" "Well, Socrates, I no longer trust my own answers. Everything we said before now seems to me to be different from what I thought then. Still, let me say that the one

who lies deliberately is more unjust than the one who lies involuntarily."

4.2.20 "Do you think there is learning and knowledge of what is just, as there is of letters?" "I do." "Which do you judge more literate: the one who writes and reads incorrectly deliberately, or the one who does it involuntarily?" "The one who does it deliberately, I'd say, since he could also do it correctly whenever he wanted." "So the one who writes incorrectly on purpose would be literate, and the one who does it involuntarily illiterate?" "Of course." "And which one knows what is just: the one who lies and deceives deliberately, or the one who does it involuntarily?" "Clearly the one who does it deliberately." "So you say the one who knows his letters is more literate than the one who doesn't?" "Yes." "And the one who knows what is just is more just than the one who doesn't?" "Apparently I do. But I seem to be saying this too without knowing how."

4.2.21 "And what about this: someone who wants to tell the truth but never says the same things about the same matters—giving directions for the same road, he says one time that it goes east and another time west, and presenting the same calculation, he gives a larger total one time and a smaller one another—what do you think of a person like that?" "By Zeus, it's clear that he doesn't know what he thought he knew."

4.2.22 "Do you know of some people who are called slavish?" "I do." "Is that because of wisdom or because of ignorance?" "Clearly because of ignorance." "Do they get this name because they're ignorant of metalworking?" "Certainly not." "Of carpentry, then?" "Not for that either." "Of shoemaking?" "Not for any of these," he said, "quite the opposite: most of those who do know such things are slavish." "Then does this name belong to those who don't know what is fine and good and just?"

4.2.23 "I think so," he said. "So we must strain every nerve, in every way, to avoid being slaves." "But by the gods, Socrates," he said, "I really did think I was pursuing the kind of philosophy through which I believed I would best be educated in what befits a man who aspires to gentlemanly excellence. Now how des-

pondent do you think I am, seeing that for all my previous labors I can't even answer a question about the things one most needs to know, and that I have no other road to travel by which I might become better?"

4.2.24 And Socrates said, "Tell me, Euthydemus, have you ever been to Delphi?" "Twice, by Zeus," he said. "Then did you notice the inscription somewhere on the temple, 'Know yourself'?" "I did." "Did you pay no attention to the inscription, or did you take note of it and try to examine yourself, what sort of person you are?" "No, by Zeus, I certainly didn't," he said, "because I was quite sure I knew that already. I'd hardly know anything else if I didn't even know myself."

4.2.25 "Which do you think knows himself: the one who knows only his own name, or the one who does what people buying horses do? They don't think they know the horse they want to know until they've examined whether it's obedient or unruly, strong or weak, fast or slow, and how it stands in all the other respects that make a horse suitable or unsuitable for use. Isn't it the one who has examined himself in the same way, what he is like for human use, who knows his own capacity?" "It seems to me," he said, "that the one who doesn't know his own capacity doesn't know himself."

4.2.26 "And isn't this clear," he said, "that through knowing themselves people meet with the most good things, and through being mistaken about themselves the most bad ones? Those who know themselves know what is suitable for them and can tell what they are able to do and what they aren't. By doing what they understand, they get what they need and do well; by keeping away from what they don't understand, they make no mistakes and escape doing badly. Because of this they are also able to assess other people, and through their dealings with others they gain good things and guard against bad ones.

4.2.27 "But those who don't know themselves, and are mistaken about their own capacity, are in the same state with regard to other people and other human affairs. They know neither what they need nor what they're doing nor whom they're dealing

with, and by going wrong in all these things they miss out on the good things and run into the bad ones.

4.2.28 "Those who know what they are doing succeed in what they undertake and become well regarded and honored. People like them enjoy dealing with them, and those who fail in their affairs want these men to deliberate on their behalf and to take the lead for them. They place their hopes of good things in them, and for [all] these reasons they love them above everyone else.

4.2.29 "But those who don't know what they are doing choose badly and fail in whatever they attempt. Not only are they penalized and punished in these very matters, but because of them they also lose their reputations, become laughingstocks, and live despised and dishonored. And you see that among cities too, those that go to war with stronger powers in ignorance of their own capacity are either laid waste or reduced from freedom to slavery."

4.2.30 And Euthydemus said, "Rest assured, Socrates, that I think knowing oneself is something to be taken very seriously. But where one should start examining oneself—for that I'm looking to you, in case you'd be willing to explain it to me."

4.2.31 "Well," said Socrates, "you surely know, I suppose, what sort of things are good and what sort are bad?" "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "for if I don't even know that, I'd be worse off than the slaves." "Come on, then," he said, "explain them to me too." "It isn't hard," he said. "First, I think being healthy is in itself a good, and being sick a bad. Then the causes of each of these—drinks and foods and habits—are good when they lead to health, and bad when they lead to sickness."

4.2.32 "So then," he said, "health and sickness themselves would be goods whenever they turn out to cause something good, and bad whenever they cause something bad." "But when," he said, "could health cause something bad, and sickness something good?" "Why, by Zeus," he said, "whenever there's a disgraceful campaign, or a disastrous voyage, or many other things of that sort, and some take part because they're strong and are killed,

while others are left behind because they're weak and survive." "That's true. But you see," he said, "that in beneficial things too, some take part because they're strong while others are left out because they're weak." "So these things," he said, "which sometimes benefit and sometimes harm—how are they any more good than bad?" "No, by Zeus, they don't seem to be, at least on this argument."

4.2.33 "But wisdom, Socrates, surely is a good beyond dispute. What task wouldn't a person do better if he were wise than if he were ignorant?" "Really? Haven't you heard," he said, "about Daedalus? Minos seized him because of his wisdom and forced him to be his slave. He was robbed of his homeland and his freedom alike. When he tried to escape with his son, he lost the boy and couldn't save himself either, but was carried off among the barbarians and was a slave there all over again." "That's the story, by Zeus," he said. "And haven't you heard what happened to Palamedes? Everyone sings of how Odysseus envied him for his wisdom and he was destroyed." "That's the story too," he said. "And how many others do you suppose have been hauled off to the King because of their wisdom, and are slaves there?"[5]

4.2.34 "It looks, Socrates," he said, "as though being happy is the least disputable good." "Unless, Euthydemus," he said, "someone builds it out of disputable goods." "And what part of happiness could be disputable?" he said. "Nothing," he said, "unless we add to it beauty or strength or wealth or reputation or something else of that kind." "But of course we'll add them, by Zeus," he said. "How could anyone be happy without these?"

4.2.35 "Then by Zeus," he said, "we'll be adding things that bring people a great deal of trouble. Many are ruined because of their beauty, by men who have gone wild over youthful looks. Many, because of their strength, take on tasks too big for them and land in no small troubles. Many, because of their wealth, are spoiled and plotted against and destroyed. And many, because

5 Palamedes, a Greek hero at Troy famed for his inventions, was framed for treason by Odysseus. "The King" is the king of Persia.

of their reputation and political power, have suffered great evils."

4.2.36 "Well," he said, "if I'm not even right to praise being happy, I admit I don't know what one ought to pray to the gods for either." "But maybe," said Socrates, "you've never even examined these things, because you're so sure you know them. Still, since you're preparing to be a leader in a democratically governed city, you obviously know what democracy is, at least."

4.2.37 "Absolutely, I should think," he said. "Then do you think it's possible to know democracy without knowing the *dēmos*, the people?" "No, by Zeus, I don't." "So you know what the people is?" "I think so." "And what do you take the people to be?" "The poor among the citizens." "So you know the poor too?" "Of course." "Then do you also know the rich?" "No less than the poor." "And what sort do you call poor, and what sort rich?" "Those who don't have enough to pay for what they need, I suppose, are poor; those who have more than enough are rich."

4.2.38 "Have you noticed, then, that some people who have very little not only find it enough but even save something out of it, while for others a great deal isn't enough?" "Yes, by Zeus," said Euthydemus—"you're right to remind me—I even know some tyrants who are driven by want to do wrong, just like the most destitute."

4.2.39 "Then if that's so," said Socrates, "we'll put the tyrants among the people, and those who own little, if they manage their households well, among the rich." And Euthydemus said, "My own poor wits are obviously forcing me to agree to this too. And I'm wondering whether it would be best for me to keep quiet, since it looks as if I simply know nothing." And he went away thoroughly dejected, despising himself and thinking he really was no better than a slave.

4.2.40 Now many of those whom Socrates had put into this state never came near him again, and he regarded them as rather dull. But Euthydemus concluded that he could never become a man worth anything unless he spent as much time with Socrates as he possibly could. From then on he never left his side unless

he had to, and he even imitated some of his habits. And Socrates, once he saw how he felt, unsettled him as little as possible, and explained as simply and clearly as he could what he thought one needed to know and what practices were best.

CHAPTER 3

Socrates shows Euthydemus how the gods provide for human beings and how to honor them.

4.3.1 So he was in no hurry for his companions to become good speakers and capable men of action [and inventive]; he thought that before these things they needed to acquire moderation. For he considered that those who had these abilities without being sensible were both more unjust and more capable of doing harm.

4.3.2 First of all, then, he tried to make his companions sensible about the gods. Others who were present when he spoke this way with other people have described it; but I myself was there when he had a conversation of this kind with Euthydemus:

4.3.3 "Tell me, Euthydemus," he said, "has it ever occurred to you to think about how carefully the gods have provided what human beings need?" And he said, "No, by Zeus, it hasn't." "But you do know," he said, "that first of all we need light, and the gods supply it to us?" "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "and if we didn't have it, we'd be like the blind, for all the good our eyes would do us." "And then, since we need rest, they give us night, the loveliest time for resting."

4.3.4 "Very much so," he said, "and that deserves gratitude too." "And since the sun, being bright, makes the hours of the day and everything else clear to us, while night is less clear because it's dark, haven't they made stars shine out in the night, which show us the hours of the night, so that we can do many of the things we need to?" "That's so," he said. "And the moon, moreover, makes plain to us the divisions not only of the night but of the month."

4.3.5 "Certainly," he said. "And what about this: since we need food, they make the earth yield it to us, and provide seasons suited to the purpose, which furnish us not only with a great variety of the things we need but also with things we enjoy?"

4.3.6 "Yes," he said, "that too shows love for humanity." "And what about their giving us water, something so valuable? It helps the earth and the seasons bring forth and increase everything useful to us. It helps nourish us ourselves, and mixed with all our foods it makes them easier to digest, more beneficial, and more pleasant. And since we need it most of all, they supply it most abundantly." "That too," he said, "shows forethought."

4.3.7 "And what about their providing us with fire, a defense against cold and a defense against darkness, a helper in every craft and in everything people make for their benefit? To put it briefly, people make nothing worth mentioning among the things useful for life without fire." "That too," he said, "is a surpassing kindness to humanity."

4.3.8 "And what about the sun? After it turns in winter, it draws near, ripening some things and drying up others whose season is past. Having done this, it comes no closer, but turns back, careful not to harm us by heating us more than it should. And when, going away again, it reaches the point where even we can see that if it goes any farther we'll freeze solid from the cold, it turns once more and approaches, and reverses its course in just that part of the sky where it would benefit us most." "Yes, by Zeus," he said, "this too looks entirely as if it happens for the sake of human beings."

4.3.9 "And since this too is obvious, that we couldn't bear either the heat or the cold if it came on suddenly, the sun approaches so gradually and departs so gradually that we pass into the extremes of each without noticing?" "For my part," said Euthydemus, "I'm already wondering whether the gods have any other work at all than caring for human beings. Only one thing holds me back: the other animals share in these things too."

4.3.10 "Well, isn't this obvious too," said Socrates, "that these animals are also born and raised for the sake of human beings? What other creature gets as much good out of goats and sheep and cattle and horses and donkeys and the other animals as human beings do? More, it seems to me, than from plants. At any rate, people feed themselves and make money from animals no less than from plants. A large part of mankind doesn't use what grows from the earth for food at all, but lives on the milk and cheese and meat of their herds. And everyone tames and breaks the useful animals and uses them as helpers in war and in many other things." "I agree with you on this too," he said, "for I see that even those of them that are far stronger than we are become so subject to human beings that people use them however they like."

4.3.11 "And what about this: since there are many fine and beneficial things, but they differ from one another, they've given human beings senses suited to each, through which we enjoy all good things. And they've implanted reason in us, by which we reason and remember about what we perceive, and so learn how each thing is advantageous, and devise many means of enjoying good things and warding off bad ones;

4.3.12 and they've given us language too, through which we share all good things with one another by teaching, and live in communities, and make laws, and govern ourselves as citizens?" "It looks altogether, Socrates, as though the gods take great care of human beings." "And what about this: where we're unable to foresee what will be advantageous in the future, there they themselves come to our aid, telling those who inquire through divination what will come about, and teaching them how things would turn out best?" "With you, Socrates," he said, "they seem to deal even more like friends than with other people, if they signal to you beforehand what you should do and what not, without your even asking them."

4.3.13 "And that I'm telling the truth you too will recognize, if you don't wait until you see the shapes of the gods, but are content to see their works and so revere and honor them. Reflect

that the gods themselves point the way to this. The others, when they give us good things, never come into plain view to give any of them. And the one who orders and holds together the whole universe, in which all things are fine and good, who keeps it always unworn and healthy and ageless for those who use it, serving him without error and faster than thought—he is seen accomplishing the greatest works, but as he manages them he is invisible to us.

4.3.14 "Reflect too that the sun, who seems to be plain for all to see, doesn't allow people to look at him closely; if anyone shamelessly tries to stare at him, he takes away his sight. And you'll find that the servants of the gods are invisible too. That the thunderbolt is hurled from above is clear, and that it overpowers whatever it strikes; yet it isn't seen as it comes, or as it strikes, or as it goes. The winds, too, aren't seen themselves, but what they do is plain to us, and we feel them as they approach. And then there is the human soul, which, if anything human does, shares in the divine: that it rules within us is plain, but it too is not seen. Anyone who takes these things to heart should not despise what is invisible, but learn its power from what happens, and honor the divine."

4.3.15 "For my part, Socrates," said Euthydemus, "I know clearly that I won't neglect the divine in the slightest. But what disheartens me is that I don't think any human being could ever repay the gods' benefits with the gratitude they deserve."

4.3.16 "Don't be disheartened about that, Euthydemus," he said. "You see that the god at Delphi, when someone asks him how he can win the favor of the gods, answers: 'By the law of your city.' And the law everywhere, surely, is to please the gods with sacrifices as far as one is able. So how could anyone honor the gods more finely or more piously than by doing as they themselves command?

4.3.17 "But one must not fall short of one's means in the least; for when someone does that, he is plainly not honoring the gods at that moment. So whoever falls short in nothing, but honors the gods as far as he is able, should take heart and hope for the

greatest goods. For no one would be sensible in hoping for greater things from anyone other than those who are able to benefit us most, or in hoping for them in any other way than by pleasing them; and how could he please them more than by obeying them as fully as he can?"

4.3.18 By saying such things, then, and acting this way himself, he made his companions more pious and more sensible.

CHAPTER 4

Socrates obeyed the laws all his life, and he argues with Hippias that the lawful is the just.

4.4.1 As for justice, he didn't hide the view he held, but demonstrated it in action too. In private, he dealt with everyone lawfully and helpfully; in public, he obeyed the authorities in whatever the laws commanded, both in the city and on campaign, so that his good discipline made him stand out from everyone else;

4.4.2 and when he was presiding over the Assembly, he would not allow the people to vote against the laws, but with the laws on his side stood up to a surge of popular feeling that I don't think any other man would have withstood;[6]

4.4.3 and when the Thirty ordered him to do something against the laws, he would not obey. When they forbade him to converse with the young, and when they ordered him and some other citizens to arrest a man to be put to death, he alone refused, because the order he had been given was against the laws;

4.4.4 and when he was defending himself against the indictment brought by Meletus, though others were accustomed in the courts to speak so as to win the jurors' favor, and to flatter them and plead with them in violation of the laws, and many were often acquitted by the jurors for that sort of thing, he refused to do any of the things customary in court that were against the laws. He could easily have been acquitted by the jur-

6 The presiding officer (*epistatēs*) chaired the Assembly for a single day, chosen by lot; this was the trial of the generals in 406 BC (see 1.1.18).

ors if he had done even a little of this, but he chose to die abiding by the laws rather than to live by breaking them.

4.4.5 And he spoke this way too, often to others; but I know that once he also had a conversation of this kind about justice with Hippias of Elis. Hippias had come to Athens after a long absence, and he came upon Socrates telling some people how remarkable it was that if someone wants to have a person taught to be a cobbler or a carpenter or a smith or a horseman, he has no trouble knowing where to send him to get this—some say that if you want to make a horse or an ox just, the place is full of people who will teach it—but if someone wants either to learn what is just himself, or to have his son or household slave taught it, he doesn't know where he could go to get it.[7]

4.4.6 And Hippias, hearing this, said, as if mocking him: "What, Socrates, are you still saying the very same things I heard from you long ago?" And Socrates said, "Yes, Hippias, and what's even more dreadful, I'm not only always saying the same things, but saying them about the same things. You, perhaps, since you know so much, never say the same things about the same things."

4.4.7 "Certainly," he said, "I always try to say something new." "Even about things you know?" he said. "For instance, if someone asks you about letters—how many there are in 'Socrates,' and which ones—do you try to say one thing before and another now? Or about numbers, when people ask whether twice five is ten, don't you give the same answer now as before?" "About these things, Socrates," he said, "I always say the same, just as you do. But about justice I'm quite sure I now have something to say that neither you nor anyone else could contradict."

4.4.8 "By Hera," he said, "you're claiming to have found a great good, if jurors are going to stop splitting their votes, and citizens are going to stop disputing and suing and fighting factional battles over what's just, and cities are going to stop quarreling and going to war over what's just. As for me, I don't see how I

7 Hippias of Elis was a famous sophist who claimed knowledge of almost every subject. A horse or ox was called "just" when it was well trained and obedient.

could leave you before I've heard what such a great good you've found."

4.4.9 "But no, by Zeus," he said, "you won't hear it until you've declared yourself what you think justice is. It's enough that you laugh at everyone else, questioning and refuting them all, while you yourself are never willing to give an account to anyone or declare your opinion about anything."

4.4.10 "What's that, Hippias?" he said. "Haven't you noticed that I never stop declaring what I think is just?" "And just what is this account of yours?" he said. "If not in words," he said, "then I declare it in deeds. Or don't you think deeds are more reliable evidence than words?" "Far more, by Zeus," he said. "Many people who say what's just do what's unjust, but no one who does what's just could be unjust."

4.4.11 "Then have you ever noticed me giving false testimony, or bringing malicious prosecutions, or throwing friends or the city into faction, or doing anything else unjust?" "No, I haven't," he said. "And don't you consider keeping away from unjust acts to be just?" "It's clear, Socrates," he said, "that even now you're trying to escape declaring your view of what justice is. You're telling us not what just people do, but what they don't do."

4.4.12 "Well, I thought," said Socrates, "that being unwilling to do wrong was proof enough of justice. But if you don't think so, see whether you like this better: I say that what is lawful is just." "Do you mean, Socrates, that lawful and just are the same thing?"

4.4.13 "I do," he said. "I ask because I can't make out what sort of thing you call lawful, or what sort just." "Do you know the laws of a city?" he said. "I do," he said. "And what do you take them to be?" "What the citizens," he said, "have agreed on and written down, about what they must do and what they must keep away from." "So," he said, "one who lives as a citizen in accordance with these would be lawful, and one who transgresses them lawless?" "Certainly," he said. "And wouldn't the one who obeys them do just things, and the one who disobeys them unjust things?" "Certainly." "And isn't the one who does just things just,

and the one who does unjust things unjust?" "Of course." "So the lawful man is just, and the lawless man unjust."

4.4.14 And Hippias said, "But Socrates, how could anyone think laws are a serious matter, or obeying them either, when the very people who made them often reject them and change them?" "Yes, and cities often take up war," said Socrates, "and then make peace again." "They certainly do," he said. "So do you think you're doing anything different," he said, "when you belittle those who obey the laws because the laws might be repealed, from what you'd be doing if you criticized those who keep good discipline in war because peace might come? Or do you also find fault with those who eagerly come to the defense of their native lands in war?" "No, by Zeus, I don't," he said.

4.4.15 "And Lycurgus the Spartan," said Socrates, "have you grasped that he wouldn't have made Sparta any different from other cities if he hadn't, above all, instilled obedience to the laws in it? And among those who hold office in cities, don't you know that the ones who do most to make the citizens obey the laws are the best? And that a city where the citizens obey the laws most fares best in peace and is irresistible in war?"[8]

4.4.16 "And then there's concord. It's thought to be the greatest good for cities, and very often in them the councils of elders and the best men urge the citizens to be of one mind. Everywhere in Greece there's a law that citizens swear to be of one mind, and everywhere they swear this oath. I don't think this happens so that the citizens will judge the same choruses best, or praise the same pipe-players, or choose the same poets, or enjoy the same things. It happens so that they'll obey the laws. When the citizens abide by these, cities become very strong and very prosperous. Without concord, no city could be governed well and no household run well.

4.4.17 "And in private life, how could anyone be less likely to be penalized by the city, or more likely to be honored, than by obeying the laws? How could he be less likely to lose in the

8 Lycurgus was the legendary lawgiver credited with founding Sparta's laws and way of life.

courts, or more likely to win? Whom would anyone more readily trust with a deposit, whether money or sons or daughters? Whom would the whole city consider more trustworthy than the law-abiding man? From whom would parents or relatives or household slaves or friends or fellow citizens or foreigners more likely get just treatment? Whom would enemies more readily trust with an armistice, a truce, or a peace treaty? Whose allies would people rather become than the law-abiding man's? And to whom would allies more readily entrust command, or a garrison, or cities? Whom would anyone who'd done a kindness more confidently expect to receive gratitude from than the law-abiding man? "Or whom would anyone rather do a kindness for than the one he expects to get gratitude back from? Whose friend would anyone rather be than such a man's, or whose enemy less? Whom would anyone be less inclined to make war on than the man whose friend he'd most want to be and whose enemy he'd least want to be, the man the greatest number would want to be friends and allies with, and the fewest would want to be enemies and opponents of?

4.4.18 "So I, Hippias, declare that the lawful and the just are the same thing. If you think the opposite, teach me." And Hippias said, "No, by Zeus, Socrates, I don't think I hold the opposite of what you've said about the just."

4.4.19 "And do you know of certain unwritten laws, Hippias?" he said. "Yes, the ones observed in the same way in every land," he said. "Could you say, then, that human beings laid them down?" "How could they," he said, "when they couldn't all meet in one place and don't even speak the same language?" "Then who do you think laid down these laws?" he said. "I think," he said, "that the gods laid down these laws for human beings. After all, the first thing observed among all people is to revere the gods."

4.4.20 "And isn't honoring parents also observed everywhere?" "That too," he said. "And also that parents shouldn't have intercourse with their children, or children with their parents?" "That one, Socrates," he said, "no longer looks to me like a law

from a god." "Why not?" he said. "Because," he said, "I notice some people breaking it."

4.4.21 "Yes, and they break plenty of other laws too," he said. "But those who transgress the laws laid down by the gods pay a penalty that no human being can escape by any means. It's not like the laws laid down by human beings, which some people break and still escape paying the penalty, some by not getting caught, others by force."

4.4.22 "And what penalty, Socrates," he said, "is it that parents and children who have intercourse with each other can't escape?" "The greatest, by Zeus," he said. "What worse could happen to people producing children than producing them badly?"

4.4.23 "But how do these people produce children badly," he said, "when nothing stops them, if they're good themselves, from having children by good partners?" "Because, by Zeus," he said, "people who have children by each other mustn't only be good, they must also be in their bodily prime. Or do you think the seed of those in their prime is like the seed of those not yet in their prime, or of those past it?" "No, by Zeus," he said, "it's not likely to be alike." "Which is better, then?" he said. "Obviously that of those in their prime," he said. "So that of those not in their prime isn't sound?" "Not likely, by Zeus," he said. "So that isn't the way to have children?" "Certainly not," he said. "So those who have children that way have them as they shouldn't?" "I think so," he said. "Then who else would be having children badly," he said, "if not these?" "I agree with you on this too," he said.

4.4.24 "What about this? Isn't it lawful everywhere to repay kindness to those who treat you well?" "It is lawful," he said, "but this one gets broken too." "And don't those who break it pay a penalty, by losing good friends and being forced to chase after people who hate them? Isn't it true that those who treat well the people who deal with them are good friends, while those who don't repay such people are hated by them for their ingratitude, and yet, because it pays best to have dealings with such people,

they chase after them most of all?" "By Zeus, Socrates," he said, "all this does look like the work of gods. For the laws to carry within them the punishment for those who break them seems to me the mark of a lawgiver better than any human."

4.4.25 "Then do you think, Hippias, that the gods legislate what is just, or something other than what is just?" "Nothing other, by Zeus," he said. "Hardly anyone else could legislate what is just, if not a god." "So the gods too, Hippias, are pleased to have the just and the lawful be the same." [By saying and doing such things he made those who spent time with him more just.]

CHAPTER 5

Socrates argues with Euthydemus that self-control brings freedom, true pleasure and skill in discussion.

4.5.1 Now I'll describe how he also made his companions more capable of action. He believed that self-control is a good thing for anyone who means to accomplish anything fine. So, first, he himself was plainly, to those around him, the most rigorously trained of all people in it. Then, in conversation, he urged his companions toward self-control above all else.

4.5.2 He was constantly mindful himself of what is useful for excellence, and he kept reminding all his companions of it. I know that he once had a conversation [with Euthydemus] about self-control that went like this: "Tell me, Euthydemus," he said, "do you think freedom is a fine and magnificent possession, both for a man and for a city?" "As fine as anything can be," he said.

4.5.3 "Then someone who is ruled by the pleasures of the body and can't do what is best because of them—do you think he's free?" "Not in the least," he said. "Perhaps because doing what is best looks to you like what a free man does, and so having people who'll stop you from doing such things seems to you unworthy of a free man?"

4.5.4 "Exactly," he said. "So the uncontrolled seem to you to be utterly unfree?" "Yes, by Zeus, and naturally so." "And do the

uncontrolled seem to you only to be prevented from doing the finest things, or also forced to do the most shameful?" "They seem to me," he said, "to be forced into the one no less than they're prevented from the other."

4.5.5 "And what sort of masters do you consider those who prevent the best things and compel the worst?" "The worst possible, by Zeus," he said. "And what kind of slavery do you think is worst?" "I'd say," he said, "slavery under the worst masters." "So the uncontrolled are slaves in the worst slavery?"

4.5.6 "I think so," he said. "And doesn't it seem to you that lack of self-control shuts people off from wisdom, the greatest good, and drives them into its opposite? Don't you think it keeps them from paying attention to what benefits them and learning it, by dragging them off toward what's pleasant—and often, when they can tell good from bad, it stuns them and makes them choose the worse instead of the better?" "That does happen," he said.

4.5.7 "And moderation, Euthydemus—who would we say has less to do with it than the uncontrolled person? After all, the works of moderation and of lack of self-control are exact opposites." "I agree to that too," he said. "And do you think anything gets more in the way of taking care of what one should than lack of self-control?" "No, I don't," he said. "And do you think there's anything worse for a human being than what makes him prefer the harmful to the beneficial, persuades him to take care of the one and neglect the other, and forces him to do the opposite of what sensible people do?"

4.5.8 "Nothing," he said. "So isn't it likely that self-control produces in people the opposite effects from lack of self-control?" "Certainly," he said. "And isn't what produces the opposites likely to be the best thing?" "Yes, it's likely," he said. "So it seems, Euthydemus," he said, "that self-control is the best thing for a human being?"

4.5.9 "Naturally, Socrates," he said. "But have you ever thought about this, Euthydemus?" "What?" he said. "That even to pleasure—the one place lack of self-control seems to lead people—it can't lead them, whereas self-control makes people enjoy

things more than anything does." "How so?" he said. "Lack of self-control won't let people endure hunger or thirst or sexual desire or lack of sleep. Yet these are the only ways to eat and drink and make love with pleasure, and to rest and sleep with pleasure, by waiting and holding out until these things are as pleasant as they can be. So it prevents people from taking any pleasure worth mentioning in the most necessary and constant things. Self-control alone makes them endure the things I've mentioned, and so it alone makes them take a pleasure worth remembering in those same things." "Absolutely," he said. "What you say is true."

4.5.10 "And then there's learning something fine and good, and devoting yourself to some such pursuit—the kind of thing that lets a person look after his own body well, manage his own household well, be useful to his friends and his city, and get the better of his enemies, all of which bring not only benefits but also the greatest pleasures. The self-controlled enjoy these things as they practice them, while the uncontrolled have no share in any of them. For who would we say has less to do with such things than the person least able to practice them, held fast as he is by his eagerness for the pleasures closest at hand?"

4.5.11 And Euthydemus said, "Socrates, you seem to me to be saying that a man who is overcome by the pleasures of the body has nothing whatever to do with any excellence." "Well, Euthydemus," he said, "how does an uncontrolled human being differ from the stupidest beast? Someone who doesn't consider what is best, but seeks by every means to do what is most pleasant—how would he differ from the most senseless grazing animals? Only the self-controlled can consider what is best in things, and, sorting them by kinds in word and in deed, choose the good and keep away from the bad."

4.5.12 And this, he said, is how men become best and happiest and most capable in discussion. He said that the very word "discuss" got its name from people meeting together and deliberating in common, sorting things out by kinds. So one should try to make oneself as ready for this as possible and care about it

above all, since this is what makes men best, most fit to lead, and most skilled in discussion.[9]

CHAPTER 6

Socrates and Euthydemus define piety, justice, wisdom, the good, the beautiful and courage.

4.6.1 I'll also try to describe how he made his companions more skilled in discussion. Socrates believed that those who know what each thing is could also explain it to others, while as for those who don't know, he said it was no wonder that they go wrong themselves and lead others wrong. That's why he never stopped examining, together with his companions, what each thing is. To go through all the ways he defined things would be a long task; I'll mention as many as I think will show his method of inquiry.

4.6.2 First, on piety, his inquiry went something like this: "Tell me, Euthydemus," he said, "what sort of thing do you think piety is?" And he said, "A very fine thing, by Zeus." "Can you say, then, what sort of person the pious man is?" "I'd say," he said, "the one who honors the gods." "And can you honor the gods in any way you like?" "No, there are laws according to which one must honor the gods."

4.6.3 "So the one who knows these laws would know how one must honor the gods?" "I think so," he said. "And does the one who knows how one must honor the gods think he must do it in any way other than the way he knows?" "Certainly not," he said. "And does anyone honor the gods in a way other than the way he thinks he must?"

4.6.4 "I don't think so," he said. "So the one who knows what is lawful concerning the gods would honor the gods lawfully?" "Certainly." "And the one who honors lawfully honors as one should?" "Of course." "And the one who honors as one should is pious?" "Certainly," he said. "So the one who knows what is law-

9 Socrates plays on the Greek *dialegesthai*, "to converse, discuss," and *dialegein*, "to sort out, separate," which look like the same word.

ful concerning the gods would be correctly defined by us as pious?" "I think so, at any rate," he said.

4.6.5 "And can you deal with human beings in any way you like?" "No: concerning them too there are lawful practices [—and the one who knows them], according to which one must [deal with one another, would be law-abiding]." "So those who deal with one another according to these deal as they should?" "Of course." "And those who deal as they should deal well?" "Certainly," he said. "And those who deal well with human beings handle human affairs well?" "That's likely," he said. "And those who obey the laws do what is just?"

4.6.6 "Certainly," he said. "And do you know what sort of things are called just?" "What the laws command," he said. "So those who do what the laws command do what is just and what they should?" "Of course." "And those who do what is just are just?" "I think so," he said. "Do you think, then, that anyone obeys the laws without knowing what the laws command?" "No, I don't," he said. "And do you think anyone who knows what he must do thinks he mustn't do it?" "I don't think so," he said. "And do you know anyone who does something other than what he thinks he must?" "No, I don't," he said. "So those who know what is lawful concerning human beings do what is just?" "Certainly," he said. "And those who do what is just are just?" "Who else could be?" he said. "Then we'd be defining correctly if we defined the just as those who know what is lawful concerning human beings?" "I think so," he said.

4.6.7 "And what would we say wisdom is? Tell me, do the wise seem to you to be wise in what they know, or are some people wise in what they don't know?" "In what they know, obviously," he said. "How could anyone be wise in what he didn't know?" "So the wise are wise by knowledge?" "By what else," he said, "could anyone be wise, if not by knowledge?" "And do you think wisdom is anything other than that by which people are wise?" "No, I don't." "So knowledge is wisdom?" "I think so." "And do you think it's possible for a human being to know everything there is?" "No, by Zeus, not even the tiniest fraction of it." "So it

isn't possible for a human being to be wise in everything?" "No, by Zeus, certainly not," he said. "So whatever each person knows, in that he is also wise?" "I think so."

4.6.8 "Now, Euthydemus, should the good be looked into in the same way?" "How?" he said. "Do you think the same thing is beneficial to everyone?" "No, I don't." "Well then, don't you think that what's beneficial to one person is sometimes harmful to another?" "Very much so," he said. "And would you say the good is anything other than the beneficial?" "No, I wouldn't," he said. "So the beneficial is good for whomever it's beneficial to?" "I think so," he said.

4.6.9 "And the beautiful—could we put it some other way? Or is there something you call beautiful, whether a body or a vessel or anything else, that you know to be beautiful for every purpose?" "No, by Zeus, there isn't," he said. "So whatever each thing is useful for, isn't it fine to use each thing for that?" "Certainly," he said. "And is each thing beautiful for anything other than what it's fine to use it for?" "Not for a single other thing," he said. "So the useful is beautiful for whatever it's useful for?" "I think so," he said.

4.6.10 "And courage, Euthydemus—do you count it among the fine things?" "Among the very finest," he said. "So you don't think courage is useful for the smallest matters?" "No, by Zeus," he said, "for the greatest." "Then do you think that, when it comes to things that are terrible and dangerous, it's useful to be ignorant of them?" "Not in the least," he said. "So those who don't fear such things because they don't know what they are aren't courageous?" "No, by Zeus," he said, "otherwise plenty of madmen and cowards would be courageous." "And what about those who are afraid even of things that aren't terrible?" "Still less, by Zeus," he said. "Then do you consider those who are good when facing terrible and dangerous things courageous, and those who are bad cowardly?"

4.6.11 "Certainly," he said. "And do you think the good in such matters are any others than those able to handle them well?" "No, these," he said. "And the bad are those of a sort to handle

them badly?" "Who else?" he said. "And does each of them handle things the way they think they must?" "How else?" he said. "And do those who aren't able to handle them well know how one must handle them?" "Surely not," he said. "So those who know how one must handle them are also the ones able to?" "They alone," he said. "Well then, do those who haven't gone wrong handle such things badly?" "I don't think so," he said. "So those who handle them badly have gone wrong?" "That's likely," he said. "So those who know how to handle terrible and dangerous things well are courageous, and those who fail at this are cowardly?" "So they seem to me," he said.

4.6.12 Kingship and tyranny he considered both to be forms of rule, but he thought they differed from each other. Rule over willing people and in accordance with the laws of cities he considered kingship; rule over unwilling people, not in accordance with laws but however the ruler wished, he considered tyranny. And where offices are filled from among those who carry out what is lawful, he thought the constitution was an aristocracy; where they are filled on the basis of property assessments, a plutocracy; and where from everyone, a democracy.

4.6.13 If anyone contradicted him on some point without having anything clear to say, but claimed without proof that the person he himself was talking about was wiser, or more of a statesman, or braver, or something of that kind, Socrates would lead the whole discussion back to its basic assumption in something like this way:

4.6.14 "You say the man you praise is a better citizen than the one I praise?" "Yes, I do." "Then why don't we first look at this: what is the job of a good citizen?" "Let's do that." "In managing finances, then, wouldn't the one who makes the city richer in funds come out ahead?" "Certainly." "And in war, the one who makes it stronger than its opponents?" "Of course." "And on an embassy, the one who wins friends in place of enemies?" "Likely so." "And in speaking before the people, the one who ends factional strife and creates concord?" "I think so." When the argu-

ments were led back in this way, the truth became plain even to those who were contradicting him.

4.6.15 Whenever he himself went through some subject in argument, he proceeded by way of what was most widely agreed, believing that this was what made an argument safe. As a result, of all the people I know, he was by far the best at getting his listeners to agree with him when he spoke. He said that Homer, too, credited Odysseus with being a "safe speaker," because he was able to lead his arguments through what people already accepted.

CHAPTER 7

Socrates teaches how far to study geometry, astronomy and arithmetic, and urges care for health.

4.7.1 That Socrates declared his own views plainly to those who spent time with him seems to me clear from what I have said. Now I will show how he also made sure that they were self-sufficient in the activities proper to them. Of everyone I know, he cared most about finding out what each of his companions had real knowledge of. Among the things a true gentleman ought to know, whatever he knew himself he taught more eagerly than anyone. Whatever he had less experience of, he took them to people who knew it.

4.7.2 He also taught how far a properly educated man should become familiar with each subject. Geometry, for example, he said one should learn up to the point where one could, if ever the need arose, measure out land correctly when taking it over, handing it over or dividing it up, or work out the labor done on it. This, he said, was so easy to learn that anyone who paid attention to the measuring would go away knowing both how big the land was and how it is measured.

4.7.3 But he disapproved of studying geometry as far as the diagrams that are hard to understand. He said he couldn't see what use they were, though he was certainly not unfamiliar with

them himself. They were enough, he said, to use up a person's whole life and keep him from many other useful studies.

4.7.4 He also urged them to become familiar with astronomy, but here too only far enough to be able to tell the time of night, of the month and of the year, for journeys, voyages and keeping watch. For anything else that is done at night, or by the month, or by the year, they should have signs to go by, telling apart the divisions of those periods. These things too, he said, were easy to learn from night hunters, ship's pilots and many others whose business it is to know them.

4.7.5 But he strongly discouraged studying astronomy so far as to learn even about the bodies that do not move in the same revolution, the planets and the stars that wander unpredictably, and wearing oneself out investigating their distances from the earth, their periods and their causes. Here too he said he could see no benefit at all, though he had certainly heard about these matters as well. These too, he said, were enough to use up a person's life and keep him from many useful things.

4.7.6 In general he discouraged anyone from brooding over the heavens and how the god contrives each thing there. He didn't think these things could be discovered by human beings, and he didn't believe that someone who inquired into what the gods had not wished to make clear would please them. He said that a person who fretted over such things risked losing his mind, just as Anaxagoras lost his. Anaxagoras was the man who thought most highly of his own mind for explaining the gods' contrivances.[10]

4.7.7 When he said that fire and the sun were the same thing, he failed to see that people can look at fire easily but cannot look straight at the sun. He also missed that people's skin turns darker when the sun shines on them, while fire has no such effect. He failed to see, too, that nothing growing from the earth can thrive without the sun's light, whereas everything heated by

10 Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, a fifth-century BC philosopher who lived in Athens, was prosecuted for impiety for claiming, among other things, that the sun was a fiery stone.

fire perishes. And when he declared that the sun was a red-hot stone, he failed to see this as well: a stone in a fire neither shines nor lasts long, while the sun goes on for all time as the brightest of all things.

4.7.8 He also urged them to learn arithmetic. But here too, as with the other subjects, he told them to steer clear of pointless labor. As far as it was useful, he examined everything himself together with his companions and worked it through with them.

4.7.9 He also strongly urged his companions to look after their health. They should learn what they could from those who knew, and each should pay attention to himself all his life: what food or drink or what kind of exercise suited him, and how he should use them to live most healthily. Someone who paid attention to himself in this way, he said, would be hard put to find a doctor who could tell better [than he himself] what was good for his health.

4.7.10 And if anyone wanted more help than human wisdom can give, he advised him to take up divination. Someone who knew the means by which the gods give human beings signs about their affairs, he said, would never be left without the gods' counsel.

CHAPTER 8

Socrates faces trial and death calmly, explaining why he prepared no defense; Xenophon gives his verdict.

4.8.1 Socrates claimed that the divine sign told him in advance what he should and should not do, and yet he was condemned to death by the jurors. If anyone thinks this proves he was lying about the divine sign, let him consider two things. First, he was already so far on in years that, if not then, he would have ended his life not much later. Second, he left behind the most burdensome part of life, when everyone's mind declines. In its place he showed the strength of his soul and won a fine reputation besides. He spoke in his own defense more truthfully, more

freely and more justly than anyone, and he bore his death sentence more gently and more bravely than anyone.

4.8.2 Everyone agrees that no human being on record ever faced death more nobly. He had to live for thirty days after the trial, because the Delian festival fell in that month, and the law allows no one to be publicly executed until the sacred delegation returns from Delos. Throughout that time all his friends could see that he lived no differently from before. And before, he had been admired more than anyone for living cheerfully and contentedly.[11]

4.8.3 How could anyone die more finely than that? What death could be finer than the one in which a person dies most finely? What death could be happier than the finest one? Or dearer to the gods than the happiest?

4.8.4 I will also tell what I heard about him from Hermogenes, the son of Hipponicus. He said that after Meletus had already brought the indictment against Socrates, he heard Socrates discussing everything except the trial. So he told him that he ought to be thinking about what he would say in his defense. At first Socrates said, "Don't you think I've spent my whole life practicing for that?" When Hermogenes asked him how, Socrates said that he had spent his life doing nothing but examining what is just and what is unjust, doing what is just and keeping away from what is unjust. That, he believed, was the finest practice for a defense.

4.8.5 Hermogenes said he then spoke up again: "Don't you see, Socrates, that Athenian juries have often been carried away by a speech and put to death men who had done no wrong, and have often acquitted men who had?" "Yes, by Zeus, Hermogenes," Socrates said, "and when I did start to think about my defense before the jurors, the divine sign opposed me."

4.8.6 Hermogenes said, "That's an astonishing thing to say." And Socrates replied: Are you astonished that the god thinks it better for me to end my life now? Don't you know that up to now I

11 Each year Athens sent a sacred delegation to Apollo's festival on the island of Delos, and the city had to stay ritually pure, with no executions, until it returned.

wouldn't have granted to anyone that he had lived a better or a more pleasant life than I have? I think the people who live best are those who take the greatest care to become as good as possible. And the people who live most pleasantly are those who most clearly perceive that they are getting better.

SOCRATES 4.8.7 That is what I have perceived happening to me up to now. Whenever I met other people and compared myself with them, I went on judging myself this way. And not only I: my friends, too, go on feeling this way about me. It isn't because they love me, since people who love others would feel the same about their own friends. It's because they believe that they themselves become their best by spending time with me.

4.8.8 If I live longer, I may well have to pay the dues of old age. I'll see and hear less and think less well. I'll become slower to learn and more forgetful, and I'll get worse at the things I used to be better at. If I didn't notice this happening, life wouldn't be worth living. And if I did notice it, how could I help living a worse and less pleasant life?

4.8.9 And if I die unjustly, surely that will be shameful for those who unjustly kill me. If doing wrong is shameful, how can doing anything at all unjustly not be shameful too? But why should it be shameful for me that others can neither recognize nor do what is just where I'm concerned?

4.8.10 I see that the people of the past leave behind a different reputation among those who come after them, depending on whether they did wrong or were wronged. I know that I too will be remembered, even if I die now, and not in the same way as those who killed me. I know it will always be said in my favor that I never wronged any human being or made anyone worse, and that I always tried to make those who spent time with me better. That was the substance of his conversations with Hermogenes and with the others.

4.8.11 Of those who knew what sort of man Socrates was, all who strive for excellence still miss him more than anyone, even now, because he did more than anyone to help them pursue excellence. He was the man I have described. He was so pious

that he did nothing without the gods' approval. He was so just that he never did anyone even the slightest harm, but brought the greatest benefits to those who associated with him. He was so self-controlled that he never chose the more pleasant over the better. He was so understanding that he never went wrong in judging between better and worse, and he needed no one else, but was self-sufficient in knowing such things. He was able to state such matters in words and to define them. And he was able to test others, to refute them when they went wrong, and to turn them toward excellence and toward being true gentlemen. To me, at any rate, he seemed to be the kind of man who would be both the best and the happiest of men. If anyone is not satisfied with this, let him compare other men's characters with his and judge accordingly.