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Euthydemus

Cri.

Who was it, Socrates, that you were talking with yesterday at the Lyceum? Why, there was such a crowd standing about you that when I came up in the hope of listening I could hear nothing distinctly: still, by craning over I got a glimpse, and it appeared to me that it was a stranger with whom you were talking. Who was he?

Soc.

About which are you asking, Crito? There were two of them, not one.

Cri.

The man whom I mean was sitting next but one to you, on your right: between you was Axiochus' boy; and he, Socrates, seemed to me to have grown a great deal, so as to look almost the same age as my Critobulus, who is rather puny whereas this boy has come on finely, and has a noble air about him.

Soc.

Euthydemus is the person to whom you refer, Crito, and the one sitting on my left was his brother, Dionysodorus. He too takes part in our discussions.

Cri.

Neither of them is known to me, Socrates. A pair of fresh additions, I suppose, to our sophists. Where do they hail from, and what science do they profess?

Soc.

By birth I believe they belong to these parts, that is to say, Chios; they went out as colonists to Thurii, but have been exiled thence and have spent a good many years now in various parts of this country. As to

what you ask of their profession, it is a wonderful one, Crito. These two men are absolutely omniscient: I never knew before what "all-round sportsmen"[1] were. They are a pair of regular all-round fighters—not in the style of the famous all-round athletes, the two brothers of Acamania; they could fight with their bodies only. But these two, in the first place, are most formidable in body and in fight against all comers

Soc.

—for they are not only well skilled themselves in fighting under arms, but are able to impart that skill, for a fee, to another; and further, they are most competent also to fight the battle of the law-courts and teach others how to speak, or to have composed for them, such speeches as may win their suits. Formerly they had merely some ability for this; but now they have put the finishing touch to their skill as all-round sportsmen. The one feat of fighting yet unperformed by them they have now accomplished, so that nobody dares stand up to them for a moment; such a faculty they have acquired for wielding words as their weapons and confuting any argument as readily if it be true as if it be false. And so I, Crito, am minded to place myself in these two gentlemen's hands; for they say it would take them but a little while to make anyone else clever in just the same way.

Cri.

What, Socrates! Are you not afraid, at your time of life, that you may be too old for that now?

Soc.

Not at all, Crito: I have enough proof and reassurance to the contrary. These same two persons were little less than old men at the time of their taking up this science, which I desire to have, of disputation. Last year, or the year before, they were as yet without their science. The only thing I am afraid of is that I may bring the same disgrace upon our two visitors as upon Connus, son of Metrobius, the harper, who is still trying to teach me the harp; so that the boys who go to his lessons with me make fun of me and call Connus "the gaffers' master." This makes me fear that someone may make the same reproach to the two strangers; and, for aught I know, their dread of this very thing may make them unwilling to accept me. So, Crito, just as in the other case I have persuaded some elderly men to come and have lessons with me, in this affair I am going to try and persuade another set. Now you, I

[1] The phrase refers especially to a very vigorous sport which combined wrestling and boxing.

am sure, will come with me to school; and we will take your sons as a bait to entice them, for I have no doubt that the attraction of these young fellows will make them include us also in the class.

Cri.

I have no objection, Socrates, if you think fit to do so. But first you must explain to me what is the science these men profess, that I may know what it is we are going to learn.

Soc.

You shall be told at once; for I cannot plead that I did not give them my attention, since I not only attended closely but remember and will try to expound the whole thing from the beginning. By some providence I chanced to be sitting in the place where you saw me, in the undressing-room,[2] alone, and was just intending to get up and go; but the moment I did so, there came my wonted spiritual sign.[3]

Soc.

So I sat down again, and after a little while these two persons entered—Euthydemus and Dionysodorus—and accompanying them, quite a number, as it seemed to me, of their pupils: the two men came in and began walking round inside the cloister.[4] Hardly had they taken two or three turns, when in stepped Cleinias, who you say has come on so much, and you are right: behind him was a whole troop of lovers, and among them Ctesippus, a young fellow from Paeania, of gentle birth and breeding, except for a certain insolence of youth. So when Cleinias as he entered caught sight of me sitting there alone, he came straight across and sat beside me on my right, just as you say. Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, when they saw him, stood at first talking with each other, and casting an occasional glance at us—for my attention was fixed on them—but then one of them, Euthydemus, took a seat by the youth, and the other next to me on my left; the rest, where each happened to find one. So I greeted the two brothers, as not having seen them for some time; after that I said to Cleinias: My dear Cleinias, these two men, you know, are skilled not in little things, but in great. For they understand all about war,

[2]This gymnasium (the Lyceum) was a public one, open to persons of all ages, and was a common resort of Socrates and the sophists.

[3]Socrates believed that his conduct was occasionally guided by a spiritual voice or sign peculiar to himself. By Plato's account it was always negative, but the present instance shows how Xenophon might have some reason for saying that it was sometimes positive.

[4]The cloister ran round the central open court, and was reached by passing through the undressing-room.

that is, as much as is needful for him who is to be a good general; both the tactics and the strategy of armies, and all the teaching of troops under arms; and they can also enable one to get redress in the law courts for a wrong that one may have suffered. When I had said this, I saw they despised me for it, and they both laughed, looking at each other; then Euthydemus said: No, no, Socrates, we do not make those matters our business now; we deal with them as diversions. At this I wondered and said: Your business must be a fine one, if such great matters are indeed diversions to you; so I beseech you, tell me what this fine business is. Virtue, Socrates, he replied, is what we deem ourselves able to purvey in a pre-eminently excellent and speedy manner. Good heavens, I exclaimed, a mighty affair indeed! Where did you have the luck to pick it up? I was still considering you, as I remarked just now, to be chiefly skilled in fighting under arms, and so spoke of you in those terms: for when you visited, our city before, this, I recollect, was the profession you made.

Soc.

But if you now in truth possess this other knowledge, have mercy—you see I address you just as though you were a couple of gods, beseeching you to forgive my former remarks. But make sure, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, that you spoke the truth: for the vastness of your promise gives me some excuse for disbelieving. You may be sure, Socrates, they replied, it is as we say. Then I congratulate you on your acquisition far more than I do the great king on his empire: only tell me whether you intend to exhibit this science of yours, or what you have determined to do. We are here for the very purpose, Socrates, of exhibiting and expounding it to anyone who wishes to learn. Well, I guarantee that all who do not possess it will wish to—myself to begin with, then Cleinias here and, besides us, Ctesippus and all these others, I said, showing him the lovers of Cleinias, who were by this time standing about us. For Ctesippus, as it happened, was sitting some way from Cleinias, I noticed; and by chance, as Euthydemus leant forward in talking to me he obscured Ctesipus' view of Cleinias, who was between us. Then Ctesippus, desiring to gaze on his favorite and being also an eager listener, led the way by jumping up and placing himself opposite us; and this made the others, on seeing what he did, stand around us, both Cleinias' lovers and the followers of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. Pointing to these, I told Euthydemus that they were all ready to learn; to which Ctesippus assented with great eagerness, and so did the rest; and they all joined in urging the two men to exhibit the power of their wisdom. On this I remarked: My good Euthydemus and

Dionysodorus, you must do your very best to gratify my friends and, for my sake also, to give us an exhibition. To do it in full, of course, would obviously be a lengthy performance: but tell me one thing—will you be able to make a good man of him only who is already convinced that he should learn of you, or of him also who is not yet so convinced, owing to an absolute disbelief that virtue is a thing that can be learnt or that you are teachers of it? Come now, is it the business of this same art to persuade such a man that virtue is teachable and that you are the men of whom one may best learn it, or does this need some other art? No, this same one can do it, Socrates, said Dionysodorus.

Soc.

Then you two, Dionysodorus, I said, would be the best persons now on earth to incite one to the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of virtue? We think so, at least, Socrates. Well then, please defer the display of all the rest to some other occasion, I said, and exhibit this one thing. You are to persuade this young fellow here that he ought to ensue wisdom and practise virtue, and so you will oblige both me and all these present. This youth happens to be in just the sort of condition I speak of; and I and all of us here are at this moment anxious for him to become as good as possible. He is the son of Axiochus, son of the former Alcibiades,[5] and is own cousin to the Alcibiades that now is: his name is Cleinias. He is young; and so we have fears for him, as well one may for a young man, lest someone forestall us and turn his inclination to some other course of life, and so corrupt him. Hence your arrival now is most happy. Come now, if it is all the same to you, make trial of the lad and talk with him in our presence. When I had thus spoken, in almost these very words, Euthydemus answered in a tone both manly and dashing: Oh, it is all the same to us, Socrates, provided the youth is willing to answer us. Why, in fact, I said, that is just what he is used to: these people here are constantly coming to him and asking him a number of questions and debating with him, so he is a fairly fearless answerer. What ensued, Crito, how am I to relate in proper style? For no slight matter it is to be able to recall in description such enormous knowledge as theirs. Consequently, like the poets, I must needs begin my narrative with an invocation of the Muses and Memory. Well, Euthydemus set to work, so far as I remember, in terms very much the same as these: Cleinias, which sort of men are the learners, the wise or the foolish? At this the young man, feeling the embarrassment

[5]i.e. the famous Alcibiades, who died in 404 B.C. at the age of 44. The supposed time of this discussion must be a year or two before Socrates' death (399 B.C.).

of the question, blushed and glanced at me in his helplessness. So I, perceiving his confusion, said: Have no fear, Cleinias; answer bravely, whichever you think it is: for perchance he is doing you the greatest service in the world. Meanwhile Dionysodorus leant over a little to me, with a broad smile on his face, and whispered in my ear: Let me tell you, Socrates, beforehand that, whichever way the lad answers, he will be confuted.

Soc.

While he was saying this, Cleinias made his reply, so that I was unable even to advise the boy to be wary: he replied that it was the wise who were the learners. Then Euthydemus asked: And are there persons whom you call teachers, or not? He agreed that there were. And the teachers of the learners are teachers in the same way as your lute-master and your writing-master, I suppose, were teachers of you and the other boys, while you were pupils? He assented. Now, of course, when you were learning, you did not yet know the things you were learning? No, he said. So were you wise, when you did not know those things? No, to be sure, he said. Then if not wise, foolish? Certainly. So when you learnt what you did not know, you learnt while being foolish. To this the lad nodded assent. Hence it is the foolish who learn, Cleinias, and not the wise, as you suppose. When he had thus spoken, all those followers of Dionysodorus and Euthydemus raised a cheer and a laugh, like a chorus at the signal of their director; and before the boy could fairly and fully recover his breath Dionysodorus took up the cudgels and said: Well now, Cleinias, whenever your writing-master dictated from memory, which of the boys learnt the piece recited, the wise or the foolish? The wise, said Cleinias. So it is the wise who learn, and not the foolish: hence the answer you gave just now to Euthydemus was a bad one. Thereupon arose a great deal of laughter and loud applause from the pair's adorers, in admiration of their cleverness; while we on our side were dismayed and held our peace. Then Euthydemus, observing our dismay, and seeking to astonish us still further, would not let the boy go, but went on questioning him and, like a skilful dancer, gave a twofold twist to his questions on the same point: Now, do the learners learn what they know, he asked, or what they do not? Then Dionysodorus whispered to me again softly: Here comes a second one, Socrates, just like the first. Heavens! I replied: surely the first question served you well enough. All our questions, Socrates, he said, are like that; they leave no escape. And consequently, as it seems to me, I remarked, you have this high repute among your disciples.

Soc.

Meanwhile Cleinias answered Euthydemus, that learners learnt what they did not know; so he had to meet the same course of questions as before: Well then, asked the other, do you not know your letters? Yes, he said. All of them? He admitted it. Now when anyone dictates some piece or other, does he not dictate letters? He admitted it. And he dictates things of which you know something, since you know all of them? He admitted this too. Well now, said the other, surely you do not learn whatever such a person dictates; it is rather he who does not know his letters that learns? No, he replied; I learn. Then you learn what you know, since you know all your letters. He agreed. So your answer was not correct, he said. The last word was hardly out of Euthydemus' mouth when Dionysodorus caught, as it were, the ball of the argument and, aiming at the boy again, said: Euthydemus is deceiving you, Cleinias. Tell me, is not learning the reception of knowledge of that which one learns? Cleinias agreed. And is not knowing, he went on, just having knowledge at the time? He assented. So that not knowing is not yet having knowledge? He agreed with him. Then are those who receive anything those who have it already, or those who have it not? Those who have it not. And you have admitted that those who do not know belong also to this class of those who have it not? He nodded assent. And the learners belong to the class of the receiving and not to that of the having? He agreed. Hence it is those who do not know that learn, Cleinias, and not those who know. Euthydemus was proceeding to press the youth for the third fall, when I, perceiving the lad was going under, and wishing to give him some breathing-space lest he should shame us by losing heart, encouraged him with these words: Cleinias, do not be surprised that these arguments seem strange to you; for perhaps you do not discern what our two visitors are doing to you. They are acting just like the celebrants of the Corybantic rites, when they perform the enthronement of the person whom they are about to initiate. There, as you know, if you have been through it, they have dancing and merrymaking: so here these two are merely dancing about you and performing their sportive gambols with a view to your subsequent initiation. You must now, accordingly, suppose you are listening to the first part of the professorial mysteries.

Soc.

First of all, as Prodicus says, you have to learn about the correct use of words—the very point that our two visitors are making plain to you, namely, that you were unaware that learning is the name which people apply on the one hand to the case of a man who, having originally no

knowledge about some matter, in course of time receives such knowledge; and on the other hand the same word is applied when, having the knowledge already, he uses that knowledge for the investigation of the same matter whether occurring in action or in speech. It is true that they tend rather to call it "understanding" than "learning", but occasionally they call it learning too; and this point, as our friends are demonstrating, has escaped your notice—how the same word is used for people who are in the opposite conditions of knowing and not knowing. A similar point underlay the second question, where they asked you whether people learn what they know, or what they do not. Such things are the sport of the sciences—and that is why I tell you these men are making game of you; I call it sport because, although one were to learn many or even all of such tricks, one would be not a whit the wiser as to the true state of the matters in hand, but only able to make game of people, thanks to the difference in the sense of the words, by tripping them up and overturning them; just as those who slyly pull stools away from persons who are about to sit down make merry and laugh when they see one sprawling on one's back. So far, then, you are to regard these gentlemen's treatment of you as mere play: but after this they will doubtless display to you their own serious object, while I shall keep them on the track and see that they fulfil the promise they gave me. They said they would exhibit their skill in exhortation; but instead, I conceive, they thought fit to make sport with you first. So now, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, let us have done with your sport: I daresay you have had as much as you want. What you have next to do is to give us a display of exhorting this youth as to how he should devote himself to wisdom and virtue. But first I shall explain to you how I regard this matter and how I desire to hear it dealt with. If I strike you as treating it in a crude and ridiculous manner, do not laugh me to scorn; for in my eagerness to listen to your wisdom I shall venture to improvise in your presence. So both you and your disciples must restrain yourselves and listen without laughing; and you, son of Axiochus, answer me this: Do all we human beings wish to prosper? Or is this question one of the absurdities I was afraid of just now? For I suppose it is stupid merely to ask such things, since every man must wish to prosper.

Soc.

Everyone in the world, said Cleinias. Well then, I asked, as to the next step, since we wish to prosper, how can we prosper? Will it

be if we have many good things? Or is this an even sillier question than the other? For surely this too must obviously be so. He agreed. Come now, of things that are, what sort do we hold to be really good? Or does it appear to be no difficult matter, and no problem for an important person, to find here too a ready answer? Anyone will tell us that to be rich is good, surely? Quite true, he said. Then it is the same with being healthy and handsome, and having the other bodily endowments in plenty? He agreed. Again, it is surely clear that good birth and talents and distinctions in one's own country are good things. He admitted it. Then what have we still remaining, I asked, in the class of goods? What of being temperate, and just, and brave? I bay you tell me, Cleinias, do you think we shall be right in ranking these as goods, or in rejecting them? For it may be that someone will dispute it. How does it strike you? They are goods, said Cleinias. Very well, I went on, and where in the troupe shall we station wisdom? Among the goods, or how? Among the goods. Then take heed that we do not pass over any of the goods that may deserve mention. I do not think we are leaving any out, said Cleinias. Hereupon I recollected one and said: Yes, by Heaven, we are on the verge of omitting the greatest of the goods. What is that? he asked. Good fortune, Cleinias: a thing which all men, even the worst fools, refer to as the greatest of goods. You are right, he said. Once again I reconsidered and said: We have almost made ourselves laughing-stocks, you and I, son of Axiochus, for our visitors. What is wrong now? he asked. Why, after putting good fortune in our former list, we have just been discussing the same thing again. What is the point? Surely it is ridiculous, when a thing has been before us all the time, to set it forth again and go over the same ground twice. To what are you referring? he asked. Wisdom, I replied, is presumably good fortune: even a child could see that. He wondered at this—he is still so young and simple-minded: then I, perceiving his surprise, went on: Can you be unaware, Cleinias, that for success in flute-music it is the flute-players that have the best fortune? He agreed to this. Then in writing and reading letters it will be the schoolmasters.[6] Certainly. Well now, for the dangers of a sea-voyage, do you consider any pilots to he more fortunate, as a general rule, than the wise ones? No, to be sure.

Soc.

Well, then, suppose you were on a campaign, with which kind of general

[6] *γραμματισταί* were the schoolmasters who taught reading and writing and explained the difficulties of Homer in primary education.

would you prefer to share both the peril and the luck—a wise one, or an ignorant? With a wise one. Well then, supposing you were sick, with which kind of doctor would you like to venture yourself a wise one, or an ignorant? With a wise one. And your reason, I said, is this, that you would fare with better fortune in the hands of a wise one than of an ignorant one? He assented. So that wisdom everywhere causes men to be fortunate: since I presume she could never err, but must needs be right in act and result; otherwise she could be no longer wisdom. We came to an agreement somehow or other in the end that the truth in general was this: when wisdom is present, he with whom it is present has no need of good fortune as well; and as we had agreed on this I began to inquire of him over again what we should think, in this case, of our previous agreements. For we agreed, said I, that if many goods were present to us we should be happy and prosper. Yes, he said. Then would we be happy because of our present goods, if they gave us no benefit, or if they gave us some? If they gave us benefit, he said. And would a thing benefit us if we merely had it and did not use it? For instance, if we had a lot of provisions, but did not eat them, or liquor, and did not drink it, could we be said to be benefited? Of course not, he answered. Well then, if every craftsman found the requisites for his particular work all ready prepared for him, and then made no use of them, would he prosper because of these acquisitions, as having acquired all the things necessary for a craftsman to have at hand? For example, if a carpenter were furnished with all his tools and a good supply of wood, but did no carpentry, is it possible he could be benefited by what he had got? By no means, he said. Well now, suppose a man had got wealth and all the goods that we mentioned just now, but made no use of them; would he be happy because of his possessing these goods? Surely not, Socrates. So it seems one must not merely have acquired such goods if one is to be happy, but use them too; else there is no benefit gained from their possession. True. Then have we here enough means, Cleinias, for making a man happy—in the possession of these goods and using them? I think so. Shall we say, I asked, if he uses them rightly, or just as much if he does not? If rightly.

Soc.

Well answered, I said; for I suppose there is more mischief when a man uses anything wrongly than when he lets it alone. In the one case there is evil; in the other there is neither evil nor good. May we not state it so? He agreed. To proceed then: in the working and use connected with wood, is there anything else that effects the right use than the knowledge of carpentry? Surely not, he said. Further, I

presume that in the working connected with furniture it is knowledge that effects the right work. Yes, he said. Then similarly, I went on, in the use of the goods we mentioned at first—wealth and health and beauty—was it knowledge that showed the way to the right use of all those advantages and rectified their conduct, or was it something else? Knowledge, he replied. So that knowledge, it would seem, supplies mankind not only with good luck, but with welfare, in all that he either possesses or conducts. He agreed. Then can we, in Heaven's name, get any benefit from all the other possessions without understanding and wisdom? Shall we say that a man will profit more by possessing much and doing much when he has no sense, than he will if he does and possesses little? Consider it this way: would he not err less if he did less; and so, erring less, do less ill; and hence, doing less ill, be less miserable? Certainly, he said. In which of the two cases, when one is poor or when one is rich, will one be more likely to do less? When one is poor, he said. And when one is weak, or when one is strong? Weak. And when one has high position, or has none? None. When one is brave and self-controlled, will one do less, or when one is a coward? A coward. So too, when idle rather than busy? He agreed. And slow rather than quick, and dim of sight and hearing rather than sharp? We agreed with each other as to these and all such cases. To sum up then, Cleinias, I proceeded, it seems that, as regards the whole lot of things which at first we termed goods, the discussion they demand is not on the question of how they are in themselves and by nature goods, but rather, I conceive, as follows: if they are guided by ignorance, they are greater evils than their opposites, according as they are more capable of ministering to their evil guide; whereas if understanding and wisdom guide them, they are greater goods; but in themselves neither sort is of any worth. I think the case appears, he replied, to be as you suggest. Now what result do we get from our statements? Is it not precisely that, of all the other things, not one is either good or bad, but of these two, wisdom is good and ignorance bad? He agreed.

Soc.

Let us consider then, I said, the further conclusion that lies before us. Since we are all eager to be happy, and since we were found to become so by not only using things but using them aright, while knowledge, we saw, was that which provided the rightness and good fortune, it seems that every man must prepare himself by all available means so that he may be as wise as possible. Is it not so? Yes, he said. And if a man thinks, as well he may, that he ought to get this endowment from his father much more than money, and also from his guardians and his

ordinary friends, and from those who profess to be his lovers, whether strangers or fellow-citizens—praying and beseeching them to give him his share of wisdom; there is no disgrace, Cleinias, or reprobation in making this a reason for serving and being a slave to either one's lover or any man, and being ready to perform any service that is honorable in one's eagerness to become wise. Is not this your view? I asked. I think you are perfectly right, he replied. Yes, Cleinias, I went on, if wisdom is teachable, and does not present itself to mankind of its own accord—for this is a question that we have still to consider as not yet agreed on by you and me. For my part, Socrates, he said, I think it is teachable. At this I was glad, and said: Well spoken indeed, my excellent friend! How good of you to relieve me of a long inquiry into this very point, whether wisdom is teachable or not teachable! So now, since you think it is both teachable and the only thing in the world that makes man happy and fortunate, can you help saying that it is necessary to pursue wisdom or intending to pursue it yourself? Why, said he, I do say so, Socrates, with all my might. So I, delighted to hear this, said: There, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, is my illustration of what I desire a hortatory argument to be—rough and ready, perhaps, and expressed at laborious length: now let either of you who wishes to do so give us an example of an artist's handling of this same matter. If you do not wish to do that, let your display begin where I left off, and show the lad whether he ought to acquire every kind of knowledge, or whether there is a single sort of it which one must obtain if one is to be both happy and a good man, and what it is. For as I was saying at the outset, it really is a matter of great moment to us that this youth should become wise and good.

Soc.

These were my words, Crito; and I set about giving the closest attention to what should follow, and observing in what fashion they would deal with the question, and how they would start exhorting the youth to practise wisdom and virtue. So then the elder of them, Dionysodorus, entered first upon the discussion, and we all turned our eyes on him expecting to hear, there and then, some wonderful arguments. And this result we certainly got; for wondrous, in a way, Crito, was the argument that the man then ushered forth, which is worth your hearing as a notable incitement to virtue. Tell me, Socrates, he said, and all you others who say you desire this youth to become wise, whether you say this in jest or truly and earnestly desire it. At this I reflected that previously, as it seemed, they took us to be jesting, when we urged them to converse with the youth, and hence they made a jest of it and

did not take it seriously. This reflection therefore made me insist all the more that we were in deadly earnest. Then Dionysodorus said: Yet be careful, Socrates, that you do not have to deny what you say now. I know what I am about, I said: I know I shall never deny it. Well now, he proceeded; you tell me you wish him to become wise? Certainly. And at present, he asked, is Cleinias wise or not? He says he is not yet so—he is no vain pretender. And you, he went on, wish him to become wise, and not to be ignorant? We agreed. So you wish him to become what he is not, and to be no longer what he now is. When I heard this I was confused; and he, striking in on my confusion, said: Of course then, since you wish him to be no longer what he now is, you wish him, apparently, to be dead. And yet what valuable friends and lovers they must be, who would give anything to know their darling was dead and gone! Ctesippus, on hearing this, was annoyed on his favorite's account, and said: Stranger of Thurii, were it not rather a rude thing to say, I should tell you, ill betide your design of speaking so falsely of me and my friends as to make out—what to me is almost too profane even to repeat—that I could wish this boy to be dead and gone!

Soc.

Why, Ctesippus, said Euthydemus, do you think it possible to lie? To be sure, I do, he replied: I should be mad otherwise. Do you mean, when one tells the thing about which one is telling, or when one does not? When one tells it, he said. Then if you tell it, you tell just that thing which you tell, of all that are, and nothing else whatever? Of course, said Ctesippus. Now the thing that you tell is a single one, distinct from all the others there are. Certainly. Then the person who tells that thing tells that which is? Yes. But yet, surely he who tells what is, and things that are, tells the truth: so that Dionysodorus, if he tells things that are, tells the truth and speaks no lie about you. Yes, said Ctesippus; but he who speaks as he did, Euthydemus, does not say things that are. Then Euthydemus asked him: And the things which are not, surely are not? They are not. Then nowhere can the things that are not be? Nowhere. Then is it possible for anyone whatever so to deal with these things that are not as to make them be when they are nowhere? I think not, said Ctesippus. Well now, when orators speak before the people, do they do nothing? No, they do something, he replied. Then if they do, they also make? Yes. Now, is speaking doing and making? He agreed that it is. No one, I suppose, speaks what is not—for thereby he would be making something; and you have agreed that one cannot so much as make what is not—so that, by your

account, no one speaks what is false, while if Dionysodorus speaks, he speaks what is true and is. Yes, in faith, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus; but somehow or other he speaks what is, only not as it is.[7] How do you mean, Ctesippus? said Dionysodorus. Are there persons who tell things as they are? Why surely, he replied, there are gentlemen—people who speak the truth? Well, he went on, good things are in good case, bad in bad, are they not? He assented. And you admit that gentlemen tell things as they are. I do. Then, Ctesippus, good people speak evil of evil things, if they speak of them as they are. Yes, I can tell you, very much so, when for instance they speak of evil men; among whom, if you take my advice, you will beware of being included, that the good may not speak ill of you. For, I assure you, the good speak ill[8] of the evil. And they speak greatly of the great, asked Euthydemus, and hotly of the hot? Certainly, I presume, said Ctesippus: I know they speak frigidly of the frigid, and call their way of arguing frigid. You are turning abusive, Ctesippus, said Dionysodorus, quite abusive!

Soc.

Not I, on my soul, Dionysodorus, for I like you: I am only giving you a friendly hint, and endeavoring to persuade you never to say anything so tactless in my presence as that I wish these my most highly valued friends to be dead and gone. So then I, observing that they were getting rather savage with each other, began to poke fun. at Ctesippus, saying: Ctesippus, my feeling is that we ought to accept from our visitors what they tell us, if they are so good as to give it, and should not quarrel over a word. For if they understand how to do away with people in such sort as to change them from wicked and witless to honest and intelligent, and that too whether they have discovered for themselves or learnt from somebody else this peculiar kind of destruction or undoing, which enables them to destroy a man in his wickedness and set him up again in honesty; if they understand this—and obviously they do; you know they said that their newly discovered art was to turn wicked men into good—let us then accord them this power; let them destroy the lad for us, and make him sensible, and all the rest of us likewise. If you young fellows are afraid, let the experiment be made on me as a "corpus vile"[9]; for I, being an elderly person, am ready to take the

[7] The quibbling throughout this passage is a willful confusion of the two very different uses of the verb "to be" (*εἶναι*), (a) in predication, where it has nothing to do with existence, and (b) by itself, as stating existence.

[8] Euthydemus seizes on the ambiguous use of *κακῶς* which may mean either badly or injuriously.

risk and put myself in the hands of Dionysodorus here, as if he were the famous Medea of Colchis. Let him destroy me, and if he likes let him boil me down, or do to me whatever he pleases: only he must make me good. Then Ctesippus said: I too, Socrates, am ready to offer myself to be skinned by the strangers even more, if they choose, than they are doing now, if my hide is not to end by being made into a wine-skin, like that of Marsyas,[10] but into the shape of virtue. And yet Dionysodorus here believes I am vexed with him. I am not vexed at all; I only contradict the remarks which I think he has improperly aimed at me. Come now, my generous Dionysodorus, do not call contradiction abuse: abuse is quite another thing. On this Dionysodorus said: As though there were such a thing as contradiction! Is that the way you argue, Ctesippus? Yes, to be sure, he replied, indeed I do; and do you, Dionysodorus, hold that there is not? Well, you at any rate, he said, could not prove that you had ever heard a single person contradicting another. Is that so? he replied: well, let us hear now whether I can prove a case of it—Ctesippus contradicting Dionysodorus. Now, will you make that good? Certainly, he said.

Soc.

Well then, proceeded the other, each thing that is has its own description? Certainly. Then do you mean, as each is, or as it is not? As it is. Yes, he said, for if you recollect, Ctesippus, we showed just now that no one speaks of a thing as it is not; since we saw that no one speaks what is not. Well, what of that? asked Ctesippus: are you and I contradicting any the less? Now tell me, he said, could we contradict if we both spoke the description of the same thing? In this case should we not surely speak the same words? He agreed. But when neither of us speaks the description of the thing, he asked, then we should contradict? Or in this case shall we say that neither of us touched on the matter at all? This also he admitted. Well now, when I for my part speak the description of the thing, while you give another of another thing, do we contradict then? Or do I describe the thing, while you do not describe it at all? How can he who does not describe contradict him who does?[11] At this Ctesippus was silent; but I, wondering at the

[9]Lit. a Carian slave.

[10]This satyr was fabled to have challenged Apollo to a musical contest, and on his fluting being judged inferior to Apollo's harping he was flayed alive by the god for his presumption, and his skin was hung up like a bag or bottle in a cave; cf. Herod. vii. 26.

[11]The argument is that, if we cannot speak what is not, or falsely, of a thing (this assumption being based on the old confusion of being with existence), there can be

argument, said: How do you mean, Dionysodorus? For, to be plain with you, this argument, though I have heard it from many people on various occasions, never fails to set me wondering—you know the followers of Protagoras made great use of it, as did others even before his time, but to me it always seems to have a wonderful way of upsetting not merely other views but itself also—and I believe I shall learn the truth of it from you far better than from anyone else. There is no such thing as speaking false—that is the substance of your statement, is it not? Either one must speak and speak the truth, or else not speak? He agreed. Then shall we say that speaking false "is not," but thinking false "is"? No, it is the same with thinking, he said. So neither is there any false opinion, I said, at all. No, he said. Nor ignorance, nor ignorant men; or must not ignorance occur, if it ever can, when we put things falsely? Certainly, he said. But there is no such thing as this, I said. No, he said. Is it merely to save your statement, Dionysodorus, that you state it so—just to say something startling—or is it really and truly your view that there is no such thing as an ignorant man? But you, he replied, are to refute me. Well, does your argument allow of such a thing as refutation, if there is nobody to speak false? There is no such thing, said Euthydemus. So neither did Dionysodorus just now bid me refute him? I asked. No, for how can one bid something that is not? Do you bid such a thing? Well, Euthydemus, I said, it is because I do not at all understand these clever devices and palpable hits: I am only a dull sort of thinker. And so I may perhaps be going to say something rather clownish; but you must forgive me.

Soc.

Here it is: if there is no such thing as speaking false or thinking false or being stupid, surely there can be no making a mistake either, when one does something. For in doing it there is no mistaking the thing that is done. You will state it so, will you not? Certainly, he said. My clownish question, I went on, is now already before you. If we make no mistake either in doing or saying or intending, I ask you what in Heaven's name, on that assumption, is the subject you two set up to teach. Or did you not say just now that your speciality was to put any man who wished in the way of learning virtue? Now really, Socrates, interposed Dionysodorus, are you such an old dotard as to recollect now what we said at first, and will you now recollect what I may have

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only one description of a thing in any given relation, and so there is no room for contradiction. This argument is commonly ascribed to Anthisthenes, the founder of the Cynic sect and opponent of Plato. It is not clear who exactly are meant by "the followers of Protagoras" or the "others before his time."

said last year, and yet be at a loss how to deal with the arguments urged at the moment? Well, you see, I replied, they are so very hard, and naturally so; for they fall from the lips of wise men; and this is further shown by the extreme difficulty of dealing with this last one you put forward. For what on earth do you mean, Dionysodorus, by saying I am at a loss how to deal with it? Or is it clear that you mean I am at a loss how to refute it? You must tell me what else your phrase can intend, "at a loss how to deal with the arguments". But it is not so very hard to deal with that phrase[12] of yours, he said. Just answer me. Before you answer me, Dionysodorus? I protested. You refuse to answer? he said. Is it fair? Oh yes, it is fair enough, he replied On what principle? I asked: or is it plainly on this one—that you present yourself to us at this moment as universally skilled in discussion, and thus can tell when an answer is to be given, and when not? So now you will not answer a word, because you discern that you ought not to. What nonsense you talk, he said, instead of answering as you should. Come, good sir, do as I bid you and answer, since you confess to my wisdom. Well then, I must obey, I said, and of necessity, it seems; for you are the master here. Now for your question. Then tell me, do things that "intend" have life when they intend, or do lifeless things do it too? Only those that have life. Now do you know any phrase that has life? Upon my soul, I do not. Why then did you ask just now what my phrase intended? Of course I made a great mistake, I said: I am such a dullard. Or perhaps it was not a mistake, and I was right in saying what I did, that phrases intend. Do you say I was mistaken or not?

Soc.

If I was not, then you will not refute me, with all your skill, and you are at a loss how to deal with the argument; while if I was mistaken, you are in the wrong there, too, for you assert that there is no such thing as making a mistake; and what I say is not aimed at what you said last year. But it seems, I went on, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, that our argument remains just where it was, and still suffers from the old trouble of knocking others down and then falling itself, and even your art has not yet discovered a way of avoiding this failure—in spite, too, of the wonderful show it makes of accurate reasoning. Here Ctesippus exclaimed: Yes, your way of discussion is marvellous, you men of Thurii or Chios[13] or wherever or however it is you are pleased

[12] i.e. *νοεῖ*, intend.

[13] Cf. above, *Plat. Euthyd. 271c.*

to get your names; for you have no scruple about babbling like fools. At this I was afraid we might hear some abuse, so I soothed Ctesippus down once more, saying: Ctesippus, I repeat to you what I said to Cleinias just now, that you do not perceive the wonderful nature of our visitors' skill. Only they are unwilling to give us a display of it in real earnest, but treat us to jugglers' tricks in the style of Proteus[14] the Egyptian adept. So let us take our cue from Menelaus,[15] and not leave hold of these gentlemen till they give us a sight of their own serious business. I believe something very fine will be found in them as soon as they begin to be serious. Come, let us beg and exhort and beseech them to let their light shine. For my part, then, I am minded to take the lead once more in showing what sort of persons I pray may be revealed in them: starting from where I left off before, I shall try, as best I can, to describe what follows on from that, to see if I can rouse them to action and make them, in merciful commensuration of my earnest endeavor, be earnest themselves. Will you, Cleinias, I asked, please remind me of the point at which we left off? Now, as far as I can tell, it was something like this: we ended by agreeing that one ought to pursue wisdom, did we not?[16] Yes, he said. And this pursuit—called philosophy—is an acquiring of knowledge. Is it not so? I asked. Yes, he said. Then what knowledge should we acquire if we acquired it rightly? Is it not absolutely clear that it must be that knowledge which will profit us? Certainly, he said. Now will it profit us at all, if we know how to tell, as we go about, where the earth has most gold buried in it? Perhaps, he said.

Soc.

But yet, I went on, we refuted that former proposition, agreeing that even if without any trouble or digging the earth we got all the gold in the world, we should gain nothing, so that not if we knew how to turn the rocks into gold would our knowledge be of any worth. For unless we know how to use the gold, we found no advantage in it. Do you not remember? I asked. Certainly I do, he said. Nor, it seems, do we get any advantage from all other knowledge, whether of money-making or medicine or any other that knows how to make things, without knowing how to use the thing made. Is it not so? He agreed. Nor again, if there

[14]Cf. *Hom. Od. 4.385 ff.* Proteus was an ancient seer of the sea who, if one could catch him as he slept on the shore and hold him fast while he transformed himself into a variety of creatures, would tell one the intentions of the gods, the fate of absent friends, etc.

[15]Cf. *Hom. Od. 4.456.*

[16]Cf. *Plat. Euthyd. 282d.*

is a knowledge enabling one to make men immortal, does this, if we lack the knowledge how to use immortality, seem to bring any advantage either, if we are to infer anything from our previous admissions. On all these points we agreed. Then the sort of knowledge we require, fair youth, I said, is that in which there happens to be a union of making and knowing how to use the thing made. Apparently, he said. So we ought, it seems, to aim at something far other than being lyre-makers or possessing that kind of knowledge. For in this case the art that makes and the art that uses are quite distinct, dealing in separation with the same thing; since there is a wide difference between the art of making lyres and that of harp-playing. Is it not so? He agreed. Nor again, obviously, do we require an art of flute-making; for this is another of the same kind. He assented. Now in good earnest, I asked, if we were to learn the art of speech-making, can that be the art we should acquire if we would be happy? I for one think not, said Cleinias, interposing. On what proof do you rely? I asked. I see, he said, certain speech-writers who do not know how to use the special arguments composed by themselves, just as lyre-makers in regard to their lyres: in the former case also there are other persons able to use what the makers produced, while being themselves unable to make the written speech. Hence it is clear that in speech likewise there are two distinct arts, one of making and one of using. I think you give sufficient proof, I said, that this art of the speech-writers cannot be that whose acquisition would make one happy. And yet I fancied that somewhere about this point would appear the knowledge which we have been seeking all this while. For not only do these speech-writers themselves, when I am in their company, impress me as prodigiously clever, Cleinias, but their art itself seems so exalted as to be almost inspired. However, this is not surprising; for it is a part of the sorcerer's art, and only slightly inferior to that.

Soc.

The sorcerer's art is the charming of snakes and tarantulas and scorpions and other beasts and diseases, while the other is just the charming and soothing of juries, assemblies, crowds, and so forth. Or does it strike you differently? I asked. No, it appears to me, he replied, to be as you say. Which way then, said I, shall we turn now? What kind of art shall we try? For my part, he said, I have no suggestion. Why, I think I have found it myself, I said. What is it? said Cleinias. Generalship, I replied, strikes me as the art whose acquisition above all others would make one happy. I do not think so. Why not? I asked. In a sense, this is an art of hunting men. What then? I said.

No part of actual hunting, he replied, covers more than the province of chasing and overcoming; and when they have overcome the creature they are chasing, they are unable to use it: the huntsmen or the fishermen hand it over to the caterers, and so it is too with the geometers, astronomers, and calculators— for these also are hunters in their way, since they are not in each case diagram-makers, but discover the realities of things[17]—and so, not knowing how to use their prey, but only how to hunt, I take it they hand over their discoveries to the dialecticians to use properly, those of them, at least, who are not utter blockheads. Very good, I said, most handsome and ingenious Cleinias; and is this really so? To be sure it is; and so, in the same way, with the generals. When they have hunted either a city or an army, they hand it over to the politicians—since they themselves do not know how to use what they have hunted—just as quail-hunters, I suppose, hand over their birds to the quail-keepers. If, therefore, he went on, we are looking for that art which itself shall know how to use what it has acquired either in making or chasing, and if this is the sort that will make us blest, we must reject generalship, he said, and seek out some other.

Cri.

What is this, Socrates? Such a pronouncement from that stripling!

Soc.

You do not believe it is his, Crito?

Cri.

I should rather think not. For I am sure, if he spoke thus, he has no need of education from Euthydemus or anyone else.

Soc.

But then, Heaven help me! I wonder if it was Ctesippus who said it, and my memory fails me.

Cri.

Very like Ctesippus!

Soc.

Well, of this at any rate I am certain, that it was neither Euthydemus nor Dionysodorus who said it. Tell me, mysterious Crito, was it some superior power that was there to speak it? For that speech I heard, I am sure.

[17] i.e. geometers etc. are not to be regarded as mere makers of diagrams, these being only the necessary and common machinery for their real business, the discovery of mathematical and other abstract truths.

Cri.

Yes, I promise you, Socrates: I fancy it was indeed some superior power—very much so. But after that, did you go on looking for a suitable art? Did you find the one which you had as the object of your search, or not?

Soc.

Find it, my good fellow! No, we were in a most ridiculous state; like children who run after crested larks, we kept on believing each moment we were just going to catch this or that one of the knowledges, while they as often slipped from our grasp. What need to tell you the story at length? When we reached the kingly art, and were examining it to see if we had here what provides and produces happiness, at this point we were involved in a labyrinth: when we supposed we had arrived at the end, we twisted about again and found ourselves practically at the beginning of our search, and just as sorely in want as when we first started on it.

Cri.

How did this happen to you, Socrates?

Soc.

I will tell you. We took the view that the statesman's and the monarch's arts were one and the same.

Cri.

Well, what then?

Soc.

To this art, we thought, generalship and the other arts handed over the management of the productions of their own trades, as this one alone knew how to use them. So it seemed clear to us that this was the one we were seeking, and was the cause of right conduct in the state, and precisely as Aeschylus' line[18] expresses it, is seated alone at the helm of the city, steering the whole, commanding the whole, and making the whole useful.

Cri.

And surely your notion was a good one, Socrates?

Soc.

You shall judge of that, Crito, if you care to hear what befell us thereafter. For later on we reconsidered it somewhat in this manner: Look now, does the monarch's art, that rules over all, produce any effect or not? Certainly it does, of course, we said to one another. Would you

[18]Cf. *Aesch. Seven 2* "Whoso at helm of the state keeps watch upon affairs, guiding the tiller without resting his eyelids in sleep."

not say so too, Crito?

Cri.

I would.

Soc.

Then what would you say is its effect? For instance, if I were to ask you whether medicine, in ruling over all that comes under its rule, has any effect to show; would you not say: Yes, health?

Cri.

I would.

Soc.

And what about your art of agriculture? In ruling over all that comes under its rule, what effect does it produce? Would you not say that it supplies us with food from the earth?

Cri.

I would.

Soc.

And what of the monarch's art? In ruling over all that comes under its rule, what does it produce? Perhaps you are not quite ready with the answer.

Cri.

I am not indeed, Socrates.

Soc.

Nor were we, Crito; yet so much you know, that if this is really the one we are seeking, it must be beneficial.

Cri.

Certainly.

Soc.

Then surely it must purvey something good?

Cri.

Necessarily, Socrates.

Soc.

And you know we agreed with each other, Cleinias and I, that nothing can be good but some sort of knowledge.

Cri.

Yes, so you told me.

Soc.

And it was found that all effects in general that you may ascribe to statesmanship—and a great many of them there must be, presumably, if the citizens are to be made wealthy and free and immune from faction—all these things were neither bad nor good, while this art must make us wise and impart knowledge, if it really was to be the

one which benefited us and made us happy.

Cri.

True: so at all events you agreed then, by your account of the discussion.

Soc.

Then do you think that kingship makes men wise and good?

Cri.

Why not, Socrates?

Soc.

But does it make all men good, and in all things? And is this the art that confers every sort of knowledge—shoe-making and carpentry and so forth?

Cri.

No, I think not, Socrates.

Soc.

Well, what knowledge does it give ? What use can we make of it? It is not to be a producer of any of the effects which are neither bad nor good, while it is to confer no other knowledge but itself. Shall we try and say what it is, and what use we shall make of it? Do you mind if we describe it, Crito, as that whereby we shall make other men good?

Cri.

I quite agree.

Soc.

And in what respect are we going to have these men good, and in what useful? Or shall we venture to say they are to make others so, and these again others? In what respect they can possibly be good is nowhere evident to us, since we have discredited all the business commonly called politics, and it is merely a case of the proverbial "Corinthus Divine"[19]; and, as I was saying, we are equally or even worse at fault as to what that knowledge can be which is to make us happy.

Cri.

Upon my word, Socrates, you got yourselves there, it seems, into a pretty fix.

Soc.

So then I myself, Crito, finding I had fallen into this perplexity, began to exclaim at the top of my voice, beseeching the two strangers as though I were calling upon the Heavenly Twins to save us, the lad

[19]Cf. *Pind. N. 7.* Megara, a colony of Corinth, revolted, and when the Corinthians appealed to the sentiment attaching to Corinthus, the mythical founder of Megara, the Megarians drove them off taunting them with using a "vain repetition."

and myself, from the mighty wave[20] of the argument, and to give us the best of their efforts, and this done, to make plain to us what that knowledge can be of which we must get hold if we are to spend the remainder of our lives in a proper way

Cri.

Well, did Euthydemus consent to propound anything for you?

Soc.

Why, certainly; and he began his discourse, my good friend, in this very lofty-minded fashion: Would you rather, Socrates, that I instructed you as to this knowledge which has baffled you all this while, or propound that you have it? O gifted sir, I exclaimed, and have you the power to do this? Certainly I have, he replied. Then for Heaven's sake, I cried, propound that I have it! This will be much easier than learning foraman of my age. Come then, answer me this, he said: Do you know anything? Yes, indeed, I replied. and many things, though trifles. That is enough, he said; now do you think it possible that anything that is should not be just that which it actually is? On my soul, not I. Now you, he said, know something? I do. Then you are knowing, if you really know? Certainly, in just that something. That makes no difference; you are not under a necessity of knowing everything, if you are knowing? No, to be sure, I replied; for there are many other things which I do not know. Then if you do not know something, you are not knowing? Not in that thing, my dear sir, I replied. Are you therefore any the less unknowing? Just now you said you were knowing; so here you are, actually the very man that you are, and again, not that man, in regard to the same matter and at the same time! Admitted, Euthydemus, I said: as the saying goes,

"well said whate'er you say." How therefore do I know that knowledge which we were seeking? Since forsooth it is impossible for the same thing to be so and not be so; by knowing one thing I know all;—for I could not be at once both knowing and unknowing;—and as I know everything I have that knowledge to boot: is that your line of argument? Is this your wisdom? Yes, you see, Socrates, he said, your own words refute you. Well, but, Euthydemus, I continued, are you not in the same plight? I assure you, so long as I had you and this dear fellow Dionysodorus to share my lot, however hard, I should have nothing to complain of. Tell me, you both know some existent things, of course, and others you do not? By no means, Socrates, said Dionysodorus. How do you mean? I asked: do you then not know

[20] Lit. the big wave that comes in every three.

anything? Oh yes, we do, he said.

Soc.
So you know everything, I asked, since you know anything? Everything, he replied; yes, and you too, if you know one thing, know all. Good Heavens, I cried, what a wonderful statement! What a great blessing to boast of! And the rest of mankind, do they know everything or nothing? Surely, he said, they cannot know some things and not others, and so be at once knowing and unknowing. But what then? I asked. All men, he replied, know all things, if they know one. In the name of goodness, Dionysodorus, I said—for now I can see both of you are serious; before, I could hardly prevail on you to be so—do you yourselves really know everything? Carpentry, for instance, and shoe-making? Certainly, he said. And you are good hands at leather-stitching? Why yes, in faith, and cobbling, he said. And are you good also at such things as counting the stars, and the sand? Certainly, he said: can you think we would not admit that also? Here Ctesippus broke in: Be so good, Dionysodorus, he said, as to place some such evidence before me as will convince me that what you say is true. What shall I put forward? he asked. Do you know how many teeth Euthydemus has, and does Euthydemus know how many you have? Are you not content, he rejoined, to be told that we know everything? No, do not say that, he replied: only tell us this one thing more, and propound to us that you speak the truth. Then, if you tell us how many teeth each of you has, and you are found by our counting to have known it, we shall believe you thenceforth in everything else likewise. Well, as they supposed we were making fun of them, they would not do it: only they agreed that they knew all subjects, when questioned on them, one after the other, by Ctesippus; who, before he had done with them, asked them if they knew every kind of thing, even the most unseemly, without the least reserve; while they most valiantly encountered his questions, agreeing that they had the knowledge in each case, like boars when driven up to face the spears: so that I for my part, Crito, became quite incredulous,and had to ask in the end if Dionysodorus knew also how to dance. To which he replied: Certainly. I do not suppose, I said, that you have attained such a degree of skill as to do sword-dancing, or be whirled about on a wheel, at your time of life? There is nothing, he said, that I cannot do. Then tell me, I went on, do you know everything at present only, or for ever? For ever too, he said. And when you were children, and were just born, you

knew? Everything, they both replied together.

Soc.

Now, to us the thing seemed incredible: then Euthydemus said: You do not believe it, Socrates? I will only say, I replied, that you must indeed be clever. Why, he said, if you will consent to answer me, I will propound that you too admit these surprising facts. Oh, I am only too glad, I replied, to be refuted in the matter. For if I am not aware of my own cleverness, and you are going to show me that I know everything always, what greater stroke of luck than this could befall me in all my living days? Then answer me, he said. Ask: I am ready to answer. Well then, Socrates, he asked, have you knowledge of something, or not? I have. And tell me, do you know with that whereby you have knowledge, or with something else? With that whereby I have knowledge: I think you mean the soul, or is not that your meaning? Are you not ashamed, Socrates, he said, to ask a question on your side when you are being questioned? Very well, I said: but how am I to proceed? I will do just as you bid me. When I cannot tell what you are asking, is it your order that I answer all the same, without asking a question upon it? Why, he replied, you surely conceive some meaning in what I say? I do, I replied. Answer then to the meaning you conceive to be in my words. Well, I said, if you ask a question with a different meaning in your mind from that which I conceive, and I answer to the latter, are you content I should answer nothing to the point? For my part, he replied, I shall be content: you, however, will not, so far as I can see. Then I declare I shall not answer, I said, before I get it right. You refuse to answer, he said, to the meaning you conceive in each case, because you will go on driveling, you hopeless old dotard! Here I perceived he was annoyed with me for distinguishing between the phrases used, when he wanted to entrap me in his verbal snares. So I remembered Connus, how he too is annoyed with me whenever I do not give in to him, with the result that he now takes less trouble over me as being a stupid person. So being minded to take lessons from this new teacher, I decided that I had better give in, lest he should take me for a blockhead and not admit me to his classes. So I said: Well, if you think fit, Euthydemus, to proceed thus, we must do so; in any case I suppose you understand debating better than I do—you are versed in the method, and I am but a layman. Begin your questions, then, over again. Now, answer me once more, he said: do you know what you know by means of something, or not? I do, I replied; by means of my soul.

Soc.
There he is again, he said, answering more than he is asked. For I am not asking what the means is, but only whether you know by some means. Yes, I did again answer more than I ought, I said, through lack of education. But forgive me, and I will now simply reply that I know what I know by some means. By one and the same means always, he asked, or sometimes by one and sometimes by another? Always, whenever I know, I replied, it is by this means. There again, he cried, you really must stop adding these qualifications. But I am so afraid this word "always" may bring us to grief. Not us, he rejoined, but, if anyone, you. Now answer: do you know by this means always? Always, I, replied, since I must withdraw the "whenever." Then you always know by this means: that being the case, do you know some things by this means of knowing, and some things by another means, or everything by this? Everything by this, I replied; everything, that is, that I know. There it comes again, he cried; the same qualification! Well, I withdraw my "that is, that I know." No, do not withdraw a single word, he said: I ask you for no concession. Only answer me: could you know all things if you did not know everything? It would be most surprising, I said. Then he went on: You may therefore add on now whatever you please: for you admit that you know all things. It seems I do, I replied, seeing that my "that I know" has no force, and I know everything. Now you have also admitted that you know always by the means whereby you know, whenever you know—or however you like to put it. For you have admitted that you always know and, at the same time, everything. Hence it is clear that even as a child you knew, both when you were being born and when you were being conceived: and before you yourself came into being or heaven and earth existed, you knew all things, since you always know. Yes, and I declare, he said, you yourself will always know all things, if it be my pleasure. Oh, pray let it be your pleasure, I replied, most worshipful Euthydemus, if what you say is really true. Only I do not quite trust in your efficacy, if your pleasure is not to he also that of your brother here, Dionysodorus: if it is, you will probably prevail. And tell me, I went on, since I cannot hope in a general way to dispute the statement that I know everything with persons so prodigiously clever—since it is your statement—how am I to say I know certain things, Euthydemus; for instance, that good men are unjust? Come, tell me, do I know this or not? You know it certainly, he said. What? I said. That the good are not unjust.

Soc.

Quite so, I said: I knew that all the time; but that is not what I ask: tell me, where did I learn that the good are unjust? Nowhere, said Dionysodorus. Then I do not know this, I said. You are spoiling the argument, said Euthydemus to Dionysodorus, and we shall find that this fellow does not know, and is at once both knowing and unknowing. At this Dionysodorus reddened. But you, I said, what do you mean, Euthydemus. Do you find that your brother, who knows everything, has not spoken aright? I a brother of Euthydemus? quickly interposed Dionysodorus. Whereupon I said: Let me alone, good sir, till Euthydemus has taught me that I know that good men are unjust, and do not grudge me this lesson. You are running away, Socrates, said Dionysodorus; you refuse to answer. Yes, and with good reason, I said: for I am weaker than either one of you, so I have no scruple about running away from the two together. You see, I am sadly inferior to Hercules, who was no match for the hydra—that she-professor who was so clever that she sent forth many heads of debate in place of each one that was cut off; nor for another sort of, crab-professor from the sea— freshly, I fancy, arrived on shore; and, when the hero was so bothered with its leftward barks and bites, he summoned his nephew Iolaus to the rescue, and he brought him effective relief. But if my Iolaus were to come, he would do more harm than good.[21] Well, answer this, said Dionysodorus, now you have done your descanting: Was Iolaus more Hercules' nephew than yours? I see I had best answer you, Dionysodorus, I said. For you will never cease putting questions—I think I may say I am sure of this—in a grudging, obstructing spirit, so that Euthydemus may not teach me that bit of cleverness. Then answer, he said. Well, I answer, I said, that Iolaus was Hercules' nephew, but not mine, so far as I can see, in any way whatever. For Patrocles, my brother, was not his father; only Hercules' brother Iphicles had a name somewhat similar to his. And Patrocles, he said, is your brother? Certainly, I said: that is, by the same mother, but not by the same father. Then he is your brother and not your brother. Not by the same father, worthy sir, I replied. His father was Chaeredemus, mine Sophroniscus. So Sophroniscus and Chaeredemus, he said, were "father"?

Soc.

Certainly, I said: the former mine, the latter his. Then surely, he went

[21] i.e. any kinsman or helper I might summon would only add to the number of your victims.

on, Chaeredemus was other than "father"? Than mine, at any rate, I said. Why then, he was father while being other than father. Or are you the same as "the stone"?[22] I fear you may prove that of me, I said, though I do not feel like it. Then are you other than the stone? Other, I must say. Then of course, he went on, if you are other than stone, you are not stone? And if you are other than gold, you are not gold? Quite so. Hence Chaeredemus, he said, being other than father, cannot be "father." It seems, I said, that he is not a father. No, for I presume, interposed Euthydemus, that if Chaeredemus is a father Sophroniscus in his turn, being other than a father, is not a father; so that you, Socrates, are fatherless. Here Ctesippus took it up, observing: And your father too, is he not in just the same plight? Is he other than my father? Not in the slightest, said Euthydemus. What, asked the other, is he the same? The same, to be sure. I should not like to think he was: but tell me, Euthydemus, is he my father only, or everybody else's too? Everybody else's too, he replied; or do you suppose that the same man, being a father, can be no father? I did suppose so, said Ctesippus. Well, said the other, and that a thing being gold could be not gold? Or being a man, not man? Perhaps, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, you are knotting flax with cotton,[23] as they say: for it is a strange result that you state, if your father is father of all. He is, though, was the reply. Of all men, do you mean? asked Ctesippus, or of horses too, and all other animals? Of all, he said. And is your mother a mother in the same way? My mother too. And is your mother a mother of sea-urchins? Yes, and yours is also, he replied. So then you are a brother of the gudgeons and whelps and porkers. Yes, and so are you, he said. Then your father is a boar and a dog. And so is yours, he said. Yes, said Dionysodorus, and it will take you but a moment, if you will answer me, Ctesippus, to acknowledge all this. Just tell me, have you a dog? Yes, a real rogue, said Ctesippus. Has he got puppies? Yes, a set of rogues like him. Then is the dog their father? Yes, indeed; I saw him with my own eyes covering the bitch. Well now, is not the dog yours? Certainly, he said. Thus he is a father, and yours, and accordingly the dog turns out to be your father, and you a brother of whelps. Hereupon Dionysodorus struck in again quickly, lest Ctesippus should get a word in before him: Answer me just one more little point: do you beat this dog? Ctesippus laughed

[22] Cf. *Plat. Gorg. 494a*, where "the life of a stone" is given as a proverbial example of a life without pleasure or pain.

[23] i.e. treating two different things as the same.

and said: My word, yes; since I cannot beat you! So you beat your own father? he said.

Soc.

There would be much more justice, though, he replied, in my beating yours, for being so ill-advised as to beget clever sons like you. Yet I doubt, Ctesippus went on, if your father, Euthydemus—the puppies' father—has derived much good from this wisdom of yours. Why, he has no need of much good, Ctesippus, neither he nor you. And have you no need either, yourself, Euthydemus? he asked. No, nor has any other man. Just tell me, Ctesippus, whether you think it good for a sick man to drink physic when he wants it, or whether you consider it not good; or for a man to go to the wars with arms rather than without them. With them, I think, he replied: and yet I believe you are about to utter one of your pleasantries. You will gather that well enough, he said: only answer me. Since you admit that physic is good for a man to drink when necessary, surely one ought to drink this good thing as much as possible; and in such a case it will be well to pound and infuse in it a cart-load of hellebore? To this Ctesippus replied: Quite so, to be sure, Euthydemus, at any rate if the drinker is as big as the Delphian statue. Then, further, since in war, he proceeded, it is good to have arms, one ought to have as many spears and shields as possible, if we agree that it is a good thing? Yes, I suppose, said Ctesippus; and you, Euthydemus, do you take the other view, that it should be one shield and one spear? Yes, I do. What, he said, and would you arm Geryon also and Briareus[24] in this way? I thought you more of an expert than that, considering you are a man-at-arms, and your comrade here too! At this Euthydemus was silent; then Dionysodorus asked some questions on Ctesippus' previous answers, saying: Well now, gold is in your opinion a good thing to have? Certainly, and—here I agree—plenty of it too, said Ctesippus. Well then, do you not think it right to have good things always and everywhere? Assuredly, he said. Then do you admit that gold is also a good? Why, I have admitted it, he replied. Then we ought always to have it, and everywhere, and above all, in oneself? And one will be happiest if one has three talents of gold in one's belly, a talent in one's skull, and a stater of gold in each eye? Well, Euthydemus, replied Ctesippus, they say that among the Scythians those are the happiest and best men who have a lot of gold in their own skulls—somewhat as you were saying a moment ago that "dog" is "father"; and a still more marvellous thing is told, how they

[24]Two fabulous giants (Geryon had three, Briareus fifty, pairs of arms).

drink out of their skulls when gilded, and gaze inside them, holding their own headpiece in their hands.

Soc.

Tell me, said Euthydemus, do the Scythians and men in general see things possible of sight, or things impossible? Possible, I presume. And you do so too? I too. Then you see our cloaks? Yes. And have they power of sight?[25] Quite extraordinarily, said Ctesippus. What do they see? he asked. Nothing. Perhaps you do not think they see—you are such a sweet innocent. I should say, Euthydemus, that you have fallen asleep with your eyes open and, if it be possible to speak and at the same time say nothing, that this is what you are doing. Why, asked Dionysodorus, may there not be a speaking of the silent? By no means whatever, replied Ctesippus. Nor a silence of speaking? Still less, he said. Now, when you speak of stones and timbers and irons, are you not speaking of the silent? Not if I walk by a smithy, for there, as they say, the irons speak and cry aloud, when they are touched; so here your wisdom has seduced you into nonsense. But come, you have still to propound me your second point, how on the other hand there may be a silence of speaking. (It struck me that Ctesippus was specially excited on account of his young friend's presence.) When you are silent, said Euthydemus, are you not making a silence of all things? Yes, he replied. Then it is a silence of speaking things also, if the speaking are among all things. What, said Ctesippus, are not all things silent? I presume not, said Euthydemus. But then, my good sir, do all things speak? Yes, I suppose, at least those that speak. But that is not what I ask, he said: are all things silent or do they speak? Neither and both, said Dionysodorus, snatching the word from him: I am quite sure that is an answer that will baffle you! At this Ctesippus, as his manner was, gave a mighty guffaw, and said: Ah, Euthydemus, your brother has made the argument ambiguous with his "both," and is worsted and done for. Then Cleinias was greatly delighted and laughed, so that Ctesippus felt his strength was as the strength of ten: but I fancy Ctesippus—he is such a rogue—had picked up these very words by overhearing the men themselves, since in nobody else of the present age is such wisdom to be found. So I remarked: Why are you laughing, Cleinias, at such serious and beautiful things? What, have you, Socrates, ever yet seen a beautiful thing? asked Dionysodorus. Yes, I have, I replied, and

[25]The quibble is on the double meaning of *δυνατὰ ὁρᾶν*—(a)possible, and (b)able to see. So in what follows, *σιγῶντα λέγειν* may mean both the speaking of a silent person, or speaking of silent things.

many of them, Dionysodorus.

Soc.

Did you find them different from the beautiful, he said, or the same as the beautiful? Here I was desperately perplexed, and felt that I had my deserts for the grunt I had made: however, I replied that they were different from the beautiful itself, though each of them had some beauty present with it. So if an ox is present with you, he said, you are an ox, and since I am now present with you, you are Dionysodorus. Heavens, do not say that! I cried. But in what way can one thing, by having a different thing present with it, be itself different? Are you at a loss there? I asked: already I was attempting to imitate the cleverness of these men, I was so eager to get it. Can I help being at a loss, he said, I and likewise everybody else in the world, in face of what cannot be? What is that you say, Dionysodorus? I asked: is not the beautiful beautiful, and the ugly ugly? Yes, if it seems so to me, he replied. Then does it seem so? Certainly, he said. Then the same also is the same, and the different different? For I presume the different cannot be the same; nay, I thought not even a child would doubt that the different is different. But, Dionysodorus, you have deliberately passed over this one point; though, on the whole, I feel that, like craftsmen finishing off each his special piece of work, you two are carrying out your disputation in excellent style. Well, he asked, do you know what is each craftsman's special piece of work? First of all, whose proper task is it to forge brass? Can you tell? I can: a brazier's. Well, again, whose to make pots? A potter's. Once more, whose to slaughter and skin, and after cutting up the joints to stew and roast? A caterer's, I said. Now, if one does one's proper work, he said, one will do rightly? Yes, to be sure. And is it, as you say, the caterer's proper work to cut up and skin? Did you admit this or not? I did so, I replied, but pray forgive me. It is clear then, he proceeded, that if someone slaughters the caterer and cuts him up, and then stews or roasts him, he will be doing his proper work; and if he hammers the brazier himself, and moulds the potter, he will be doing his business likewise. Poseidon! I exclaimed, there you give the finishing touch to your wisdom. I wonder if this skill could ever come to me in such manner as to be my very own. Would you recognize it, Socrates, he asked, if it came to be your own? Yes, if only you are agreeable, I replied, without a doubt. Why, he went on, do you imagine you perceive what is yours? Yes, if I take your meaning aright: for all my hopes arise from you, and end in Euthydemus here.[26]

Soc.
Then tell me, he asked, do you count those things yours which you control and are free to use as you please? For instance, an ox or a sheep,would you count these as yours, if you were free to sell or bestow them, or sacrifice them to any god you chose? And things which you could not treat thus are not yours? Hereupon, since I knew that some brilliant result was sure to bob up from the mere turn of the questions, and as I also wanted to hear it as quickly as possible, I said: It is precisely as you say; only such things are mine. Well now, he went on: you call those things animals which have life? Yes, I said. And you admit that only those animals are yours which you are at liberty to deal with in those various ways that I mentioned just now? I admit that. Then—after a very ironical pause, as though he were pondering some great matter—he proceeded: Tell me, Socrates, have you an ancestral Zeus[27]? Here I suspected the discussion was approaching the point at which it eventually ended, and so I tried what desperate wriggle I could to escape from the net in which I now felt myself entangled. My answer was: I have not, Dionysodorus. What a miserable fellow you must be, he said, and no Athenian at all, if you have neither ancestral gods, nor shrines, nor anything else that denotes a gentleman! Enough, Dionysodorus; speak fair words, and don't browbeat your pupil! For I have altars and shrines, domestic and ancestral, and everything else of the sort that other Athenians have. Then have not other Athenians, he asked, their ancestral Zeus? None of the Ionians, I replied, give him this title, neither we nor those who have left this city to settle abroad: they have an ancestral Apollo, because of Ion's parentage.[28] Among us the name "ancestral" is not given to Zeus, but that of "houseward" and "tribal," and we have a tribal Athena. That will do, said Dionysodorus; you have, it seems, Apollo and Zeus and Athena. Certainly, I said. Then these must be your gods? he said. My ancestors, I said, and lords. Well, at least, you have them, he said: or have you not admitted they are yours? I have admitted it, I replied: what else could I do? And are not these gods animals? he asked: you know you have admitted that whatever has life is an animal. Or have these gods no life? They have, I replied. Then are they not animals? Yes, animals, I said. And those animals, he went on, you have admitted to be yours, which you are free to bestow and sell and sacrifice to any god you please. I have

[26]The Greek works follow a usual form of prayer or hymn to the gods.
[27]Zeus was the ancestral or tutelary god of the Dorians
[28]Cf. *Eur. Ion 64-75.* Apollo begot Ion upon Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus.

admitted it, I replied; there is no escape for me, Euthydemus.

Soc.

Come then, tell me straight off, he said; since you admit that Zeus and the other gods are yours, are you free to sell or bestow them or treat them just as you please, like the other animals? Well, Crito, here I must say I was knocked out, as it were, by the argument, and lay speechless; then Ctesippus rushed to the rescue and—Bravo, Hercules! he cried, a fine argument! Whereat Dionysodorus asked: Now, do you mean that Hercules is a bravo, or that bravo is Hercules? Ctesippus replied: Poseidon, what a frightful use of words! I give up the fight: these two are invincible. Hereupon I confess, my dear Crito, that everyone present without exception wildly applauded the argument and the two men, till they all nearly died of laughing and clapping and rejoicing. For their previous successes had been highly acclaimed one by one, but only by the devotees of Euthydemus; whereas now almost the very pillars of the Lyceum took part in the joyful acclamations in honor of the pair. For myself, I was quite disposed to admit that never had I set eyes on such clever people, and I was so utterly enthralled by their skill that I betook myself to praising and congratulating them, and said: Ah, happy pair! What amazing genius, to acquire such a great accomplishment so quickly and in so short a time! Among the many fine points in your arguments, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, there is one that stands out in particular magnificence—that you care not a jot for the multitude, or for any would-be important or famous people, but only for those of your own sort. And I am perfectly sure that there are but a few persons like yourselves who would be satisfied with these arguments: the rest of the world regard them only as arguments with which, I assure you, they would feel it a greater disgrace to refute others than to be refuted themselves. And further, there is at the same time a popular and kindly feature in your talk: when you say there is nothing either beautiful, or good, or white, and so on, and no difference of things at all, in truth you simply stitch up men's mouths, as you expressly say you do; while as to your apparent power of stitching up your own mouths as well, this is a piece of agreeable manners that takes off any offence from your talk. But the greatest thing of all is, that this faculty of yours is such, and is so skilfully contrived, that anyone in the world may learn it of you in a very short time; this fact I perceived myself by watching Ctesippus and observing how quickly he was able to imitate you on the spot.

Soc.

Now, in so far as your accomplishment can be quickly imparted, it is

excellent; but for public discussions it is not suitable: if I may advise you, beware of talking before a number of people, lest they learn the whole thing in a trice and give you no credit for it. The best thing for you is to talk to each other by yourselves, in private; failing that, if a third person is present, it must be someone who will pay you a good fee. And if you are prudent you will give this same counsel to your pupils also—that they are never to converse with anybody except you and each other. For it is the rare, Euthydemus, that is precious, while water is cheapest, though best, as Pindar[29] said. But come, I said, see if you can admit both me and Cleinias here to your class. This, Crito, was our conversation, and after exchanging a few more words we went off. Now you must arrange to join us in taking lessons from the pair; for they say they are able to teach anyone who is willing to pay good money, and that no sort of character or age—and it is well that you especially should be told that they promise that their art is no hindrance to money-making—need deter anyone from an easy acquisition of their wisdom.

Cri.

Indeed, Socrates, I love listening, and would be glad to learn from them; but I am afraid I am one of the sort who are not like Euthydemus, but who, as you described them just now, would prefer being refuted to refuting with such arguments. Now, although I feel it is absurd to admonish you, I wish nevertheless to report to you what was told me just now. Do you know, one of the people who had left your discussion came up to me as I was taking a stroll—a man who thinks himself very wise, one of those who are so clever at turning out speeches for the law-courts[30]—and said: Crito, do you take no lessons from these wise men? No, in truth, I replied: there was such a crowd that, though I stood quite close, I was unable to catch what was said. Well, let me tell you, he said, it was something worth hearing. What was it? I asked. You would have heard the disputation of men who are the most accomplished of our day in that kind of speaking. To this I replied: Well, what did they show forth to you? Merely the sort of stuff, he said, that you may hear such people babbling about at any time—making an inconsequent ado about matters of no consequence (in some such parlance he expressed himself). Whereupon—Well, all the same, I said, philosophy is a charming thing.

Cri.

[29]Cf. *Pind. O. 1.*, which begins—*Ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ.*

[30]The allusion is probably to Isocrates.

Charming is it, my dear innocent? he exclaimed: nay, a thing of no consequence. Why, had you been in that company just now, you would have been filled with shame, I fancy, for your particular friend: he was so strangely willing to lend himself to persons who care not a straw what they say, but merely fasten on any phrase that turns up. And these, as I said just now, are the heads of their profession today. But the fact is, Crito, he went on, the business itself and the people who follow it are worthless and ridiculous. Now, in my opinion, Socrates, he was not right in decrying the pursuit: he is wrong, and so is anyone else who decries it: though I must say I felt he was right in blaming the readiness to engage in discussion with such people before a large company.

Soc.

Crito, these people are very odd. But I do not yet know what answer I shall give you. Of which party was he who came up to you and blamed philosophy? Was he one of those who excel in the contests of the courts, an orator; or of those who equip the orators for the fray, a composer of the speeches they deliver in their contests?

Cri.

Nothing of an orator, I dare swear, nor do I think he has ever appeared in court: only he is reputed to know about the business, so they declare, and to be a clever person, and compose clever speeches.

Soc.

Now I understand: it was of these people that I was just now going to speak myself. They are the persons, Crito, whom Prodicus described as the border-ground between philosopher and politician, yet they fancy that they are the wisest of all mankind, and that they not merely are but are thought so by a great many people; and accordingly they feel that none but the followers of philosophy stand in the way of their universal renown. Hence they believe that, if they can reduce the latter to a status of no esteem, the prize of victory will by common consent be awarded to them, without dispute or delay, and their claim to wisdom will be won. For they consider themselves to be in very truth the wisest, but find that, when caught in private conversation, they are cut off short by Euthydemus and his set. This conceit of their wisdom is very natural, since they regard themselves as moderately versed in philosophy, and moderately too in politics, on quite reasonable grounds: for they have dipped into both as far as they needed, and, evading all risk and struggle, are content to gather the fruits of wisdom.

Cri.

Well, now, do you consider, Socrates, that there is anything in what

they say? It is not to be denied that these men have some color for their statements.

Soc.

Yes, that is so, Crito; color rather than truth. It is no easy matter to persuade them that either people or things, which are between two other things and have a certain share of both, if compounded of bad and good are found to be better than the one and worse than the other; but if compounded of two good things which have not the same object, they are worse than either of their components in relation to the object to which each of them is adapted; while if they are compounded of two bad things which have not the same object, and stand between them, this is the only case where they are better than either of the two things of which they have a share. Now if philosophy and the statesman's business are both good things, and each of them has a different object, and if these persons, partaking of both, are between them, their claims are nought; for they are inferior to both: if one is good and the other bad, they are better than the one and worse than the other: while if both are bad, in this case there would be some truth in their statement, but in any other case there is none. Now I do not think they will admit either that both these things are bad, or that one is bad and the other good: the truth is that these people, partaking of both, are inferior to both in respect of the objects for which statesmanship and philosophy are important; and while they are really in the third place they seek to be accorded the first. However, we ought to be indulgent towards their ambition and not feel annoyed, while still judging them to be what they actually are. For we should be glad of anyone, whoever he may be, who says anything that verges on good sense, and labours steadily and manfully in its pursuit.

Cri.

Now I myself, Socrates, as I so often tell you, am in doubt about my sons, as to what I am to do with them. The younger is as yet quite small; but Critobulus is already grown up, and needs someone who will be of service to him. When I am in your company, the effect on me is such as to make me feel it is mere madness to have taken ever so much pains in various directions for the good of my children— first in so marrying that they should be of very good blood on their mother's side; then in making money so that they might be as well off as possible; while I have neglected the training of the boys themselves. But when I glance at one of the persons who profess to educate people, I am dismayed, and feel that each one of them, when I consider them, is wholly unsuitable— to tell you the truth between ourselves. So that

I cannot see how I am to incline the lad towards philosophy.

Soc.

My dear Crito are you not aware that in every trade the duffers are many and worthless, whereas the good workers are few and worth any price? Why, do you not hold athletics, and money-making, and rhetoric, and generalship, to be fine things?

Cri.

Certainly I do, of course.

Soc.

Well then, in each of these, do you not see most men making a ridiculous show at their respective tasks?

Cri.

Yes, I know: what you say is perfectly true.

Soc.

Then will you yourself on this account eschew all these pursuits, and not let your son have anything to do with them?

Cri.

No, there would be no good reason for that, Socrates.

Soc.

Then avoid at least what is wrong, Crito: let those who practise philosophy have their way, whether they are helpful or mischievous; and when you have tested the matter itself, well and truly, if you find it to be a poor affair, turn everyone you can away from it, not only your sons: but if you find it to be such as I think it is, pursue and ply it without fear, both you, as they say, and yours.

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