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# Gorgias

Plato (c. 428-348 BCE)

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**Gorgias** 1

# Gorgias

Call.
To join in a fight or a fray, as the saying is, Socrates, you have chosen your time well enough.
Soc.
Do you mean, according to the proverb, we have come too late for a feast?
Call.
Yes, a most elegant feast; for Gorgias gave us a fine and varied display but a moment ago.
Soc.
But indeed, Callicles, it is Chaerephon here who must take the blame for this; he forced us to spend our time in the market-place.
Chaer.
No matter, Socrates I will take the curing of it too for Gorgias is a friend of mine, so that he will give us a display now, if you think fit, or if you prefer, on another occasion.
Call.
What, Chaerephon? Has Socrates a desire to hear Gorgias?
Chaer.
Yes, it is for that very purpose we are here.
Call.
Then whenever you have a mind to pay me a call—Gorgias is staying with me, and he will give you a display.
Soc.
Thank you, Callicles: but would he consent to discuss with us? For I want to find out from the man what is the function of his art, and what

it is that he professes and teaches. As for the rest of his performance, he must give it us, as you suggest, on another occasion.

Call.

The best way is to ask our friend himself, Socrates: for indeed that was one of the features of his performance. Why, only this moment he was pressing for whatever questions anyone in the house might like to ask, and saying he would answer them all.

Soc.

What a good idea! Ask him, Chaerephon.

Chaer.

What am I to ask?

Soc.

What he is.

Chaer.

How do you mean?

---

Soc.

Just as, if he chanced to be in the shoe-making business, his answer would have been, I presume, "a shoemaker." Now, don't you see my meaning?

Chaer.

I see, and will ask him. Tell me, Gorgias, is Callicles here correct in saying that you profess to answer any questions one may ask you?

---

Gorg.

He is, Chaerephon; indeed, I was just now making this very profession, and I may add that nobody has asked me anything new for many years now.

Chaer.

So I presume you will easily answer, Gorgias.

Gorg.

You are free to make trial of that, Chaerephon.

Pol.

Yes, to be sure; and, if you like, Chaerephon, of me. For I think Gorgias must be quite tired out, after the long discourse he has just delivered.

Chaer.

Why, Polus, do you suppose you could answer more excellently than Gorgias?

---

Pol.

And what does that matter, if I should satisfy you?

Chaer.

Not at all; since it is your wish, answer.

Pol.

Ask.

Chaer.

Then I ask you, if Gorgias chanced to be skilled in the same art as his brother Herodicus, what should we be justified in calling him? What we call his brother, should we not?

Pol.

Certainly.

Chaer.

Then we should make a right statement if we described him as a doctor.

Pol.

Yes.

Chaer.

And if he were expert in the same art as Aristophon, son of Aglaophon, or his brother,[1] what name should we rightly give him?

---

Pol.

Obviously that of painter.

Chaer.

But as it is, we would like to know in what art he is skilled, and hence by what name we should rightly call him.

Pol.

Chaerephon, there are many arts amongst mankind that have been discovered experimentally, as the result of experiences: for experience conducts the course of our life according to art, but inexperience according to chance. Of these several arts various men partake in various ways, and the best men of the best. Gorgias here is one of these, and he is a partner in the finest art of all.

---

Soc.

Fine, at any rate, Gorgias, is the equipment for discourse that Polus seems to have got: but still he is not performing his promise to Chaerephon.

Gorg.

How exactly, Socrates ?

[1] Polygnotus, the famous painter who decorated public buildings in Athens from about 470 B.C.

Soc.
He does not seem to me to be quite answering what he is asked.
Gorg.
Well, will you please ask him?
Soc.
No, if you yourself will be so good as to answer, why, I would far rather ask you. For I see plainly, from what he has said, that Polus has had more practice in what is called rhetoric than in discussion.
Pol.
How so, Socrates ?
Soc.
Because, Polus, when Chaerephon has asked in what art Gorgias is skilled, you merely eulogize his art as though it were under some censure, instead of replying what it is.
Pol.
Why, did I not reply that it was the finest?
Soc.
You certainly did: but nobody asked what was the quality of his art, only what it was, and by what name we ought to call Gorgias. Just as Chaerephon laid out the lines for you at first, and you answered him properly in brief words, in the same way you must now state what is that art, and what we ought to call Gorgias; or rather, Gorgias, do you tell us yourself in what art it is you are skilled, and hence, what we ought to call you.
Gorg.
Rhetoric, Socrates.
Soc.
So we are to call you a rhetorician ?
Gorg.
Yes, and a good one, if you would call me what—to use Homer's phrase—"I vaunt myself to be." [2]
Soc.
Well, I shall be pleased to do so.
Gorg.
Then call me such.

---

Soc.
And are we to say that you are able to make others like yourself?

[2]The regular phrase of a Homeric hero in boasting of his valor, parentage, etc.; cf. *Hom. Il. 6.211*, *Hom. Il. 14.113*.

Gorg.

Yes, that is what I profess to do, not only here, but elsewhere also.

Soc.

Then would you be willing, Gorgias, to continue this present way of discussion, by alternate question and answer, and defer to some other time that lengthy style of speech in which Polus made a beginning? Come, be true to your promise, and consent to answer each question briefly.

Gorg.

There are some answers, Socrates, that necessitate a lengthy expression: however, I will try to be as brief as possible; for indeed it is one of my claims that no one could express the same thing in briefer terms than myself.

Soc.

That is just what I want, Gorgias: give me a display of this very skill—in brevity of speech; your lengthy style will do another time.

Gorg.

Well, I will do that, and you will admit that you never heard anyone speak more briefly.

Soc.

Come then; since you claim to be skilled in rhetorical art, and to be able to make anyone else a rhetorician, tell me with what particular thing rhetoric is concerned: as, for example, weaving is concerned with the manufacture of clothes, is it not?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

And music, likewise, with the making of tunes?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Upon my word, Gorgias, I do admire your answers! You make them as brief as they well can be.

Gorg.

Yes, Socrates, I consider myself a very fair hand at that.

Soc.

You are right there. Come now, answer me in the same way about rhetoric: with what particular thing is its skill concerned?

Gorg.

With speech.

---

Soc.
What kind of speech, Gorgias? Do you mean that which shows sick people by what regimen they could get well?
Gorg.
No.
Soc.
Then rhetoric is not concerned with all kinds of speech.
Gorg.
No, I say.
Soc.
Yet it does make men able to speak.
Gorg.
Yes.
Soc.
And to understand also the things about which they speak.
Gorg.
Of course.

---

Soc.
Now, does the medical art, which we mentioned just now, make men able to understand and speak about the sick?
Gorg.
It must.
Soc.
Hence the medical art also, it seems, is concerned with speech.
Gorg.
Yes.
Soc.
That is, speech about diseases?
Gorg.
Certainly.
Soc.
Now, is gymnastic also concerned with speech about the good and bad condition of our bodies?
Gorg.
Quite so.
Soc.
And moreover it is the same, Gorgias, with all the other arts; each of them is concerned with that kind of speech which deals with the

subject matter of that particular art.

Gorg.

Apparently.

Soc.

Then why, pray, do you not give the name "rhetorical" to those other arts, when they are concerned with speech, if you call that "rhetoric" which has to do with speech?

Gorg.

Because, Socrates, the skill in those other arts is almost wholly concerned with manual work and similar activities, whereas in rhetoric there is no such manual working, but its whole activity and efficacy is by means of speech. For this reason I claim for the rhetorical art that it is concerned with speech, and it is a correct description, I maintain.

Soc.

Now, do I understand what sort of art you choose to call it? Perhaps, however, I shall get to know this more clearly. But answer me this: we have arts, have we not?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Then amongst the various arts some, I take it, consist mainly of work, and so require but brief speech; while others require none, for the art's object may be achieved actually in silence, as with painting, sculpture, and many other arts. It is to such as these that I understand you to refer when you say rhetoric has no concern with them; is not that so?

Gorg.

Your supposition is quite correct, Socrates.

Soc.

But there is another class of arts which achieve their whole purpose through speech and—to put it roughly—require either no action to aid them, or very little; for example, numeration, calculation, geometry, draught-playing, and many other arts: some of these have the speech in about equal proportion to the action, but most have it as the larger part, or absolutely the whole of their operation and effect is by means of speech. It is one of this class of arts that I think you refer to as rhetoric.

Gorg.

You are right.

Soc.

But, mind you, I do not think it is any one of these that you mean to call rhetoric; though, so far as your expression went, you did say

that the art which has its effect through speech is rhetoric, and one might retort, if one cared to strain at mere words: So, Gorgias, you call numeration rhetoric! But I do not believe it is either numeration or geometry that you call rhetoric.

---

Gorg.

Your belief is correct, Socrates, and your supposition just.

Soc.

Come now, and do your part in finishing off the answer to my question. Since rhetoric is in fact one of these arts which depend mainly on speech, and there are likewise other arts of the same nature, try if you can tell me with what this rhetoric, which has its effect in speech, is concerned. For instance, suppose some one asked me about one or other of the arts which I was mentioning just now: Socrates, what is the art of numeration? I should tell him, as you did me a moment ago, that it is one of those which have their effect through speech. And suppose he went on to ask: With what is its speech concerned? I should say: With the odd and even numbers, and the question of how many units there are in each. And if he asked again: What art is it that you call calculation? I should say that this also is one of those which achieve their whole effect by speech. And if he proceeded to ask: With what is it concerned? I should say— in the manner of those who draft amendments in the Assembly—that in most respects calculation is in the same case as numeration, for both are concerned with the same thing, the odd and the even; but that they differ to this extent, that calculation considers the numerical values of odd and even numbers not merely in themselves but in relation to each other. And suppose, on my saying that astronomy also achieves its whole effect by speech, he were to ask me: And the speech of astronomy, with what is it concerned? I should say: With the courses of the stars and sun and moon, and their relative speeds.

Gorg.

And you would be right, Socrates.

---

Soc.

Come then and do your part, Gorgias: rhetoric is one of those arts, is it not, which carry out their work and achieve their effect by speech.

Gorg.

That is so.

Soc.

Then tell me what they deal with: what subject is it, of all in the world, that is dealt with by this speech employed by rhetoric?

Gorg.

The greatest of human affairs, Socrates, and the best.

Soc.

But that also, Gorgias, is ambiguous, and still by no means clear. I expect you have heard people singing over their cups the old catch, in which the singers enumerate the best things in life,—"first health, then beauty, and thirdly," as the maker of the catch puts it, "wealth got without guile."[3]

Gorg.

Yes, I have heard it; but what is the point of your quotation?

---

Soc.

I mean that, supposing the producers of those blessings which the maker of the catch commends—namely, the doctor, the trainer, and the money-getter—were to stand before you this moment, and the doctor first should say:

"Gorgias is deceiving you, Socrates for it is not his art, but mine, that deals with man's greatest good." Then supposing I were to ask him:

"And who are you, to say so?" He would probably reply:

"A doctor."

"Well, what do you mean? That the work of your art is the greatest good?"

"What else, Socrates," I expect he would reply,

"is health? What greater good is there for men than health?" And supposing the trainer came next and said:

"I also should be surprised indeed, Socrates, if Gorgias could show you a greater good in his art than I can in mine." Again I should say to him in his turn:

"And who are you, sir? What is your work?"

"A trainer," he would reply,

"and my work is making men's bodies beautiful and strong." After the trainer would come the money-getter, saying— with, I fancy, a fine contempt for every one:

"Pray consider, Socrates, if you can find a good that is greater than

[3]Bergk, Poet. Lyr. Gr. viii., gives four lines of the (anonymous) song: *ὑγιαίνειν μὲν ἄριστον ἀνδρὶ θνατῷ, δεύτερον δὲ φυὰν καλὸν γενέσθαι, τὸ τρίτον δὲ πλουτεῖν ἀδόλως, καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ἡβᾶν μετὰ τῶν φίλων.*

wealth, either in Gorgias' view or in that of anyone else at all."

"Why then," we should say to him,

"are you a producer of that?"

"Yes," he would say.

"And who are you?"

"A money-getter."

"Well then," we shall say to him,

"do you judge wealth to be the greatest good for men?"

"Of course," he will reply.

"But look here," we should say;

"our friend Gorgias contends that his own art is a cause of greater good than yours." Then doubtless his next question would be:

"And what is that good? Let Gorgias answer." Now come, Gorgias; imagine yourself being questioned by those persons and by me, and tell us what is this thing that you say is the greatest good for men, and that you claim to produce.

Gorg.

A thing, Socrates, which in truth is the greatest good, and a cause not merely of freedom to mankind at large, but also of dominion to single persons in their several cities.

Soc.

Well, and what do you call it?

---

Gorg.

I call it the ability to persuade with speeches either judges in the law courts or statesmen in the council-chamber or the commons in the Assembly or an audience at any other meeting that may be held on public affairs. And I tell you that by virtue of this power you will have the doctor as your slave, and the trainer as your slave; your money-getter will turn out to be making money not for himself, but for another,—in fact for you, who are able to speak and persuade the multitude.

Soc.

I think now, Gorgias, you have come very near to showing us the art of rhetoric as you conceive it, and if I at all take your meaning, you say that rhetoric is a producer of persuasion, and has therein its whole business and main consummation. Or can you tell us of any other function it can have beyond that of effecting persuasion in the minds of an audience?

Gorg.

None at all, Socrates; your definition seems to me satisfactory; that is the main substance of the art.

Soc.

Then listen, Gorgias: I, let me assure you, for so I persuade myself—if ever there was a man who debated with another from a desire of knowing the truth of the subject discussed, I am such a man; and so, I trust, are you.

Gorg.

Well, what then, Socrates?

Soc.

I will now tell you. What the real nature of the persuasion is that you speak of as resulting from rhetoric, and what the matters are with which persuasion deals, I assure you I do not clearly understand; though I may have my suspicions as to what I suppose you to mean by it, and with what things you think it deals. But nevertheless I will ask you what you do mean by the persuasion that results from rhetoric, and with what matters you think it deals. Now why is it that, having a suspicion of my own, I am going to ask you this, instead of stating it myself? It is not on your account, but with a view to the argument, and to such a progress in it as may best reveal to us the point we are discussing. Just see if you do not think it fair of me to press you with my question: suppose I happened to ask you what Zeuxis was among painters, and you said

"a figure painter," would it not be fair of me to ask you what sort of figures he painted, and where?

Gorg.

Certainly.

---

Soc.

Would this be the reason—that there are also other painters who depict a variety of other figures?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

But if no one besides Zeuxis were a painter, your answer would have been right?

Gorg.

Yes, of course.

Soc.

Come then, tell me now about rhetoric: do you think rhetoric alone

effects persuasion, or can other arts do it as well? I mean, for example, when a man teaches anything, does he persuade in his teaching? Or do you think not?

Gorg.

No, to be sure, Socrates, I think he most certainly does persuade.

---

Soc.

Then let us repeat our question with reference to the same arts that we spoke of just now: does not numeration, or the person skilled in numeration, teach us all that pertains to number?

Gorg.

Certainly.

Soc.

And persuades also?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

So that numeration also is a producer of persuasion?

Gorg.

Apparently.

Soc.

Then if we are asked what kind of persuasion, and dealing with what, we shall reply, I suppose: The instructive kind, which deals with the amount of an odd or an even number; and we shall be able to demonstrate that all the other arts which we mentioned just now are producers of persuasion, and what kind it is, and what it deals with, shall we not?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Hence rhetoric is not the only producer of persuasion.

Gorg.

You are right.

Soc.

Since then it is not the only one that achieves this effect, but others can also, we should be justified in putting this further question to the speaker, as we did concerning the painter: Then of what kind of persuasion, and of persuasion dealing with what, is rhetoric the art? Or do you not consider that such a further question would be justified?

Gorg.

Yes, I do.

Soc.

Then answer me, Gorgias, since you agree with me on that.

Gorg.

Well then, I mean that kind of persuasion, Socrates, which you find in the law-courts and in any public gatherings, as in fact I said just now; and it deals with what is just and unjust.

Soc.

I, too, I may tell you, had a suspicion that it was this persuasion that you meant, and as dealing with those things, Gorgias; but you must not be surprised if I ask you by-and-by some such question as may seem to be obvious, though I persist in it; for, as I say, I ask my questions with a view to an orderly completion of our argument—I am not aiming at you, but only anxious that we do not fall into a habit of snatching at each other's words with a hasty guess, and that you may complete your own statement in your own way, as the premises may allow.

Gorg.

And I think you are quite right in doing so, Socrates.

Soc.

Come then, let us consider another point. Is there something that you call "having learnt."

Gorg.

There is.

Soc.

And again, "having believed"?

Gorg.

Yes.

---

Soc.

Then do you think that having learnt and having believed, or learning and belief, are the same thing, or different?

Gorg.

In my opinion, Socrates, they are different.

Soc.

And your opinion is right, as you can prove in this way: if some one asked you—Is there, Gorgias, a false and a true belief?—you would say, Yes, I imagine.

Gorg.

I should.

Soc.

But now, is there a false and a true knowledge?

Gorg.

Surely not.

Soc.

So it is evident again that they[4] are not the same.

Gorg.

You are right.

---

Soc.

But yet those who have learnt have been persuaded, as well as those who have believed.

Gorg.

That is so.

Soc.

Then would you have us assume two forms of persuasion—one providing belief without knowledge, and the other sure knowledge?

Gorg.

Certainly.

Soc.

Now which kind of persuasion is it that rhetoric creates in law courts or any public meeting on matters of right and wrong? The kind from which we get belief without knowledge, or that from which we get knowledge?

Gorg.

Obviously, I presume, Socrates, that from which we get belief.

---

Soc.

Thus rhetoric, it seems, is a producer of persuasion for belief, not for instruction in the matter of right and wrong.

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

And so the rhetorician's business is not to instruct a law court or a public meeting in matters of right and wrong, but only to make them believe; since, I take it, he could not in a short while instruct such a mass of people in matters so important.

Gorg.

No, to be sure.

---

[4] i.e. knowledge and belief.

Soc.

Come then, let us see what actually is our account of rhetoric: for I confess I am not yet able to distinguish what my own account of it is. When the city holds a meeting to appoint doctors or shipbuilders or any other set of craftsmen, there is no question then, is there, of the rhetorician giving advice? And clearly this is because in each appointment we have to elect the most skilful person. Again, in a case of building walls or constructing harbors or arsenals, our only advisers are the master-builders; or in consulting on the appointment of generals, or on a manoeuvre against the enemy, or on a military occupation, it is the general staff who will then advise us, and not the rhetoricians. Or what do you say, Gorgias, to these instances? For as you claim to be an orator yourself and to make orators of others, it is proper to inquire of you concerning your own craft. And here you must regard me as furthering your own interest: for it is quite likely that some one within these walls has a wish to become your pupil—indeed I fancy I perceive more than one, yes, a number of them, who, perhaps, would be ashamed to press you with questions. So, when you are being pressed with mine, consider that you are being questioned by them as well:

"What shall we get, Gorgias, by coming to hear you? On what matters shall we be enabled to give advice to the state? Will it be only on right and wrong, or on those things besides which Socrates was mentioning just now?" So try to give them an answer.

Gorg.

Well, I will try, Socrates, to reveal to you clearly the whole power of rhetoric: and in fact you have correctly shown the way to it yourself. You know, I suppose, that these great arsenals and walls of Athens, and the construction of your harbors, are due to the advice of Themistocles, and in part to that of Pericles, not to your craftsmen.

Soc.

So we are told, Gorgias, of Themistocles; and as to Pericles, I heard him myself when he was advising us about the middle wall.[5]

---

Gorg.

So whenever there is an election of such persons as you were referring

[5]Built about 440 B.C. between the two walls built in 456 B.C., one connecting the Piraeus, and the other Phalerum, with Athens. The "middle wall" ran parallel to the former, and secured from hostile attack a narrow strip of land between Athens and the Piraeus. Socrates was born in 469 B.C.

to, Socrates, you see it is the orators who give the advice and get resolutions carried in these matters.

Soc.

That is just what surprises me, Gorgias, and has made me ask you all this time what in the world the power of rhetoric can be. For, viewed in this light, its greatness comes over me as something supernatural.

Gorg.

Ah yes, if you knew all, Socrates,—how it comprises in itself practically all powers at once! And I will tell you a striking proof of this: many and many a time have I gone with my brother or other doctors to visit one of their patients, and found him unwilling either to take medicine or submit to the surgeon's knife or cautery; and when the doctor failed to persuade him I succeeded, by no other art than that of rhetoric. And I further declare that, if a rhetorician and a doctor were to enter any city you please, and there had to contend in speech before the Assembly or some other meeting as to which of the two should be appointed physician, you would find the physician was nowhere, while the master of speech would be appointed if he wished. And if he had to contend with a member of any other profession whatsoever, the rhetorician would persuade the meeting to appoint him before anyone else in the place: for there is no subject on which the rhetorician could not speak more persuasively than a member of any other profession whatsoever, before a multitude. So great, so strange, is the power of this art. At the same time, Socrates, our use of rhetoric should be like our use of any other sort of exercise. For other exercises are not to be used against all and sundry, just because one has learnt boxing or wrestling or fighting in armour so well as to vanquish friend and foe alike: this gives one no right to strike one's friends, or stab them to death. Nor, in all conscience, if a man took lessons at a wrestling-school, and having got himself into good condition and learnt boxing he proceeded to strike his father and mother, or some other of his relations or friends, should that be a reason for hating athletic trainers and teachers of fighting in armour, and expelling them from our cities. For they imparted their skill with a view to its rightful use against enemies and wrongdoers, in self-defence, not provocation; whereas the others have perverted their strength and art to an improper use.

Gorg.

So it is not the teachers who are wicked, nor is the art either guilty or wicked on this account, but rather, to my thinking, those who do not use it properly. Now the same argument applies also to rhetoric: for the orator is able, indeed, to speak against every one and on every question

in such a way as to win over the votes of the multitude, practically in any matter he may choose to take up: but he is no whit the more entitled to deprive the doctors of their credit, just because he could do so, or other professionals of theirs; he must use his rhetoric fairly, as in the case of athletic exercise. And, in my opinion, if a man becomes a rhetorician and then uses this power and this art unfairly, we ought not to hate his teacher and cast him out of our cities. For he imparted that skill to be used in all fairness, whilst this man puts it to an opposite use. Thus it is the man who does not use it aright who deserves to be hated and expelled and put to death, and not his teacher.

Soc.

I expect, Gorgias, that you as well as I have had no small practice in arguments, and have observed the following fact about them, that it is not easy for people to define to each other the matters which they take in hand to discuss, and to make such exchange of instruction as will fairly bring their debate to an end: no, if they find that some point is in dispute between them, and one of them says that the other is speaking incorrectly or obscurely, they are annoyed and think the remark comes from jealousy of themselves, and in a spirit of contention rather than of inquiry into the matter proposed for discussion. In some cases, indeed, they end by making a most disgraceful scene, with such abusive expressions on each side that the rest of the company are vexed on their own account that they allowed themselves to listen to such fellows. Well, what is my reason for saying this? It is because your present remarks do not seem to me quite in keeping or accord with what you said at first about rhetoric. Now I am afraid to refute you, lest you imagine I am contentiously neglecting the point and its elucidation, and merely attacking you.

---

Soc.

I therefore, if you are a person of the same sort as myself, should be glad to continue questioning you: if not, I can let it drop. Of what sort am I? One of those who would be glad to be refuted if I say anything untrue, and glad to refute anyone else who might speak untruly; but just as glad, mind you, to be refuted as to refute, since I regard the former as the greater benefit, in proportion as it is a greater benefit for oneself to be delivered from the greatest evil than to deliver some one else. For I consider that a man cannot suffer any evil so great as a false opinion on the subjects of our actual argument. Now if you say that you too are of that sort, let us go on with the conversation; but if

you think we had better drop it, let us have done with it at once and make an end of the discussion.

Gorg.

Nay, I too, Socrates, claim to be of the sort you indicate; though perhaps we should have taken thought also for the wishes of our company. For, let me tell you, some time before you and your friend arrived, I gave the company a performance of some length; and if we now have this conversation I expect we shall seriously protract our sitting. We ought, therefore, to consider their wishes as well, in case we are detaining any of them who may want to do something else.

Chaer.

You hear for yourselves, Gorgias and Socrates, the applause by which these gentlemen show their desire to hear anything you may say; for my own part, however, Heaven forbid that I should ever be so busy as to give up a discussion so interesting and so conducted, because I found it more important to attend to something else.

---

Call.

Yes, by all that's holy, Chaerephon; and let me say, moreover, for myself that among the many discussions which I have attended in my time I doubt if there was one that gave me such delight as this present one. So, for my part, I shall count it a favor even if you choose to continue it all day long.

Soc.

Why, Callicles, I assure you there is no hindrance on my side, if Gorgias is willing.

Gorg.

After that, Socrates, it would be shameful indeed if I were unwilling, when it was I who challenged everybody to ask what questions they pleased. But if our friends here are so minded, go on with the conversation and ask me anything you like.

Soc.

Hark you then, Gorgias, to what surprises me in your statements: to be sure, you may possibly be right, and I may take your meaning wrongly. You say you are able to make a rhetorician of any man who chooses to learn from you?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Now, do you mean, to make him carry conviction to the crowd on all

subjects, not by teaching them, but by persuading?

---

Gorg.
Certainly I do.
Soc.
You were saying just now, you know, that even in the matter of health the orator will be more convincing than the doctor.
Gorg.
Yes, indeed, I was—meaning, to the crowd.
Soc.
And "to the crowd" means "to the ignorant?" For surely, to those who know, he will not be more convincing than the doctor.
Gorg.
You are right.
Soc.
And if he is to be more convincing than the doctor, he thus becomes more convincing than he who knows?
Gorg.
Certainly.
Soc.
Though not himself a doctor, you agree?

---

Gorg.
Yes.
Soc.
But he who is not a doctor is surely without knowledge of that whereof the doctor has knowledge.
Gorg.
Clearly.
Soc.
So he who does not know will be more convincing to those who do not know than he who knows, supposing the orator to be more convincing than the doctor. Is that, or something else, the consequence?
Gorg.
In this case it does follow.
Soc.
Then the case is the same in all the other arts for the orator and his rhetoric: there is no need to know the truth of the actual matters, but one merely needs to have discovered some device of persuasion which will make one appear to those who do not know to know better than

those who know.

Gorg.

Well, and is it not a great convenience, Socrates, to make oneself a match for the professionals by learning just this single art and omitting all the others?

Soc.

Whether the orator is or is not a match for the rest of them by reason of that skill, is a question we shall look into presently, if our argument so requires: for the moment let us consider first whether the rhetorician is in the same relation to what is just and unjust, base and noble, good and bad, as to what is healthful, and to the various objects of all the other arts; he does not know what is really good or bad, noble or base, just or unjust, but he has devised a persuasion to deal with these matters so as to appear to those who, like himself, do not know to know better than he who knows. Or is it necessary to know, and must anyone who intends to learn rhetoric have a previous knowledge of these things when he comes to you? Or if not, are you, as the teacher of rhetoric, to teach the person who comes to you nothing about them—for it is not your business—but only to make him appear in the eyes of the multitude to know things of this sort when he does not know, and to appear to be good when he is not? Or will you be utterly unable to teach him rhetoric unless he previously knows the truth about these matters? Or what is the real state of the case, Gorgias? For Heaven's sake, as you proposed just now, draw aside the veil and tell us what really is the function of rhetoric.

Gorg.

Why, I suppose, Socrates, if he happens not to know these things he will learn them too from me.

Soc.

Stop there: I am glad of that statement. If you make a man a rhetorician he must needs know what is just and unjust either previously or by learning afterwards from you.

Gorg.

Quite so.

---

Soc.

Well now, a man who has learnt building is a builder, is he not?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

And he who has learnt music, a musician?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Then he who has learnt medicine is a medical man, and so on with the rest on the same principle; anyone who has learnt a certain art has the qualification acquired by his particular knowledge?

Gorg.

Certainly.

Soc.

And so, on this principle, he who has learnt what is just is just?

Gorg.

Absolutely, I presume.

Soc.

And the just man, I suppose, does what is just.

Gorg.

Yes.

---

Soc.

Now the just man must wish to do what is just?

Gorg.

Apparently.

Soc.

Hence the just man will never wish to act unjustly?

Gorg.

That must needs be so.

Soc.

But it follows from our statements[6] that the rhetorician must be just.

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Hence the rhetorician will never wish to do wrong.

Gorg.

Apparently not.

Soc.

Then do you remember saying a little while ago that we ought not to complain against the trainers or expel them from our cities, if a boxer makes not merely use, but an unfair use, of his boxing? So in just

[6] i.e. that he must know what is just, and that he who knows this must be just (see ¤ ¤ A and B above).

the same way, if an orator uses his rhetoric unfairly, we should not complain against his teacher or banish him from our city, but the man who does the wrong and misuses his rhetoric. Was that said or not?

Gorg.

It was.

---

Soc.

But now we find that this very person, the rhetorician, could never be guilty of wrongdoing, do we not?

Gorg.

We do.

Soc.

And in our first statements, Gorgias, we said that rhetoric dealt with speech, not on even and odd, but on the just and unjust, did we not?

Gorg.

Yes.

Soc.

Well then, I supposed at the time when you were saying this that rhetoric could never be an unjust thing, since the speeches it made were always about justice but when a little later you told us that the orator might make even an unjust use of his rhetoric, that indeed surprised me, and thinking the two statements were not in accord I made those proposals,—that if, like myself, you counted it a gain to be refuted, it was worth while to have the discussion, but if not, we had better have done with it. And now that we have come to examine the matter, you see for yourself that we agree once more that it is impossible for the rhetorician to use his rhetoric unjustly or consent to do wrong. Now, to distinguish properly which way the truth of the matter lies will require, by the Dog,[7] Gorgias, no short sitting.

Pol.

How is this, Socrates? Is that really your opinion of rhetoric, as you now express it? Or, think you, because Gorgias was ashamed not to admit your point that the rhetorician knows what is just and noble and good, and will himself teach these to anyone who comes to him without knowing them; and then from this admission I daresay there followed some inconsistency in the statements made—the result that you are so fond of—when it was yourself who led him into that set of questions![8] For who do you think will deny that he has a knowledge of

[7] This favorite oath of Socrates was derived from Egypt, where the god Anubis was represented with a dog's head; cf. *Plat. Gorg. 482b.*

what is just and can also teach it to others? I call it very bad taste to lead the discussion in such a direction.

Soc.

Ah, sweet Polus, of course it is for this very purpose we possess ourselves of companions and sons, that when the advance of years begins to make us stumble, you younger ones may be at hand to set our lives upright again in words as well as deeds. So now if Gorgias and I are stumbling in our words, you are to stand by and set us up again—it is only your duty; and for my part I am willing to revoke at your pleasure anything that you think has been wrongly admitted, if you will kindly observe one condition.

Pol.

What do you mean by that?

Soc.

That you keep a check on that lengthy way of speaking, Polus, which you tried to employ at first.

Pol.

Why, shall I not be at liberty to say as much as I like?

---

Soc.

It would indeed be a hard fate for you, my excellent friend, if having come to Athens, where there is more freedom of speech than anywhere in Greece, you should be the one person there who could not enjoy it.

Soc.

But as a set-off to that, I ask you if it would not be just as hard on me, while you spoke at length and refused to answer my questions, not to be free to go away and avoid listening to you. No, if you have any concern for the argument that we have carried on, and care to set it on its feet again, revoke whatever you please, as I suggested just now; take your turn in questioning and being questioned, like me and Gorgias; and thus either refute or be refuted. For you claim, I understand, that you yourself know all that Gorgias knows, do you not?

Pol.

I do.

Soc.

Then are you with him also in bidding us ask at each point any questions we like of you, as one who knows how to answer?

Pol.

---

[8]The defective construction of this sentence is probably intended to mark the agitated manner of Polus in making his protest.

Certainly I am.

---

Soc.

So now, take whichever course you like: either put questions, or answer them.

Pol.

Well, I will do as you say. So answer me this, Socrates: since you think that Gorgias is at a loss about rhetoric, what is your own account of it?

Soc.

Are you asking what art I call it?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

None at all, I consider, Polus, if you would have the honest truth.

Pol.

But what do you consider rhetoric to be?

---

Soc.

A thing which you say—in the treatise which I read of late—"made art."

Pol.

What thing do you mean?

Soc.

I mean a certain habitude.

Pol.

Then do you take rhetoric to be a habitude?

Soc.

I do, if you have no other suggestion.

Pol.

Habitude of what?

Soc.

Of producing a kind of gratification and pleasure.

Pol.

Then you take rhetoric to be something fine—an ability to gratify people?

Soc.

How now, Polus? Have you as yet heard me tell you what I say it is, that you ask what should follow that—whether I do not take it to be fine?

Pol.
Why, did I not hear you call it a certain habitude?
Soc.
Then please—since you value "gratification"—be so good as gratify me in a small matter.
Pol.
I will.
Soc.
Ask me now what art I take cookery to be.
Pol.
Then I ask you, what art is cookery ?
Soc.
None at all, Polus.
Pol.
Well, what is it ? Tell me.

---

Soc.
Then I reply, a certain habitude.
Pol.
Of what? Tell me.
Soc.
Then I reply, of production of gratification and pleasure, Polus.
Pol.
So cookery and rhetoric are the same thing?
Soc.
Not at all, only parts of the same practice.
Pol.
What practice do you mean?
Soc.
I fear it may be too rude to tell the truth; for I shrink from saying it on Gorgias' account, lest he suppose I am making satirical fun of his own profession. Yet indeed I do not know whether this is the rhetoric which Gorgias practices, for from our argument just now we got no very clear view as to how he conceives it; but what I call rhetoric is a part of a certain business which has nothing fine about it.
Gorg.
What is that, Socrates? Tell us, without scruple on my account.
Soc.
It seems to me then, Gorgias, to be a pursuit that is not a matter of art, but showing a shrewd, gallant spirit which has a natural bent for clever

dealing with mankind, and I sum up its substance in the name flattery. This practice, as I view it, has many branches, and one of them is cookery; which appears indeed to be an art but, by my account of it, is not an art but a habitude or knack. I call rhetoric another branch of it, as also personal adornment and sophistry—four branches of it for four kinds of affairs. So if Polus would inquire, let him inquire: he has not yet been informed to what sort of branch of flattery I assign rhetoric; but without noticing that I have not yet answered that, he proceeds to ask whether I do not consider it a fine thing. But I am not going to reply to the question whether I consider rhetoric a fine or a base thing, until I have first answered what it is; for it would not be fair, Polus: but if you want the information, ask me what sort of branch of flattery I assert rhetoric to be.

Pol.

I ask you then; so answer, what sort of branch it is.

Soc.

Now, will you understand when I answer? Rhetoric, by my account, is a semblance[9] of a branch of politics.

Pol.

Well then, do you call it a fine or a base thing?

Soc.

A base one, I call it—for all that is bad I call base—since I am to answer you as though you had already understood my meaning.

Gorg.

Nor do I myself, upon my word, Socrates, grasp your meaning either.

Soc.

And no wonder, Gorgias, for as yet my statement is not at all clear; but Polus[10] here is so young and fresh!

Gorg.

Ah, do not mind him; but tell me what you mean by rhetoric being a semblance of a branch of politics.

Soc.

Well, I will try to express what rhetoric appears to me to be: if it is not in fact what I say, Polus here will refute me. There are things, I suppose, that you call body and soul?

---

Gorg.

Of course.

---

[9] i.e.an unreal image or counterfeit: Quintilian (ii. 15.25) renders simulacrum.

[10] Socrates alludes to the meaning of πῶλος (a colt).

Soc.
And each of these again you believe to have a good condition?
Gorg.
I do.
Soc.
And again, a good condition that may seem so, but is not? As an example, let me give the following: many people seem to be in good bodily condition when it would not be easy for anyone but a doctor, or one of the athletic trainers, to perceive that they are not so.
Gorg.
You are right.
Soc.
Something of this sort I say there is in body and in soul, which makes the body or the soul seem to be in good condition, though it is none the more so in fact.

---

Gorg.
Quite so.
Soc.
Now let me see if I can explain my meaning to you more clearly. There are two different affairs to which I assign two different arts: the one, which has to do with the soul, I call politics; the other, which concerns the body, though I cannot give you a single name for it offhand, is all one business, the tendance of the body, which I can designate in two branches as gymnastic and medicine. Under politics I set legislation in the place of gymnastic, and justice to match medicine. In each of these pairs, of course—medicine and gymnastic, justice and legislation—there is some intercommunication, as both deal with the same thing; at the same time they have certain differences. Now these four, which always bestow their care for the best advantage respectively of the body and the soul, are noticed by the art of flattery which, I do not say with knowledge, but by speculation, divides herself into four parts, and then, insinuating herself into each of those branches, pretends to be that into which she has crept, and cares nothing for what is the best, but dangles what is most pleasant for the moment as a bait for folly, and deceives it into thinking that she is of the highest value. Thus cookery assumes the form of medicine, and pretends to know what foods are best for the body; so that if a cook and a doctor had to contend before boys, or before men as foolish as boys, as to which of the two, the doctor or the cook, understands the question of

sound and noxious foods, the doctor would starve to death.

Soc.

Flattery, however, is what I call it, and I say that this sort of thing is a disgrace, Polus—for here I address you—because it aims at the pleasant and ignores the best; and I say it is not an art, but a habitude, since it has no account to give of the real nature of the things it applies, and so cannot tell the cause of any of them. I refuse to give the name of art to anything that is irrational: if you dispute my views, I am ready to give my reasons. However, as I put it, cookery is flattery disguised as medicine; and in just the same manner self-adornment personates gymnastic: with its rascally, deceitful, ignoble, and illiberal nature it deceives men by forms and colors, polish and dress so as to make them, in the effort of assuming an extraneous beauty, neglect the native sort that comes through gymnastic. Well, to avoid prolixity, I am willing to put it to you like a geometer[11]—for by this time I expect you can follow me: as self-adornment is to gymnastic, so is sophistry to legislation; and as cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice.[12] But although, as I say, there is this natural distinction between them,[13] they are so nearly related that sophists and orators are jumbled up as having the same field and dealing with the same subjects, and neither can they tell what to make of each other, nor the world at large what to make of them. For indeed, if the soul were not in command of the body, but the latter had charge of itself, and so cookery and medicine were not surveyed and distinguished by the soul, but the body itself were the judge, forming its own estimate of them by the gratifications they gave it, we should have a fine instance of what Anaxagoras described, my dear Polus,—for you are versed in these matters: everything would be jumbled together, without distinction as between medicinal and healthful and tasty concoctions. Well now, you have heard what I state rhetoric to be—the counterpart of cookery in the soul, acting here as that does on the body. It may, indeed, be absurd of me, when I do not allow you to make long speeches, to have extended mine to so considerable a length. However, I can fairly claim indulgence: for when I spoke briefly you did not understand me; you were unable to make any use of the answer I gave you, but required a full exposition.

Soc.

Now if I on my part cannot tell what use to make of any answers you

[11] i.e. in the concise mathematical manner, such as that which later appeared in the writings of Euclid

[12] Administrative justice is here specially meant.

[13] i.e. sophistry and rhetoric.

may give me, you shall extend your speech also; but if I can make some use of them, allow me to do it; that will only be fair. And now, if you can make any use of this answer of mine, do so.

Pol.

Then what is it you say? Do you take rhetoric to be flattery?

Soc.

Well, I said rather a branch of flattery. Why, at your age, Polus, have you no memory? What will you do later on?

Pol.

Then do you think that good orators are considered to be flatterers in their cities, and so worthless?

---

Soc.

Is that a question you are asking, or are you beginning a speech?

Pol.

I am asking a question.

Soc.

To my mind, they are not considered at all.

Pol.

How not considered? Have they not the chief power in their cities?

Soc.

No, if you mean power in the sense of something good for him who has it.

Pol.

Why, of course I mean that.

Soc.

Then, to my thinking, the orators have the smallest power of all who are in their city.

---

Pol.

What? Are they not like the despots, in putting to death anyone they please, and depriving anyone of his property and expelling him from their cities as they may think fit?

Soc.

By the Dog, I fear I am still in two minds, Polus, at everything you say, as to whether this is a statement on your own part, and a declaration of your own opinion, or a question you are putting to me.

Pol.

Why, I am asking you.

Soc.

Very well, my friend then are you asking me two things at once?

Pol.

How two?

---

Soc.

Were you not this moment saying something like this: Is it not the case that the orators put to death anyone they wish, like the despots, and deprive people of property and expel them from their cities as they may think fit?

Pol.

I was.

Soc.

Then I tell you that there are two questions here, and I will give you answers to them both. For I say, Polus, that the orators and the despots alike have the least power in their cities, as I stated just now; since they do nothing that they wish to do, practically speaking, though they do whatever they think to be best.

Pol.

Well, and is not that a great power to have?

Soc.

No, judging at least by what Polus says.

Pol.

I say no! Pardon me, I say yes.

Soc.

No, by the ————, you do not; for you said that great power is a good to him who has it.

Pol.

Yes, and I maintain it.

Soc.

Then do you regard it as a good, when a man does what he thinks to be best, without having intelligence? Is that what you call having a great power?

Pol.

No, I do not.

Soc.

Then will you prove that the orators have intelligence, and that rhetoric is an art, not a flattery, and so refute me ? Else, if you are going to leave me unrefuted, the orators who do what they think fit in their cities, and the despots, will find they have got no good in doing that, if indeed power is, as you say, a good, but doing what one thinks fit

without intelligence is—as you yourself admit, do you not?—an evil.

Pol.

Yes, I do.

Soc.

How then can the orators or the despots have great power in their cities, unless Socrates is refuted by Polus, and admits that they do what they wish?

---

Pol.

Hark at the man————!

Soc.

I deny that they do what they wish: there, refute me.

Pol.

Did you not admit just now that they do what they think best?

Soc.

Yes, and I admit it now.

Pol.

Then do they not do what they wish?

Soc.

I say no.

Pol.

When they do what they think fit?

Soc.

Yes.

Pol.

What shocking, nay, monstrous answers, Socrates!

Soc.

Spare your invective, peerless Polus—if I may address you in your own style:[14] but if you have a question to ask me, expose my error otherwise, make answer yourself.

Pol.

Well, I am ready to answer, in order that I may know what you mean.

Soc.

Then is it your view that people wish merely that which they do each time, or that which is the object of their doing what they do? For instance, do those who take medicine by doctor's orders wish, in your opinion, merely what they do,—to take the medicine and suffer the

[14]The assonance in *ὦ λῷστε Πῶλε* is a mocking allusion to the nicely balanced clauses and jingling phrases which Polus imitated from his master Gorgias. Something of this style appears in Polus's speech above, 448c.

pain of it,—or rather to be healthy, which is the object of their taking it?

---

Pol.

To be healthy, without a doubt.

Soc.

And so with seafarers and such as pursue profit generally in trade; what they wish is not what they are doing at each moment—for who wishes to go on a voyage, and incur all its danger and trouble? It is rather, I conceive, the object of their voyage—to get wealth; since it is for wealth that they go on it.

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

And is it not just the same in every case? If a man does something for an object, he does not wish the thing that he does, but the thing for which he does it.

---

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Now is there any existent thing that is not either good or bad or between these—neither good nor bad?

Pol.

Most assuredly nothing, Socrates.

Soc.

Well, do you call wisdom and health and wealth and everything else of that kind good, and their opposites bad?

Pol.

I do.

Soc.

And by things neither good nor bad do you mean such things as sometimes partake of the good, sometimes of the bad, and sometimes of neither—for example, sitting, walking, running, and sailing, or again, stones and sticks and anything else of that sort? These are what you mean, are they not? Or are there other things that you describe as neither good nor bad?

Pol.

No, these are what I mean.

Soc.

Then do people do these intermediate things, when they do them, for the sake of the good things, or the good things for the intermediate?

Pol.

The intermediate, I presume, for the good.

---

Soc.

Thus it is in pursuit of the good that we walk, when we walk, conceiving it to be better; or on the contrary, stand, when we stand, for the sake of the same thing, the good: is it not so?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

And so we put a man to death, if we do put him to death, or expel him or deprive him of his property, because we think it better for us to do this than not?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

So it is for the sake of the good that the doers of all these things do them?

Pol.

I agree.

Soc.

And we have admitted that when we do things for an object, we do not wish those things, but the object for which we do them?

---

Pol.

Quite so.

Soc.

Then we do not wish to slaughter people or expel them from our cities or deprive them of their property as an act in itself, but if these things are beneficial we wish to do them, while if they are harmful, we do not wish them. For we wish what is good, as you say; but what is neither good nor bad we do not wish, nor what is bad either, do we? Is what I say true in your opinion, Polus, or not? Why do you not answer?

Pol.

It is true.

---

Soc.

Then, as we agree on this, if a man puts anyone to death or expels him from a city or deprives him of his property, whether he does it as a despot or an orator, because he thinks it better for himself though it is really worse, that man, I take it, does what he thinks fit, does he not?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Now is it also what he wishes, supposing it to be really bad? Why do you not answer?

Pol.

No, I do not think he does what he wishes.

---

Soc.

Can such a man then be said to have great power in that city, if to have great power is something good, according to your admission?

Pol.

He cannot.

Soc.

Then I spoke the truth when I said that it is possible for a man to do what he thinks fit in a city and yet not to have great power nor to do what he wishes.

Pol.

As if you, Socrates, would not accept the liberty of doing what you think fit in your city rather than not, and would not envy a man whom you observed to have put some one to death as he thought fit, or deprived him of his property or sent him to prison!

Soc.

Justly, do you mean, or unjustly?

---

Pol.

Whichever way he does it, is it not enviable in either case?

Soc.

Hush, Polus!

Pol.

Why?

Soc.

Because we ought not to envy either the unenviable or the wretched, but pity them.

Pol.

What! Is that the state in which you consider those people, of whom I speak, to be?

Soc.

Yes, for so I must.

Pol.

Then do you consider that a man who puts another to death as he thinks fit, and justly puts him to death, is wretched and pitiable?

Soc.

Not I; but not enviable either.

Pol.

Did you not say just now that he was wretched?

---

Soc.

Only he who unjustly put some one to death, my friend, and I called him pitiable as well: if he acted justly, then he is unenviable.

Pol.

I suppose, at any rate, the man who is put to death unjustly is both pitiable and wretched.

Soc.

Less so than he who puts him to death, Polus, and less so than he who is put to death justly.

Pol.

In what way can that be, Socrates ?

Soc.

In this, that to do wrong is the greatest of evils.

Pol.

What, is this the greatest? Is not to suffer wrong a greater?

Soc.

By no means.

Pol.

Then would you wish rather to suffer wrong than to do it?

---

Soc.

I should wish neither, for my own part; but if it were necessary either to do wrong or to suffer it, I should choose to suffer rather than do it.

Pol.

Then you would not accept a despot's power?

Soc.

No, if you mean by a despot's power the same as I do.

Pol.

Why, what I mean is, as I did just now, the liberty of doing anything one thinks fit in one's city—putting people to death and expelling them and doing everything at one's own discretion.

Soc.

My gifted friend, let me speak, and you shall take me to task in your turn. Suppose that in a crowded market I should hide a dagger under my arm and then say to you:

"Polus, I have just acquired, by a wonderful chance, the power of a despot; for if I should think fit that one of those people whom you see there should die this very instant, a dead man he will be, just as I think fit; or if I think fit that one of them shall have his head broken, broken it will be immediately; or to have his cloak torn in pieces, torn it will be: so great is my power in this city." Then suppose that on your disbelieving this I showed you my dagger; I expect when you saw it you would say:

"Socrates, at this rate every one would have great power, for any house you thought fit might be set ablaze on these methods, and the Athenian arsenals also, and the men-of-war and all the rest of the shipping, both public and private." But surely this is not what it is to have great power—merely doing what one thinks fit. Or do you think it is?

Pol.

Oh no, not in that way.

---

Soc.

Then can you tell me why you disapprove of this kind of power?

Pol.

I can.

Soc.

Why, then? Tell me.

Pol.

Because it is inevitable that he who acts thus will be punished.

Soc.

And is it not a bad thing to be punished?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

So, my remarkable friend, you have come round again to the view that if doing what one thinks fit is attended by advantage in doing it, this is not merely a good thing but at the same time, it seems, the

possession of great power; otherwise it is a bad thing and means little power. And let us consider another point besides; do we not admit that sometimes it is better to do those things that we were mentioning just now—to put people to death and banish them and deprive them of property—while sometimes it is not?

Pol.

To be sure.

Soc.

Then here is a point, it seems, that is admitted both on your side and on mine.

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Then when do you say it is better to do these things? Tell me where you draw the line.

Pol.

Nay, I would rather that you, Socrates, answered that.

---

Soc.

Well then I say, Polus, if you prefer to hear it from me, that it is better when these things are done justly, and worse when unjustly.

Pol.

So hard to refute you, Socrates! Nay, a mere child could do it, could he not, and prove your words are untrue?

Soc.

Then I shall be most grateful to the child, and equally to you, if you refute me and rid me of foolery. Come, do not grow weary in well-doing towards your friend, but refute me.

---

Pol.

Well, to be sure, Socrates, there is no need to refute you with ancient instances; for those happenings of but a day or two ago are enough to refute you, and prove that many a wrongdoer is happy.

Soc.

What sort of thing do you mean?

Pol.

I suppose you see that Archelaus, son of Perdiccas, is ruler of Macedonia?[15]

Soc.

[15] Archelaus usurped the throne of Macedonia in 413 B.C., and ruled till his death

Well, if I do not, at any rate I hear it.

Pol.

Do you consider him happy or wretched?

Soc.

I do not know, Polus; I have never met the man.

---

Pol.

What? Could you find out by meeting him, and cannot otherwise tell, straight off, that he is happy?

Soc.

No, indeed, upon my word.

Pol.

Then doubtless you will say, Socrates, that you do not know that even the Great King is happy.

Soc.

Yes, and I shall be speaking the truth; for I do not know how he stands in point of education and justice.

Pol.

Why, does happiness entirely consist in that?

Soc.

Yes, by my account, Polus; for a good and honorable man or woman, I say, is happy, and an unjust and wicked one is wretched.

---

Pol.

Then this Archelaus, on your statement, is wretched?

Soc.

Yes, my friend, supposing he is unjust.

Pol.

Well, but how can he be other than unjust? He had no claim to the throne which he now occupies, being the son of a woman who was a slave of Perdiccas' brother Alcetas, and in mere justice he was Alcetas' slave; and if he wished to do what is just, he would be serving Alcetas and would be happy, by your account; but, as it is, he has become a prodigy of wretchedness, since he has done the most enormous wrong. First of all he invited this very master and uncle of his to his court, as if he were going to restore to him the kingdom of which Perdiccas had deprived him; and after entertaining him and his son Alexander—

---

in 399 B.C. Euripides, Agathon, and other distinguished Athenians were guests at his court; Socrates was also invited, but declined to visit him (Aristot. Rhet. ii. 23. 8), and this is probably the point of Socrates' next remark.

his own cousin, about the same age as himself—and making them drunk, he packed them into a carriage, drove them away by night, and murdered and made away with them both. And after all these iniquities he failed to observe that he had become a most wretched person and had no repentance, but a while later he refused to make himself happy by bringing up, as he was justly bound, his brother, the legitimate son of Perdiccas, a boy about seven years old who had a just title to the throne, and restoring the kingdom to him; but he cast him into a well and drowned him, and then told his mother Cleopatra that he had fallen in and lost his life while chasing a goose. So now, you see, as the greatest wrongdoer in Macedonia, he is the most wretched of all the Macedonians, not the happiest; and I daresay some Athenians could be found who would join you in preferring to change places with any other Macedonian of them all, rather than with Archelaus!

Soc.

At the beginning of our discussion, Polus, I complimented you on having had, as I consider, a good training in rhetoric, while you seem to have neglected disputation; and now, accordingly, this is the argument, is it, with which any child could refute me? By this statement, you think, I now stand refuted at your hands, when I assert that the wrongdoer is not happy? How so, my good friend? Why, I tell you I do not admit a single point in what you say.

---

Pol.

No, because you do not want to; for you really agree with my statement.

Soc.

My gifted friend, that is because you attempt to refute me in rhetorical fashion, as they understand refuting in the law courts. For there, one party is supposed to refute the other when they bring forward a number of reputable witnesses to any statements they may make, whilst their opponent produces only one, or none. But this sort of refutation is quite worthless for getting at the truth; since occasionally a man may actually be crushed by the number and reputation of the false witnesses brought against him. And so now you will find almost everybody, Athenians and foreigners, in agreement with you on the points you state, if you like to bring forward witnesses against the truth of what I say: if you like, there is Nicias, son of Niceratus, with his brothers, whose tripods are standing in a row in the Dionysium;[16]

[16]These tripods were prizes won by dramatic performances supported as a public service by Nicias and his brothers, and they were placed in the precincts of the temple

or else Aristocrates, son of Scellias, whose goodly offering again is well known at Delphi; or if you choose, there is the whole house of Pericles or any other family you may like to select in this place. But I, alone here before you, do not admit it, for you fail to convince me: you only attempt, by producing a number of false witnesses against me, to oust me from my reality, the truth. But if on my part I fail to produce yourself as my one witness to confirm what I say, I consider I have achieved nothing of any account towards the matter of our discussion, whatever it may be; nor have you either, I conceive, unless I act alone as your one witness, and you have nothing to do with all these others. Well now, this is one mode of refutation, as you and many other people understand it; but there is also another which I on my side understand. Let us therefore compare them with each other and consider if there is a difference between them. For indeed the points which we have at issue are by no means of slight importance: rather, one might say, they are matters on which it is most honorable to have knowledge, and most disgraceful to lack it; for in sum they involve our knowing or not knowing who is happy and who is not. To start at once with the point we are now debating, you consider it possible for a man to be happy while doing wrong, and as a wrongdoer, since you regard Archelaus as a wrongdoer, and yet happy. We are to conclude, are we not, that this is your opinion?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

And I say it is impossible. There we have one point at issue. Very good but then, will a man be happy in wrongdoing if he comes in for requital and punishment?

Pol.

Not at all, since in that case he would be most wretched.

---

Soc.

But if the wrongdoer escapes requital, by your account he will be happy?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

---

of Dionysus. The persons here mentioned are selected as instances of public men who won high reputation in their time through the pursuit of material wealth and influence.

Whereas in my opinion, Polus, the wrongdoer or the unjust is wretched anyhow; more wretched, however, if he does not pay the penalty and gets no punishment for his wrongdoing, but less wretched if he pays the penalty and meets with requital from gods and men.

---

Pol.
What a strange doctrine, Socrates, you are trying to maintain!
Soc.
Yes, and I will endeavor to make you too, my friend, maintain it with me: for I count you as a friend. Well now, these are the points on which we differ; just examine them yourself. I think I told you at an earlier stage that wrongdoing was worse than being wronged.
Pol.
Certainly you did.
Soc.
And you thought that being wronged was worse.
Pol.
Yes.
Soc.
And I said that wrongdoers were wretched, and I was refuted by you.
Pol.
Upon my word, yes.

---

Soc.
At least to your thinking, Polus.
Pol.
Yes, and true thinking too.
Soc.
Perhaps. But you said, on the other hand, that wrongdoers are happy, if they pay no penalty.
Pol.
Certainly.
Soc.
Whereas I say they are most wretched, and those who pay the penalty, less so. Do you wish to refute that as well?
Pol.
Why, that is still harder to refute, Socrates, than the other!
Soc.
Not merely so, Polus, but impossible; for the truth is never refuted.

---

Pol.

How do you mean? If a man be caught criminally plotting to make himself a despot, and he be straightway put on the rack and castrated and have his eyes burnt out, and after suffering himself, and seeing inflicted on his wife and children, a number of grievous torments of every kind, he be finally crucified or burnt in a coat of pitch, will he be happier than if he escape and make himself despot, and pass his life as the ruler in his city, doing whatever he likes, and envied and congratulated by the citizens and the foreigners besides? Impossible, do you tell me, to refute that?

Soc.

You are trying to make my flesh creep this time, my spirited Polus, instead of refuting me; a moment ago you were for calling witnesses. However, please refresh my memory a little: "criminally plotting to make himself a despot," you said?

Pol.

I did.

Soc.

Then neither of them will ever be happier than the other—neither he who has unjustly compassed the despotic power, nor he who pays the penalty; for of two wretched persons neither can be happier; but still more wretched is he who goes scot-free and establishes himself as despot. What is that I see, Polus? You are laughing? Here we have yet another form of refutation—when a statement is made, to laugh it down, instead of disproving it!

Pol.

Do you not think yourself utterly refuted, Socrates, when you make such statements as nobody in the world would assent to? You have only to ask anyone of the company here.

Soc.

Polus, I am not one of your statesmen: indeed, last year, when I was elected a member of the Council, and, as my tribe held the Presidency, I had to put a question to the vote, I got laughed at for not understanding the procedure.[17] So do not call upon me again to take the votes of the company now; but if, as I said this moment, you have no better disproof than those, hand the work over to me in my turn, and try the sort of refutation that I think the case requires. For I know how to

[17]Socrates refers humorously to his noble act in refusing to put to the vote an illegal proposal against the generals who fought at Arginusae, 406 B.C. By saying "last year" he fixes the supposed date of this conversation at 405 B.C.

produce one witness in support of my statements, and that is the man himself with whom I find myself arguing; the many I dismiss: there is also one whose vote I know how to take, whilst to the multitude I have not a word to say. See therefore if you will consent to be put to the proof in your turn by answering my questions. For I think, indeed, that you and I and the rest of the world believe that doing wrong is worse than suffering it, and escaping punishment worse than incurring it.

Pol.

And I, that neither I nor anyone else in the world believes it. You, it seems, would choose rather to suffer wrong than to do it.

Soc.

Yes, and so would you and everyone else.

Pol.

Far from it neither; I nor you nor anybody else.

---

Soc.

Then will you answer?

Pol.

To be sure I will, for indeed I am eager to know what on earth you will say.

Soc.

Well then, so that you may know, tell me, just as though I were asking you all over again, which of the two seems to you, Polus, to be the worse—doing wrong or suffering it?

Pol.

Suffering it, I say.

Soc.

Now again, which is fouler—doing wrong or suffering it? Answer.

Pol.

Doing it.

Soc.

And also more evil, if fouler.

Pol.

Not at all.

Soc.

I see: you hold, apparently, that fair and good are not the same, nor evil and foul.

Pol.

Just so.

Soc.
But what of this? All fair things, like bodies and colors and figures and sounds and observances—is it according to no standard that you call these fair in each case? Thus in the first place, when you say that fair bodies are fair, it must be either in view of their use for some particular purpose that each may serve, or in respect of some pleasure arising when, in the act of beholding them, they cause delight to the beholder. Have you any description to give beyond this of bodily beauty?

Pol.
I have not.

Soc.
And so with all the rest in the same way, whether they be figures or colors, is it for some pleasure or benefit or both that you give them the name of "fair"?

Pol.
It is.

Soc.
And sounds also, and the effects of music, are not these all in the same case?

Pol.
Yes.

Soc.
And further, in all that belongs to laws and observances, surely the "fairness" of them cannot lie beyond those limits of being either beneficial or pleasant or both.

Pol.
I think not.

---

Soc.
And is it not just the same with the "fairness" of studies also?

Pol.
Doubtless; and this time, Socrates, your definition is quite fair, when you define what is fair by pleasure and good.

Soc.
And foul by their opposites, pain and evil?

Pol.
That needs must follow.

Soc.
Thus when of two fair things one is fairer, the cause is that it surpasses

in either one or both of these effects, either in pleasure, or in benefit, or in both.

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

And again, when one of two foul things is fouler, this will be due to an excess either of pain or of evil: must not that be so?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Come then, what was it we heard just now about doing and suffering wrong? Were you not saying that suffering wrong is more evil, but doing it fouler?

Pol.

I was.

Soc.

Well now, if doing wrong is fouler than suffering it, it is either more painful, and fouler by an excess of pain or evil or both; must not this also be the case?

Pol.

Yes, of course.

Soc.

Then let us first consider if doing wrong exceeds suffering it in point of pain—if those who do wrong are more pained than those who suffer it.

Pol.

Not so at all, Socrates.

Soc.

Then it does not surpass in pain.

Pol.

No, indeed.

Soc.

And so, if not in pain, it can no longer be said to exceed in both.

Pol.

Apparently.

Soc.

It remains, then, that it exceeds in the other.

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

In evil.

Pol.
So it seems.
Soc.
Then it is by an excess of evil that doing wrong is fouler than suffering it.
Pol.
Yes, obviously.

---

Soc.
Now it is surely admitted by the mass of mankind, as it was too by you in our talk a while ago, that doing wrong is fouler than suffering it.
Pol.
Yes.
Soc.
And now it has been found to be more evil.
Pol.
So it seems.
Soc.
Then would you rather have the evil and foul when it is more than when it is less? Do not shrink from answering, Polus you will get no hurt by it: but submit yourself bravely to the argument, as to a doctor, and reply yes or no to my question.

---

Pol.
Why, I should not so choose, Socrates.
Soc.
And would anybody else in the world?
Pol.
I think not, by this argument at least.
Soc.
Then I spoke the truth when I said that neither you nor anyone else in the world would choose to do wrong rather than suffer it, since it really is more evil.
Pol.
Apparently.
Soc.
So you see, Polus, that when one proof is contrasted with the other they have no resemblance, but whereas you have the assent of every one else except myself, I am satisfied with your sole and single assent and

evidence, and I take but your vote only and disregard the rest. Now let us leave this matter where it stands, and proceed next to examine the second part on which we found ourselves at issue—whether for a wrongdoer to pay the penalty is the greatest of evils, as you supposed, or to escape it is a greater, as I on my side held. Let us look at it this way: do you call paying the just penalty, and being justly punished, for wrongdoing the same thing?

Pol.

I do.

---

Soc.

And can you maintain that all just things are not fair, in so far as they are just? Consider well before you speak.

Pol.

No, I think they are, Socrates.

Soc.

Then take another point: if a man does anything, must there be something which is also acted upon by this doer of the thing?

Pol.

I think so.

Soc.

And does it suffer what the doer does, and is the effect such as the agent's action makes it? I mean, for example, when one strikes a blow something must needs be struck?

Pol.

It must.

Soc.

And if the striker strikes hard or quick, the thing struck is struck in the same way?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Hence the effect in the thing struck is such as the striker makes it?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

And so again, if one burns, something must be burnt?

Pol.

Yes, of course.

Soc.

And if one burns severely or sorely, the thing burnt is burnt according as the burner burns it?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

And again, if one cuts, the same may be said? For something is cut.

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

And if the cut is large or deep or sore, the cut made in the thing cut is such as the cutter cuts it?

Pol.

Apparently.

Soc.

Then putting it all in a word, see if you agree that what I was just saying applies to all cases—that the patient receives an effect of the same kind as the agent's action.

Pol.

I do agree.

Soc.

Then this being admitted, is paying the penalty suffering something, or doing it?

Pol.

Suffering it must be, Socrates.

Soc.

And at the hands of an agent?

Pol.

Yes, of course; at the hands of the punisher.

---

Soc.

And he who punishes aright punishes justly?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Doing what is just, or not?

Pol.

What is just.

Soc.

And he who pays the penalty by being punished suffers what is just?

Pol.

Apparently.

Soc.

And what is just, I think we have agreed, is fair?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

Then of these two, the one does what is fair and the other, he who is punished, suffers it.

Pol.

Yes.

---

Soc.

And so, if fair, good? For that is either pleasant or beneficial.[18]

Pol.

It must be so.

Soc.

So he who pays the penalty suffers what is good?

Pol.

It seems so.

Soc.

Then he is benefited?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Is it the benefit I imagine—that he becomes better in soul if he is justly punished?

Pol.

Quite likely.

Soc.

Then is he who pays the penalty relieved from badness of soul?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

And so relieved from the greatest evil? Look at it this way; in a man's pecuniary resources do you perceive any other badness than poverty?

Pol.

No, only poverty.

Soc.

---

[18] As was agreed above, *Plat. Gorg. 474d*, *Plat. Gorg. 474e*.

And what in his bodily resources? You would say that badness there is weakness or disease or ugliness or the like?

Pol.

I would.

Soc.

And in soul too you believe there is a certain wickedness?

Pol.

Of course.

Soc.

And do you not call this injustice, ignorance, cowardice, and so forth?

Pol.

Certainly I do.

---

Soc.

So now in property, body, and soul, these three, you have mentioned three vices—poverty, disease, and injustice?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Then which of these vices is the foulest? Is it not injustice—in short, the vice of the soul?

Pol.

Far the foulest.

Soc.

And if foulest, then also most evil?

Pol.

How do you mean, Socrates?

Soc.

Just this: the foulest is foulest in each case because it produces the greatest pain or harm or both; this follows from our previous admissions.

Pol.

Quite so.

Soc.

And foulest of all, we have just agreed, is injustice and, in general, vice of soul?

Pol.

Yes, we have.

Soc.

So then either it is most painful, that is, foulest of these vices by an

excess of painfulness, or else of harmfulness, or in both ways?

Pol.

Necessarily.

Soc.

Then do you think that being unjust, licentious, cowardly, and ignorant is more painful than being poor and sick?

Pol.

No, I do not, Socrates, from what we have said.

Soc.

Portentous then must be the extent of harm, and astonishing the evil, by which the soul's vice exceeds all the others so as to be foulest of all, since it is not by pain, on your view of the matter.

Pol.

Apparently.

Soc.

But further, I suppose, whatever has an excess of harm in the greatest measure, must be the greatest evil in the world.

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

So injustice, licentiousness, and in general, vice of soul, are the greatest evils in the world?

Pol.

Apparently.

Soc.

Now what is the art that relieves from poverty? Is it not money-making?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

And what from disease? Is it not medicine?

Pol.

It must be.

---

Soc.

And what from wickedness and injustice? If you are not ready for that offhand, consider it thus: whither and to whom do we take those who are in bodily sickness?

Pol.

To the doctor, Socrates.

Soc.
And whither the wrongdoers and libertines?
Pol.
To the law-court, do you mean?
Soc.
Yes, and to pay the penalty?
Pol.
I agree.
Soc.
Then is it not by employing a kind of justice that those punish who punish aright?
Pol.
Clearly so.
Soc.
Then money-making relieves us from poverty, medicine from disease, and justice from licentiousness and injustice.
Pol.
Apparently.
Soc.
Which then is the fairest of these things?
Pol.
Of what things, pray?
Soc.
Moneymaking, medicine, justice.
Pol.
Justice, Socrates, is far above the others.
Soc.
Now again, if it is fairest, it causes either most pleasure or benefit or both.
Pol.
Yes.
Soc.
Well then, is it pleasant to be medically treated, and do those who undergo such treatment enjoy it?
Pol.
I do not think so.
Soc.
But it is beneficial, is it not?

---

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Because one is relieved of a great evil, and hence it is worth while to endure the pain and be well.

Pol.

Of course.

Soc.

Is this then the happiest state of body for a man to be in—that of being medically treated—or that of never being ill at all?

Pol.

Clearly, never being ill.

Soc.

Yes, for what we regarded as happiness, it seems, was not this relief from evil, but its non-acquisition at any time.

Pol.

That is so.

---

Soc.

Well now, which is the more wretched of two persons who have something evil either in body or in soul, he who is medically treated and is relieved of the evil, or he who is not treated and keeps it?

Pol.

To my thinking, he who is not treated.

Soc.

And we found that paying the penalty is a relief from the greatest evil, wickedness?

Pol.

We did.

Soc.

Because, I suppose, the justice of the court reforms us and makes us juster, and acts as a medicine for wickedness.

Pol.

Yes.

---

Soc.

Happiest therefore is he who has no vice in his soul, since we found this to be the greatest of evils.

Pol.

Clearly so.

Soc.

Next after him, I take it, is he who is relieved of it.

Pol.

So it seems.

Soc.

And that was the man who is reproved, reprimanded, and made to pay the penalty.

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Hence the worst life is led by him who has the vice and is not relieved of it.

Pol.

Apparently.

Soc.

And this is the man who in committing the greatest wrongs and practicing the greatest injustice has contrived to escape reproof and chastisement and penalty alike, as you say Archelaus has succeeded in doing, and the rest of the despots and orators and overlords?

Pol.

So it seems.

Soc.

Because, I conceive, my excellent friend, what these persons have contrived for themselves is very much as though a man who was the victim of the worst diseases should contrive not to submit to the doctor's penalty for his bodily transgressions and take the prescribed treatment, from a childish fear of cautery or incision, as being so painful. Or do you not agree to this view of it?

Pol.

I do.

Soc.

Since he was ignorant, it would seem, of the virtue of bodily health and fitness. For it is very probable, from what we have just agreed, that something like this is done also by those who evade their due penalty, Polus; they perceive its painfulness, but are blind to its benefits, and are unaware how much more wretched than lack of health in the body it is to dwell with a soul that is not healthy, but corrupt, unjust, and unholy; and hence it is that they do all they can to avoid paying the penalty and being relieved of the greatest of evils, by providing themselves with money and friends and the ability to excel in persuasive speech. But if what we have agreed is true, Polus, do you observe the consequences of our argument? Or, if you like, shall we reckon them

up together?

Pol.

Yes, if you do not mind.

Soc.

Then does it result that injustice and wrongdoing is the greatest evil?

Pol.

Yes, apparently.

---

Soc.

And further, it appeared that paying the penalty is a relief from this evil?

Pol.

It looks like it.

Soc.

Whereas not paying it is a retention of the evil in us?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Thus wrongdoing is second of evils in greatness; but to do wrong and not pay the penalty is the greatest and takes the first place among all evils.

Pol.

It seems so.

Soc.

Well now, my friend, was this the point at issue between us, that you counted Archelaus, who did the greatest wrong, happy because he paid no penalty, whilst I on the contrary thought that anyone—whether Archelaus or any other person you please—who pays no penalty for the wrong he has done, is peculiarly and pre-eminently wretched among men, and that it is always the wrongdoer who is more wretched than the wronged, and the unpunished than the punished? Is not this what I stated?

Pol.

Yes.

Soc.

Then has it not been proved that this was a true statement?

Pol.

Apparently.

---

Soc.

Very well: so if this is true, Polus, what is the great use of rhetoric? For you see by what we have just agreed that a man must keep a close watch over himself so as to avoid wrongdoing, since it would bring a great deal of evil upon him; must he not?

Pol.

Certainly.

Soc.

But if he is guilty of wrongdoing, either himself or anyone else he may care for, he must go of his own freewill where he may soonest pay the penalty, to the judge as if to his doctor, with the earnest intent that the disease of his injustice shall not become chronic and cause a deep incurable ulcer in his soul. Or what are we to say, Polus, if our former conclusions stand? Must not our later ones accord with them in this way, and in this only?

Pol.

Yes, what else, indeed, are we to say, Socrates?

Soc.

Then for pleading in defence of injustice, whether it is oneself or one's parents or friends or children or country that has done the wrong, rhetoric is of no use to us at all, Polus; except one were to suppose, perchance, to the contrary, that a man ought to accuse himself first of all, and in the second place his relations or anyone else of his friends who may from time to time be guilty of wrong; and, instead of concealing the iniquity, to bring it to light in order that he may pay the penalty and be made healthy; and, moreover, to compel both himself and his neighbors not to cower away but to submit with closed eyes and good courage, as it were, to the cutting and burning of the surgeon, in pursuit of what is good and fair, and without reckoning in the smart: if his crimes have deserved a flogging, he must submit to the rod; if fetters, to their grip; if a fine, to its payment; if banishment, to be banished; or if death, to die; himself to be the first accuser either of himself or of his relations, and to employ his rhetoric for the purpose of so exposing their iniquities that they may be relieved of that greatest evil, injustice. Shall this be our statement or not, Polus?

---

Pol.

An extraordinary one, Socrates, it seems to me, though perhaps you do find it agrees with what went before.

Soc.

Well, either that must be upset, or this necessarily follows.

Pol.

Yes, that certainly is so.

Soc.

And so again conversely, supposing it is our duty to injure somebody, whether an enemy or anyone else—provided only that it is not against oneself that wrong has been done by such enemy, for this we must take care to avoid[19]—but supposing our enemy has wronged some one else, we must make every exertion of act and word to prevent him from being punished or coming to trial, or if he does, we must contrive that our enemy shall escape and not be punished; nay, if he has carried off a great lot of gold, that he shall not refund it but keep and spend it on himself and his, unjustly and godlessly, or if he has committed crimes that deserve death, that he shall not die; if possible, never die, but be deathless in his villainy, or failing that, live as long a time as may be in that condition. Such are the purposes, as it seems to me, Polus, for which rhetoric is useful, since to him who has no intention of doing wrong it is, I consider, of no great use, if indeed there is any use in it at all; for in our previous argument it was nowhere to be found.

Call.

Tell me, Chaerephon, is Socrates in earnest over this, or only joking?

Chaer.

To my thinking, Callicles, prodigiously in earnest: still, there is nothing like asking him.

---

Call.

Upon my word, just what I want to do. Tell me, Socrates, are we to take you as serious just now, or joking? For if you are serious and what you say is really true, must not the life of us human beings have been turned upside down, and must we not be doing quite the opposite, it seems, of what we ought to do?

Soc.

Callicles, if men had not certain feelings, each common to one sort of people, but each of us had a feeling peculiar to himself and apart from the rest, it would not be easy for him to indicate his own impression to his neighbor. I say this because I notice that you and I are at this moment in much the same condition, since the two of us are enamored

[19]The parenthesis humorously anticipates an objection that might be made, in a particular case, to this theory of what a really thorough enmity would be: if our enemy has robbed us of gold, of course we cannot, as is presently urged, take care that "he shall not refund it."

each of two things—I of Alcibiades, son of Cleinias, and philosophy, and you of two, the Athenian Demus, and the son of Pyrilampes.[20] Now I always observe that, for all your cleverness, you are unable to contradict your favorite, however much he may say or whatever may be his account of anything, but are ever changing over from side to side. In the Assembly, if the Athenian Demus disagrees with some statement you are making, you change over and say what it desires and just the same thing happens to you in presence of that fair youth, the son of Pyrilampes;

Soc.

you are unable to resist the counsels and statements of your darling, so that if anyone showed surprise at the strangeness of the things you are constantly saying under that influence, you would probably tell him, if you chose to speak the truth, that unless somebody makes your favorite stop speaking thus, you, will never stop speaking thus either. Consider yourself therefore obliged to hear the same sort of remark from me now, and do not be surprised at my saying it, but make my darling, philosophy, stop talking thus. For she, my dear friend, speaks what you hear me saying now, and she is far less fickle to me than any other favorite: that son of Cleinias is ever changing his views, but philosophy always holds the same, and it is her speech that now surprises you, and she spoke it in your own presence. So you must either refute her, as I said just now, by proving that wrongdoing and impunity for wrong done is not the uttermost evil; or, if you leave that unproved, by the Dog, god of the Egyptians, there will be no agreement between you, Callicles, and Callicles, but you will be in discord with him all your life. And yet I, my very good sir, should rather choose to have my lyre, or some chorus that I might provide for the public, out of tune and discordant, or to have any number of people disagreeing with me and contradicting me, than that I should have internal discord and contradiction in my own single self.

Call.

Socrates, you seem to be roistering recklessly in your talk, like the true demagogue that you are; and you are declaiming now in this way because Polus has got into the same plight as he was accusing Gorgias of letting himself be led into by you. For he said, I think, when you asked Gorgias whether, supposing a man came to him with no knowledge of justice but a desire to learn rhetoric, he would instruct

[20] Pyrilampes' son was named Demus, and was famous for his beauty; cf. *Aristoph. Wasps 97.* "Demus" was the ordinary word for the "people" of a city.

the man, Gorgias showed some shame and said he would, because of the habit of mind in people which would make them indignant if refused—and so, because of this admission, he was forced to contradict himself, and that was just what suited you—and Polus was right, to my thinking, in mocking at you as he did then; but this time he has got into the very same plight himself. For my own part, where I am not satisfied with Polus is just that concession he made to you—that doing wrong is fouler than suffering it; for owing to this admission he too in his turn got entangled in your argument and had his mouth stopped, being ashamed to say what he thought. For you, Socrates, really turn the talk into such low, popular clap-trap, while you give out that you are pursuing the truth—into stuff that is "fair," not by nature, but by convention.[21]

Call.

Yet for the most part these two—nature and convention—are opposed to each other, so that if a man is ashamed and dares not say what he thinks, he is forced to contradict himself. And this, look you, is the clever trick you have devised for our undoing in your discussions: when a man states anything according to convention you slip "according to nature" into your questions; and again, if he means nature, you imply convention. In the present case, for instance, of doing and suffering wrong, when Polus was speaking of what is conventionally fouler, you followed it up in the sense of what is naturally so. For by nature everything is fouler that is more evil, such as suffering wrong: doing it is fouler only by convention. Indeed this endurance of wrong done is not a man's part at all, but a poor slave's, for whom it is better to be dead than alive, as it is for anybody who, when wronged or insulted, is unable to protect himself or anyone else for whom he cares. But I suppose the makers of the laws are the weaker sort of men, and the more numerous. So it is with a view to themselves and their own interest that they make their laws and distribute their praises and censures; and to terrorize the stronger sort of folk who are able to get an advantage, and to prevent them from getting one over them, they tell them, that such aggrandizement is foul and unjust, and that wrongdoing is just this endeavor to get the advantage of one's neighbors: for I expect they are well content to see themselves on an equality, when they are so inferior. So this is why by convention it is termed unjust

[21]The distinction between "natural," or absolute, and "conventional," or legal, right, first made by the Ionian Archelaus who taught Socrates in his youth, is developed at length in the Republic (*Plat. Rep. 1.388 ff.*), and was a constant subject of discussion among the sophists of Plato's time.

and foul to aim at an advantage over the majority, and why they call it wrongdoing: but nature, in my opinion, herself proclaims the fact that it is right for the better to have advantage of the worse, and the abler of the feebler. It is obvious in many cases that this is so, not only in the animal world, but in the states and races, collectively, of men—that right has been decided to consist in the sway and advantage of the stronger over the weaker. For by what manner of right did Xerxes march against Greece, or his father against Scythia? Or take the countless other cases of the sort that one might mention. Why, surely these men follow nature—the nature of right—in acting thus; yes, on my soul, and follow the law[22] of nature—though not that, I dare say, which is made by us;

Call.

we mold the best and strongest amongst us, taking them from their infancy like young lions, and utterly enthral them by our spells and witchcraft, telling them the while that they must have but their equal share, and that this is what is fair and just. But, I fancy, when some man arises with a nature of sufficient force, he shakes off all that we have taught him, bursts his bonds, and breaks free; he tramples underfoot our codes and juggleries, our charms and "laws," which are all against nature; our slave rises in revolt and shows himself our master, and there dawns the full light of natural justice. And it seems to me that Pindar adds his evidence to what I say, in the ode where he says—"Law the sovereign of all,Mortals and immortals,"*Pind. Fr. 169 (Bergk)*which, so he continues,—"Carries all with highest hand,Justifying the utmost force: in proof I takeThe deeds of Hercules, for unpurchased"*Pind. Fr. 169 (Bergk)*—the words are something like that—I do not know the poem well—but it tells how he drove off the cows as neither a purchase nor a gift from Geryones; taking it as a natural right that cows ar any other possessions of the inferior and weaker should all belong to the superior and stronger. Well, that is the truth of the matter; and you will grasp it if you will now put philosophy aside and pass to greater things. For philosophy, you know, Socrates, is a charming thing, if a man has to do with it moderately in his younger days; but if he continues to spend his time on it too long, it is ruin to any man. However well endowed one may be, if one philosophizes far on into life, one must needs find oneself ignorant of everything that ought to be familiar to the man who would be a thorough gentleman

[22]Callicles boldly applies the word *νόμος*, which so far has been used in the sense of man-made law or convention, in its widest sense of general rule or principle.

and make a good figure in the world. For such people are shown to be ignorant of the laws of their city, and of the terms which have to be used in negotiating agreements with their fellows in private or in public affairs, and of human pleasures and desires; and, in short, to be utterly inexperienced in men's characters. So when they enter upon any private or public business they make themselves ridiculous, just as on the other hand, I suppose, when public men engage in your studies and discussions, they are quite ridiculous.

Call.

The fact is, as Euripides has it—"Each shines in that, to that end presses on,Allotting there the chiefest part of the day,Wherein he haply can surpass himself—"*Eur. Antiope Fr.*[23] whereas that in which he is weak he shuns and vilifies; but the other he praises, in kindness to himself, thinking in this way to praise himself also. But the most proper course, I consider, is to take a share of both. It is a fine thing to partake of philosophy just for the sake of education, and it is no disgrace for a lad to follow it: but when a man already advancing in years continues in its pursuit, the affair, Socrates, becomes ridiculous; and for my part I have much the same feeling towards students af philosophy as towards those who lisp or play tricks. For when I see a little child, to whom it is still natural to talk in that way, lisping or playing some trick, I enjoy it, and it strikes me as pretty and ingenuous and suitable to the infant's age; whereas if I hear a small child talk distinctly, I find it a disagreeable thing, and it offends my ears and seems to me more befitting a slave. But when one hears a grown man lisp, or sees him play tricks, it strikes one as something ridiculous and unmanly, that deserves a whipping. Just the same, then, is my feeling towards the followers of philosophy. For when I see philosophy in a young lad I approve of it; I consider it suitable, and I regard him as a person of liberal mind: whereas one who does not follow it I account illiberal and never likely to expect of himself any fine or generous action. But when I see an elderly man still going on with philosophy and not getting rid of it, that is the gentleman, Socrates, whom I think in need of a whipping. For as I said just now, this person, however well endowed he may be, is bound to become unmanly through shunning the centers and marts of the city, in which, as the poet[24] said, "men

[23]Zethus and Amphion, twins born to Zeus by Antiope, were left by her on Mt. Cithaeron, where Zethus grew up as a man of the field, and Amphion as a musician. Here probably Amphion is speaking in defence of the quieter life; further on, in the quotations given in *Plat. Gorg. 489b*, *Plat. Gorg. 489c*, Zethus reproaches him with his effeminacy.

get them note and glory"; he must cower down and spend the rest of his days whispering in a corner with three or four lads, and never utter anything free or high or spirited. Now I, Socrates, am quite fairly friendly to you, and so I feel very much at this moment as Zethus did, whom I have mentioned, towards Amphion in Euripides.

Call.

Indeed I am prompted to address you in the same sort of words as he did his brother:

"You neglect, Socrates, what you ought to mind; you distort with a kind of boyish travesty a soul of such noble nature; and neither will you bring to the counsels of justice any rightly spoken word, nor will you accept any as probable or convincing, nor advise any gallant plan for your fellow." And yet, my dear Socrates—now do not be annoyed with me, for I am going to say this from goodwill to you—does it not seem to you disgraceful to be in the state I consider you are in, along with the rest of those who are ever pushing further into philosophy? For as it is, if somebody should seize hold of you or anyone else at all of your sort, and drag you off to prison, asserting that you were guilty of a wrong you had never done, you know you would be at a loss what to do with yourself, and would be all dizzy and agape without a word to say; and when you came up in court, though your accuser might be ever so paltry a rascal, you would have to die if he chose to claim death as your penalty. And yet what wisdom is there, Socrates,

"in an art that found a man of goodly parts and made him worse," unable either to succor himself, or to deliver himself or anyone else from the greatest dangers, but like to be stripped by his enemies of all his substance, and to live in his city as an absolute outcast? Such a person, if one may use a rather low expression, can be given a box on the ear with impunity. No, take my advice, my good sir,

"and cease refuting; some practical proficiency induce,"—something that will give you credit for sense:

"to others leave these pretty toys,"—call them vaporings or fooleries as you will,—

"which will bring you to inhabit empty halls"; and emulate, not men who probe these trifles, but who have means and repute and other good things in plenty.

Soc.

If my soul had happened to be made of gold, Callicles, do you not think I should have been delighted to find one of those stones with

[24] *Hom. Il. 9.441.*

which they test gold, and the best one; which, if I applied it, and it confirmed to me that my soul had been properly tended, would give me full assurance that I am in a satisfactory state and have no need of other testing?

Call.

What is the point of that question, Socrates?

Soc.

I will tell you. I am just thinking what a lucky stroke I have had in striking up with you.

Call.

How so?

Soc.

I am certain that whenever you agree with me in any view that my soul takes, this must be the very truth. For I conceive that whoever would sufficiently test a soul as to rectitude of life or the reverse should go to work with three things which are all in your possession—knowledge, goodwill, and frankness. I meet with many people who are unable to test me, because they are not wise as you are; while others, though wise, are unwilling to tell me the truth, because they do not care for me as you do; and our two visitors here, Gorgias and Polus, though wise and friendly to me, are more lacking in frankness and inclined to bashfulness than they should be: nay, it must be so, when they have carried modesty to such a point that each of them can bring himself, out of sheer modesty, to contradict himself in face of a large company, and that on questions of the greatest importance. But you have all these qualities which the rest of them lack: you have had a sound education, as many here in Athens will agree; and you are well disposed to me. You ask what proof I have? I will tell you. I know, Callicles, that four of you have formed a partnership in wisdom—you, Tisander of Aphidnae, Andron, son of Androtion, and Nausicydes of Cholarges;[25] and I once overheard you debating how far the cultivation of wisdom should be carried, and I know you were deciding in favor of some such view as this—that one should not be carried away into the minuter points of philosophy, but you exhorted one another to beware of making yourselves overwise, lest you should unwittingly work your own ruin. So when I hear you giving me the same advice as you gave your own most intimate friends, I have proof enough that you really

[25] Andron is one of the wise men who meet in the house of Callias, *Plat. Prot. 315*; Nausicydes may be the wealthy meal-merchant mentioned in *Aristoph. Eccl. 426*, and *Xen. Mem. 2.7.6.* Of Tisander nothing is known.

are well disposed to me. And further, as to your ability to speak out frankly and not be bashful, you not only claim this yourself, but you are borne out too by the speech that you made a short while ago. Well, this is clearly the position of our question at present: if you can bear me out in any point arising in our argument, that point can at once be taken as having been amply tested by both you and me, and there will be no more need of referring it to a further test; for no defect of wisdom or access of modesty could ever have been your motive in making this concession, nor again could you make it to deceive me: for you are my friend, as you say yourself. Hence any agreement between you and me must really have attained the perfection of truth.

Soc.

And on no themes could one make more honorable inquiry, Callicles, than on those which you have reproached me with—what character one should have, and what should be one's pursuits and up to what point, in later as in earlier years. For I assure you that if there is any fault of conduct to be found in my own life it is not an intentional error, but due to my ignorance: so I ask you not to break off in the middle of your task of admonishing me, but to make fully clear to me what it is that I ought to pursue and by what means I may attain it; and if you find me in agreement with you now, and afterwards failing to do what I agreed to, regard me as a regular dunce and never trouble any more to admonish me again—a mere good-for-nothing. Now, go right back and repeat to me what you and Pindar hold natural justice to consist in: is it that the superior should forcibly despoil the inferior, the better rule the worse, and the nobler have more than the meaner? Have you some other account to give of justice, or do I remember aright?

Call.

Why, that is what I said then, and I say it now also.

Soc.

Is it the same person that you call "better" and "superior"? For I must say I was no more able then to understand what your meaning might be. Is it the stronger folk that you call superior, and are the weaker ones bound to hearken to the stronger one—as for instance I think you were also pointing out then, that the great states attack the little ones in accordance with natural right, because they are superior and stronger, on the ground that the superior and the stronger and the better are all the same thing; or is it possible to be better and yet inferior and weaker, and to be superior and yet more wicked? Or is the definition of the better and the superior the same? This is just what I bid you declare in definite terms—whether the superior and the better

and the stronger are the same or different.

Call.

Well, I tell you plainly, they are all the same.

Soc.

Now, are the many superior by nature to the one? I mean those who make the laws to keep a check on the one, as you were saying yourself just now.

Call.

Of course.

Soc.

Then the ordinances of the many are those of the superior.

Call.

Certainly.

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Soc.

And so of the better? For the superior are far better, by your account.

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

And so their ordinances are by nature "fair," since they are superior who made them?

Call.

I agree.

Soc.

Then is it the opinion of the many that—as you also said a moment ago—justice means having an equal share, and it is fouler to wrong than be wronged? Is that so, or not? And mind you are not caught this time in a bashful fit. Is it, or is it not, the opinion of the many that to have one's equal share, and not more than others, is just, and that it is fouler to wrong than be wronged? Do not grudge me an answer to this, Callicles, so that—if I find you agree with me—I may then have the assurance that comes from the agreement of a man so competent to decide.

Call.

Well, most people do think so.

Soc.

Then it is not only by convention that doing wrong is fouler than suffering it, and having one's equal share is just, but by nature also: and therefore it looks as though your previous statement was untrue, and your count against me incorrect, when you said that convention

and nature are opposites and that I, forsooth, recognizing that, am an unscrupulous debater, turning to convention when the assertion refers to nature, and to nature when it refers to convention.

Call.

What an inveterate driveller the man is! Tell me, Socrates, are you not ashamed to be word-catching at your age, and if one makes a verbal slip, to take that as a great stroke of luck? Do you imagine that, when I said "being superior," I meant anything else than "better"? Have I not been telling you ever so long that I regard the better and the superior as the same thing? Or do you suppose I mean that if a pack of slaves and all sorts of fellows who are good for nothing, except perhaps in point of physical strength, gather together and say something, that is a legal ordinance?

Soc.

Very well, most sapient Callicles: you mean that, do you?

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Call.

Certainly I do.

Soc.

Why, my wonderful friend, I have myself been guessing ever so long that you meant something of this sort by "superior," and if I repeat my questions it is because I am so keen to know definitely what your meaning may be. For I presume you do not consider that two are better than one, or that your slaves are better than yourself, just because they are stronger than you are. Come now, tell me again from the beginning what it is you mean by the better, since you do not mean the stronger only, admirable sir, do be more gentle with me over my first lessons, or I shall cease attending your school.

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Call.

You are sarcastic, Socrates.

Soc.

No, by Zethus, Callicles, whom you made use of just now[26] for aiming a good deal of sarcasm at me: but come, tell us whom you mean by the better.

Call.

I mean the more excellent.

Soc.

[26] Above, *Plat. Gorg. 486a.*

So you see, you are uttering mere words yourself, and explaining nothing. Will you not tell us whether by the better and superior you mean the wiser, or some other sort?

Call.

Why, to be sure, I mean those, and very much so.

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Soc.

Then one wise man is often superior to ten thousand fools, by your account, and he ought to rule and they to be ruled, and the ruler should have more than they whom he rules. That is what you seem to me to intend by your statement—and I am not word-catching here—if the one is superior to the ten thousand.

Call.

Why, that is my meaning. For this is what I regard as naturally just—that being better and wiser he should have both rule and advantage over the baser people.

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Soc.

Stop there now. Once more, what is your meaning this time? Suppose that a number of us are assembled together, as now, in the same place, and we have in common a good supply of food and drink, and we are of all sorts—some strong, some weak; and one of us, a doctor, is wiser than the rest in this matter and, as may well be, is stronger than some and weaker than others; will not he, being wiser than we are, be better and superior in this affair?

Call.

Certainly.

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Soc.

Then is he to have a larger ration than the rest of us because he is better, or ought he as ruler to have the distribution of the whole stock, with no advantage in spending and consuming it upon his own person, if he is to avoid retribution, but merely having more than some and less than others? Or if he chance to be the weakest of all, ought he not to get the smallest share of all though he be the best, Callicles? Is it not so, good sir?

Call.

You talk of food and drink and doctors and drivel: I refer to something different.

Soc.

Then tell me, do you call the wiser better? Yes or no?

Call.

Yes, I do.

Soc.

But do you not think the better should have a larger share?

Call.

Yes, but not of food and drink.

Soc.

I see; of clothes, perhaps; and the ablest weaver should have the largest coat, and go about arrayed in the greatest variety of the finest clothes?

Call.

What have clothes to do with it?

Soc.

Well, shoes then; clearly he who is wisest in regard to these, and best, should have some advantage. Perhaps the shoemaker should walk about in the biggest shoes and wear the largest number.

Call.

Shoes—what have they to do with it? You keep on drivelling.

Soc.

Well, if you do not mean things of that sort, perhaps you mean something like this: a farmer, for instance, who knows all about the land and is highly accomplished in the matter, should perhaps have an advantage in sharing the seed, and have the largest possible amount of it for use on his own land.

Call.

How you keep repeating the same thing, Socrates!

Soc.

Yes, and not only that, Callicles, but on the same subjects too.

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Call.

I believe, on my soul, you absolutely cannot ever stop talking of cobblers and fullers, cooks and doctors, as though our discussion had to do with them.

Soc.

Then will you tell me in what things the superior and wiser man has a right to the advantage of a larger share? Or will you neither put up with a suggestion from me nor make one yourself?

Call.

Why, I have been making mine for sometime past. First of all, by "the superior" I mean, not shoemakers or cooks, but those who are wise as

regards public affairs and the proper way of conducting them, and not only wise but manly, with ability to carry out their purpose to the full; and who will not falter through softness of soul.

Soc.

Do you perceive, my excellent Callicles, that your count against me is not the same as mine against you? For you say I am ever repeating the same things, and reproach me with it, whereas I charge you, on the contrary, with never saying the same thing on the same subject; but at one moment you defined the better and superior as the stronger, and at another as the wiser, and now you turn up again with something else: "the manlier" is what you now tell us is meant by the superior and better. No, my good friend, you had best say, and get it over, whom you do mean by the better and superior, and in what sphere.

Call.

But I have told you already: men of wisdom and manliness in public affairs. These are the persons who ought to rule our cities, and justice means this—that these should have more than other people, the rulers than the ruled.

Soc.

How so? Than themselves, my friend?

Call.

What do you mean?

Soc.

I mean that every man is his own ruler; or is there no need of one's ruling oneself, but only of ruling others?

Call.

What do you mean by one who rules himself?

Soc.

Nothing recondite; merely what most people mean—one who is temperate and self-mastering, ruler of the pleasures and desires that are in himself.

Call.

You will have your pleasantry! You mean "the simpletons" by "the temperate."

Soc.

How so? Nobody can fail to see that I do not mean that.

Call.

Oh, you most certainly do, Socrates. For how can a man be happy if he is a slave to anybody at all? No, natural fairness and justice, I tell you now quite frankly, is this—that he who would live rightly should let his desires be as strong as possible and not chasten them, and should be

able to minister to them when they are at their height by reason of his manliness and intelligence, and satisfy each appetite in turn with what it desires. But this, I suppose, is not possible for the many; whence it comes that they decry such persons out of shame, to disguise their own impotence, and are so good as to tell us that licentiousness is disgraceful, thus enslaving—as I remarked before—the better type of mankind; and being unable themselves to procure achievement of their pleasures they praise temperance and justice by reason of their own unmanliness. For to those who started with the advantage of being either kings' sons or able by their own parts to procure some authority or monarchy or absolute power, what in truth could be fouler or worse than temperance and justice in such cases? Finding themselves free to enjoy good things, with no obstacle in the way, they would be merely imposing on themselves a master in the shape of the law, the talk and the rebuke of the multitude. Or how could they fail to be sunk in wretchedness by that "fairness" of justice and temperance, if they had no larger portion to give to their own friends than to their enemies, that too when they were rulers in their own cities? No, in good truth, Socrates—which you claim to be seeking—the fact is this: luxury and licentiousness and liberty, if they have the support of force, are virtue and happiness, and the rest of these embellishments—the unnatural covenants of mankind—are all mere stuff and nonsense.

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Soc.

Far from ignoble, at any rate, Callicles, is the frankness with which you develop your thesis: for you are now stating in clear terms what the rest of the world think indeed, but are loth to say. So I beg you not to give up on any account, that it may be made really evident how one ought to live. Now tell me: do you say the desires are not to be chastened if a man would be such as he ought to be, but he should let them be as great as possible and provide them with satisfaction from some source or other, and this is virtue?

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Call.

Yes, I say that.

Soc.

Then it is not correct to say, as people do, that those who want nothing are happy.

Call.

No, for at that rate stones and corpses would be extremely happy.

Soc.

Well, well, as you say, life is strange. For I tell you I should not wonder if Euripides' words were true, when he says:"Who knows if to live is to be dead,And to be dead, to live?"*Eur. Polydus*[27] and we really, it may be, are dead; in fact I once heard sages say that we are now dead, and the body is our tomb,[28] and the part of the soul in which we have desires is liable to be over-persuaded and to vacillate to and fro, and so some smart fellow, a Sicilian, I daresay, or Italian,[29] made a fable in which—by a play of words[30]—he named this part, as being so impressionable and persuadable, a jar, and the thoughtless he called uninitiate:[31] in these uninitiate that part of the soul where the desires are, the licentious and fissured part, he named a leaky jar in his allegory, because it is so insatiate. So you see this person, Callicles, takes the opposite view to yours, showing how of all who are in Hades—meaning of course the invisible—these uninitiate will be most wretched, and will carry water into their leaky jar with a sieve which is no less leaky. And then by the sieve, as my story-teller said, he means the soul: and the soul of the thoughtless he likened to a sieve, as being perforated, since it is unable to hold anything by reason of its unbelief and forgetfulness. All this, indeed, is bordering pretty well on the absurd; but still it sets forth what I wish to impress upon you, if I somehow can, in order to induce you to make a change, and instead of a life of insatiate licentiousness to choose an orderly one that is set up and contented with what it happens to have got. Now, am I at all prevailing upon you to change over to the view that the orderly people are happier than the licentious or will no amount of similar fables that I might tell you have any effect in changing your mind?

Call.

The latter is more like the truth, Socrates.

Soc.

Come now, let me tell you another parable from the same school[32] as that I have just told. Consider if each of the two lives, the temperate

[27]Eur. fr. 638.

[28]The sage was perhaps Philolaus, a Pythagorean philosopher contemporary with Socrates. The phrase *σῶμα σῆμα*, suggesting a mystical similarity between body and tomb, was part of the Orphic doctrine.

[29]"Sicilian" may refer to Empedocles; "Italian" to one of the Pythagoreans.

[30]The play is with *πιθανόν* and *πίθον*:*πεισοκόν* is added to explain that *πιθανόν* is not used in its ordinary active sense of impressive.

[31]The *σοφός* seems to have falsely derived *ἀμυήτους* from *μύω* (= close), with the meaning unclosed, in order to connect it with the notion of "cracked" or "leaky."

[32]Probably of Pythagoras.

and the licentious, might be described by imagining that each of two men had a number of jars, and those of one man were sound and full, one of wine, another of honey, a third of milk, and various others of various things, and that the sources of each of these supplies were scanty and difficult and only available through much hard toil:

Soc.

well, one man, when he has taken his fill, neither draws off any more nor troubles himself a jot, but remains at ease on that score; whilst the other finds, like his fellow, that the sources are possible indeed, though difficult, but his vessels are leaky and decayed, and he is compelled to fill them constantly, all night and day, or else suffer extreme distress. If such is the nature of each of the two lives, do you say that the licentious man has a happier one than the orderly? Do I, with this story of mine, induce you at all to concede that the orderly life is better than the licentious, or do I fail?

Call.

You fail, Socrates. For that man who has taken his fill can have no pleasure any more; in fact it is what I just now called living like a stone, when one has filled up and no longer feels any joy or pain. But a pleasant life consists rather in the largest possible amount of inflow.

Soc.

Well then, if the inflow be large, must not that which runs away be of large amount also, and must not the holes for such outflow be of great size?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

Then it is a plover's life[33] you are describing this time, not that of a corpse or a stone. Now tell me, is the life you mean something like feeling hunger and eating when hungry?

Call.

Yes, it is.

---

Soc.

And feeling thirst and drinking when thirsty?

Call.

Yes, and having all the other desires, and being able to satisfy them, and so with these enjoyments leading a happy life.

Soc.

[33]Referring to this bird's habit of drinking water and then ejecting it.

Bravo, my fine fellow! Do go on as you have begun, and mind you show no bashfulness about it. I too, it seems, must try not to be too bashful. First of all, tell me whether a man who has an itch and wants to scratch, and may scratch in all freedom, can pass his life happily in continual scratching.

---

Call.

What an odd person you are, Socrates—a regular stump-orator!

Soc.

Why, of course, Callicles, that is how I upset Polus and Gorgias, and struck them with bashfulness; but you, I know, will never be upset or abashed; you are such a manly fellow. Come, just answer that.

Call.

Then I say that the man also who scratches himself will thus spend a pleasant life.

Soc.

And if a pleasant one, a happy one also?

Call.

Certainly.

---

Soc.

Is it so if he only wants to scratch his head? Or what more am I to ask you? See, Callicles, what your answer will be, if you are asked everything in succession that links on to that statement; and the culmination of the case, as stated—the life of catamites—is not that awful, shameful, and wretched? Or will you dare to assert that these are happy if they can freely indulge their wants?

Call.

Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to lead the discussion into such topics?

Soc.

What, is it I who am leading it there, noble sir, or the person who says outright that those who enjoy themselves, with whatever kind of enjoyment, are happy, and draws no distinction between the good and bad sorts of pleasure? But come, try again now and tell me whether you say that pleasant and good are the same thing, or that there is some pleasure which is not good.

Call.

Then, so that my statement may not be inconsistent through my saying they are different, I say they are the same.

Soc.

You are spoiling your first statements,[34] Callicles, and you can no longer be a fit partner with me in probing the truth, if you are going to speak against your own convictions.

---

Call.
Why, you do the same, Socrates.
Soc.
Then I am just as much in the wrong if I do, as you are. But look here, my gifted friend, perhaps the good is not mere unconditional enjoyment: for if it is, we have to face not only that string of shameful consequences I have just shadowed forth, but many more besides.
Call.
In your opinion, that is, Socrates.
Soc.
And do you, Callicles, really maintain that it is?
Call.
I do.

---

Soc.
Then are we to set about discussing it as your serious view?
Call.
Oh yes, to be sure.
Soc.
Come then, since that is your opinion, resolve me this: there is something, I suppose, that you call knowledge?
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
And were you not saying just now that knowledge can have a certain courage coupled with it?
Call.
Yes, I was.
Soc.
And you surely meant that they were two things, courage being distinct from knowledge?
Call.
Quite so.

---

[34]Cf. *Plat. Gorg. 482d*, where Callicles blamed Polus for not saying what he really thought.

Soc.
Well now, are pleasure and knowledge the same thing, or different?
Call.
Different, I presume, O sage of sages.
Soc.
And courage too, is that different from pleasure?
Call.
Of course it is.
Soc.
Come now, let us be sure to remember this, that Callicles the Acharnian said pleasant and good were the same, but knowledge and courage were different both from each other and from the good.
Call.
And Socrates of Alopece refuses to grant us this; or does he grant it?

---

Soc.
He does not; nor, I believe, will Callicles either, when he has rightly considered himself. For tell me, do you not regard people who are well off as being in the opposite condition to those who are badly off?
Call.
I do.
Soc.
Then if these conditions are opposite to each other, must not the same hold of them as of health and disease? For, you know, a man is never well and ill at the same time, nor gets rid of health and disease together.
Call.
How do you mean?

---

Soc.
Take, for instance, any part of the body you like by itself, and consider it. A man, I suppose, may have a disease of the eyes, called ophthalmia?
Call.
Certainly.
Soc.
Then I presume he is not sound also at that time in those same eyes?
Call.
By no conceivable means.
Soc.
And what say you, when he gets rid of his ophthalmia? Does he at

that time get rid too of the health of his eyes, and so at last is rid of both things together?

Call.

Far from it.

Soc.

Because, I imagine, this would be an astonishing and irrational result, would it not?

---

Call.

Very much so.

Soc.

Whereas, I take it, he gets and loses either turn?

Call.

I agree.

Soc.

And so with strength and weakness in just the same way?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

And speed and slowness?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And so too with good things and happiness and their opposites—bad things and wretchedness—does one take on each of these in turn, and in turn put it off?

Call.

Absolutely, I presume.

---

Soc.

Then if we find any things that a man puts off and retains at one and the same moment, clearly these cannot be the good and the bad. Do we admit this? Now consider very carefully before you answer.

Call.

Oh, I admit it down to the ground.

Soc.

So now for our former admissions: did you say that being hungry was pleasant or painful? I mean, hunger itself.

Call.

Painful, I said; though eating when one is hungry I call pleasant.

Soc.
I see: but at all events hunger itself is painful, is it not?
Call.
I agree.
Soc.
And so too with thirst?
Call.
Quite so.
Soc.
Then am I to ask you any further questions, or do you admit that all want and desire is painful?
Call.
I admit it; no, do not question me further.
Soc.
Very good: but drinking when one is thirsty you surely say is pleasant?
Call.
I do.
Soc.
Now, in this phrase of yours the words "when one is thirsty," I take it, stand for "when one is in pain"?

Call.
Yes.
Soc.
But drinking is a satisfaction of the want, and a pleasure?
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
So in the act of drinking, you say, one has enjoyment?
Call.
Quite so.
Soc.
When one is thirsty?
Call.
I agree.
Soc.
That is, in pain?
Call.
Yes.

Soc.
Then do you perceive the conclusion,—that you say one enjoys oneself, though in pain at the same moment, when you say one drinks when one is thirsty? Or does this not occur at once, at the same place and time—in either soul or body, as you please? For I fancy it makes no difference. Is this so or not?

Call.
It is.

Soc.
But further, you say it is impossible to be badly off, or to fare ill, at the same time as one is faring well.

Call.
Yes, I do.

---

Soc.
But to enjoy oneself when feeling pain you have admitted to be possible.

Call.
Apparently.

Soc.
Hence enjoyment is not faring well, nor is feeling pain faring ill, so that the pleasant is found to be different from the good.

Call.
I cannot follow these subtleties of yours, Socrates.

Soc.
You can, but you play the innocent, Callicles. Just go on a little further, that you may realize how subtle is your way of reproving me. Does not each of us cease at the same moment from thirst and from the pleasure he gets by drinking?

Call.
I cannot tell what you mean.

Gorg.
No, no, Callicles, you must answer him, for our sakes also, that the arguments may be brought to a conclusion.

Call.
But Socrates is always like this, Gorgias he keeps on asking petty, unimportant questions until he refutes one.

Gorg.
Why, what does that matter to you? In any case it is not your credit that is at stake, Callicles; just permit Socrates to refute you in such

manner as he chooses.

---

Call.

Well then, proceed with those little cramped questions of yours, since Gorgias is so minded.

Soc.

You are fortunate, Callicles, in having been initiated into the Great Mysteries before the Little:[35] I did not think that was the proper thing. So go on answering where you left off—as to whether each of us does not cease to feel thirst and pleasure at the same time.

Call.

I grant it.

Soc.

And so, with hunger and the rest, does he cease to feel the desires and pleasures at the same time?

Call.

That is so.

Soc.

And also ceases to feel the pains and pleasures at the same time?

---

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

But still he does not cease to have the good and bad at the same time, as you agreed; and now, you do not agree?

Call.

I do; and what then?

Soc.

Only that we get the result, my friend, that the good things are not the same as the pleasant, nor the bad as the painful. For with the one pair the cessation is of both at once, but with the other two it is not, since they are distinct. How then can pleasant things be the same as good, or painful things as bad? Or if you like, consider it another way—for I fancy that even after that you do not admit it. Just observe: do you not call good people good owing to the presence of good things, as you call beautiful those in whom beauty is present?

Call.

I do.

[35] Socrates means that one cannot hope to know great things without first learning the truth about little things.

Soc.
Well now, do you give the name of good men to fools and cowards? It was not they just now but brave and wise men whom you so described. Or is it not these that you call good?
Call.
To be sure it is.
Soc.
And now, have you ever seen a silly child enjoying itself?
Call.
I have.
Soc.
And have you never seen a silly man enjoying himself?
Call.
I should think I have; but what has that to do with it?
Soc.
Nothing; only answer.
Call.
I have seen one.

---

Soc.
And again, a man of sense in a state of pain or enjoyment?
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
And which sort are more apt to feel enjoyment or pain, the wise or the foolish?
Call.
I should think there is not much difference.
Soc.
Well, that will suffice. In war have you ever seen a coward?
Call.
Of course I have.
Soc.
Well now, when the enemy withdrew, which seemed to you to enjoy it more, the cowards or the brave?

---

Call.
Both did, I thought; or if not that, about equally.
Soc.
No matter. Anyhow, the cowards do enjoy it?

Call.
Very much.
Soc.
And the fools, it would seem.
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
And when the foe advances, do the cowards alone feel pain, or the brave as well?
Call.
Both.
Soc.
Alike?
Call.
More, perhaps, the cowards.
Soc.
And when the foe withdraws, do they not enjoy it more?
Call.
Perhaps.
Soc.
So the foolish and the wise, and the cowardly and the brave, feel pain and enjoyment about equally, according to you, but the cowardly more than the brave?
Call.
I agree.
Soc.
But further, are the wise and brave good, and the cowards and fools bad?
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
Then the good and the bad feel enjoyment and pain about equally?
Call.
I agree.
Soc.
Then are the good and the bad about equally good and bad? Or are the bad in some yet greater measure good and bad?

---

Call.
Why, upon my word, I cannot tell what you mean.

Soc.

You are aware, are you not, that you hold that the good are good by the presence of good things, and that the bad are so by the presence of bad things? And that the pleasures are the good things, and the pains bad things?

Call.

Yes, I am.

Soc.

Hence in those who have enjoyment the good things—the pleasures—are present, so long as they enjoy?

Call.

Of course.

Soc.

Then, good things being present, those who enjoy are good?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

Well now, in those who feel pain are not bad things present, namely pains?

Call.

They are.

Soc.

And it is by the presence of bad things, you say, that the bad are bad? Or do you no longer say so?

Call.

I do say so.

Soc.

Then whoever enjoys is good, and whoever is pained, bad?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

You mean, those more so who feel these things more, and those less who feel less, and those about equally who feel about equally?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

Now you say that the wise and the foolish, the cowardly and the brave, feel enjoyment and pain about equally, or the cowards even more?

Call.

I do.

Soc.

Then just help me to reckon up the results we get from our admissions for you know they say: "That which seemeth well, 'tis well twice and also thrice to tell,"[36] and to examine too. We say that the wise and brave man is good, do we not?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

And that the foolish and cowardly is bad?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And again, that he who enjoys is good?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

And that he who feels pain is bad?

Call.

Necessarily.

Soc.

And that the good and the bad feel enjoyment and pain in a like manner, or perhaps the bad rather more?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

Then is the bad man made bad or good in a like manner to the good man, or even good in a greater measure? Does not this follow, along with those former statements, from the assumption that pleasant things and good things are the same? Must not this be so, Callicles?

Call.

Let me tell you, Socrates, all the time that I have been listening to you and yielding you agreement, I have been remarking the puerile delight with which you cling to any concession one may make to you, even in jest. So you suppose that I or anybody else in the world does not regard some pleasures as better, and others worse!

Soc.

Oh ho, Callicles, what a rascal you are, treating me thus like a child—now asserting that the same things are one way, now another, to deceive me! And yet I started with the notion that I should not have to fear

[36]The saying—*καὶ δὶς γὰρ ὃ δεῖ καλόν ἐστιν ἐνισπεῖν*—was attributed by some to Empedocles.

any intentional deception on your part, you being my friend; but now I find I was mistaken, and it seems I must, as the old saying goes, e'en make the best of what I have got,[37] and accept just anything you offer. Well then, what you now state, it seems, is that there are certain pleasures, some good, and some bad; is not that so?

Call.

Yes.

---

Soc.

Then are the beneficial ones good, and the harmful ones bad?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And are those beneficial which do some good, and those evil which do some evil?

Call.

I agree.

Soc.

Now are these the sort you mean—for instance, in the body, the pleasures of eating and drinking that we mentioned a moment ago? Then the pleasures of this sort which produce health in the body, or strength, or any other bodily excellence,—are these good, and those which have the opposite effects, bad?

Call.

Certainly.

---

Soc.

And similarly in the case of pains, are some worthy and some base?

Call.

Of course.

Soc.

So it is the worthy pleasures and pains that we ought to choose in all our doings?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And the base ones not?

Call.

[37] The proverb usually has *τίθεσθαι* instead of *ποιεῖν*; cf. Lucian, Necyom. 21.

Clearly so.

Soc.

Because, you know, Polus and I, if you recollect, decided[38]. that everything we do should be for the sake of what is good. Do you agree with us in this view—that the good is the end of all our actions, and it is for its sake that all other things should be done, and not it for theirs? Do you add your vote to ours, and make a third?

Call.

I do.

Soc.

Then it is for the sake of what is good that we should do everything, including what is pleasant, not the good for the sake of the pleasant.

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

Now is it in every man's power to pick out which sort of pleasant things are good and which bad, or is professional skill required in each case?

Call.

Professional skill.

Soc.

Then let us recall those former points I was putting to Polus and Gorgias.[39] I said, if you remember, that there were certain industries, some of which extend only to pleasure, procuring that and no more, and ignorant of better and worse; while others know what is good and what bad. And I placed among those that are concerned with pleasure the habitude, not art, of cookery, and among those concerned with good the art of medicine. Now by the sanctity of friendship, Callicles, do not on your part indulge in jesting with me, or give me random answers against your conviction, or again, take what I say as though I were jesting. For you see that our debate is upon a question which has the highest conceivable claims to the serious interest even of a person who has but little intelligence—namely, what course of life is best; whether it should be that to which you invite me, with all those manly pursuits of speaking in Assembly and practicing rhetoric and going in for politics after the fashion of you modern politicians, or this life of philosophy; and what makes the difference between these two. Well, perhaps it is best to do what I attempted a while ago, and distinguish them; and then, when we have distinguished them and come to an

[38]Cf. *Plat. Gorg. 468c*

[39]Cf. *Plat. Gorg. 464-5.*

agreement with each other as to these lives being really two, we must consider what is the difference between them and which of them is the one we ought to live. Now I daresay you do not yet grasp my meaning.

Call.

No, I do not.

Soc.

Well, I will put it to you more plainly. Seeing that we have agreed, you and I, that there is such a thing as "good," and such a thing as "pleasant," and that the pleasant is other than the good, and that for the acquisition of either there is a certain practice or preparation—the quest of the pleasant in the one case, and that of the good in the other—but first you must either assent or object to this statement of mine: do you assent?

Call.

I am with you entirely.

Soc.

Then try and come to a definite agreement with me on what I was saying to our friends here, and see if you now find that what I then said was true. I was saying, I think, that cookery seems to me not an art but a habitude, unlike medicine, which, I argued, has investigated the nature of the person whom she treats and the cause of her proceedings, and has some account to give of each of these things; so much for medicine: whereas the other, in respect of the pleasure to which her whole ministration is given, goes to work there in an utterly inartistic manner, without having investigated at all either the nature or the cause of pleasure, and altogether irrationally—with no thought, one may say, of differentiation, relying on routine and habitude for merely preserving a memory of what is wont to result; and that is how she is enabled to provide her pleasures. Now consider first whether you think that this account is satisfactory, and that there are certain other such occupations likewise, having to do with the soul; some artistic, with forethought for what is to the soul's best advantage, and others making light of this, but again, as in the former case, considering merely the soul's pleasure and how it may be contrived for her, neither inquiring which of the pleasures is a better or a worse one, nor caring for aught but mere gratification, whether for better or worse. For I, Callicles, hold that there are such, and for my part I call this sort of thing flattery, whether in relation to the body or to the soul or to anything else, whenever anyone ministers to its pleasure without regard for the better and the worse; and you now, do you support us with the same opinion on this matter, or do you gainsay us?

Call.
Not I; I agree with you, in order that your argument may reach a conclusion, and that I may gratify Gorgias here.

---

Soc.
And is this the case with only one soul, and not with two or many?
Call.
No, it is also the case with two or many.
Soc.
Then is it possible also to gratify them all at once, collectively, with no consideration of what is best?
Call.
I should think it is.
Soc.
Then can you say what are the pursuits which effect this? Or rather, if you like, when I ask you, and one of them seems to you to be of this class, say yes, and when one does not, say no. And first let us consider flute-playing. Does it not seem to you one of this sort, Callicles, aiming only at our pleasure, and caring for naught else ?
Call.
It does seem so to me.
Soc.
And so too with all similar pursuits, such as harp-playing in the contests?
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
And what of choral productions and dithyrambic compositions? Are they not manifestly, in your view, of the same kind? Or do you suppose Cinesias,[40] son of Meles, cares a jot about trying to say things of a sort that might be improving to his audience, or only what is likely to gratify the crowd of spectators?
Call.
Clearly the latter is the case, Socrates, with Cinesias.
Soc.
And what of his father Meles? Did he ever strike you as looking to what was best in his minstrelsy? Or did he, perhaps, not even make the pleasantest his aim? For his singing used to be a pain to the audience.

[40] A dithyrambic poet whose extravagant style was ridiculed by Aristophanes (*Aristoph. Frogs 153*; *Aristoph. Cl. 333*; *Aristoph. Birds 1379*).

But consider now: do you not think that all minstrelsy and composing of dithyrambs have been invented for the sake of pleasure?

Call.

I do.

---

Soc.

Then what of the purpose that has inspired our stately and wonderful tragic poetry? Are her endeavor and purpose, to your mind, merely for the gratification of the spectators, or does she strive hard, if there be anything pleasant and gratifying, but bad for them, to leave that unsaid, and if there be anything unpleasant, but beneficial, both to speak and sing that, whether they enjoy it or not? To which of these two aims, think you, is tragic poetry devoted ?

Call.

It is quite obvious, in her case, Socrates, that she is bent rather upon pleasure and the gratification of the spectators.

Soc.

Well now, that kind of thing, Callicles, did we say just now, is flattery ?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

Pray then, if we strip any kind of poetry of its melody, its rhythm and its meter, we get mere speeches as the residue, do we not?

Call.

That must be so.

Soc.

And those speeches are spoken to a great crowd of people?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

Hence poetry is a kind of public speaking.

---

Call.

Apparently.

Soc.

Then it must be a rhetorical public speaking or do you not think that the poets use rhetoric in the theaters?

Call.

Yes, I do.

Soc.

So now we have found a kind of rhetoric addressed to such a public as is compounded of children and women and men, and slaves as well as free; an art that we do not quite approve of, since we call it a flattering one.

Call.

To be sure.

Soc.

Very well; but now, the rhetoric addressed to the Athenian people, or to the other assemblies of freemen in the various cities—what can we make of that? Do the orators strike you as speaking always with a view to what is best, with the single aim of making the citizens as good as possible by their speeches, or are they, like the poets, set on gratifying the citizens, and do they, sacrificing the common weal to their own personal interest, behave to these assemblies as to children, trying merely to gratify them, nor care a jot whether they will be better or worse in consequence?

---

Call.

This question of yours is not quite so simple; for there are some who have a regard for the citizens in the words that they utter, while there are also others of the sort that you mention.

Soc.

That is enough for me. For if this thing also is twofold, one part of it, I presume, will be flattery and a base mob-oratory, while the other is noble—the endeavor, that is, to make the citizens' souls as good as possible, and the persistent effort to say what is best, whether it prove more or less pleasant to one's hearers. But this is a rhetoric you never yet saw; or if you have any orator of this kind that you can mention, without more ado let me know who he is!

Call.

No, upon my word, I cannot tell you of anyone, at least among the orators of today.

Soc.

Well then, can you mention one among those of older times whom the Athenians have to thank for any betterment that started at the time of his first harangues, as a change from the worse state in which he originally found them? For my part, I have no idea who the man is.

---

Call.

Why, do you hear no mention of Themistocles and what a good man he was, and Cimon and Miltiades and the great Pericles, who has died recently,[41] and whom you have listened to yourself?

Soc.

Yes, Callicles, if that which you spoke of just now is true virtue—the satisfaction of one's own and other men's desires; but if that is not so, and the truth is—as we were compelled to admit in the subsequent discussion—that only those desires which make man better by their satisfaction should be fulfilled, but those which make him worse should not, and that this is a special art, then I for one cannot tell you of any man so skilled having appeared among them.

Call.

Ah, but if you search properly you will find one.

Soc.

Then let us just consider the matter calmly, and see if any of them has appeared with that skill. Come now: the good man, who is intent on the best when he speaks, will surely not speak at random in whatever he says, but with a view to some object? He is just like any other craftsman, who having his own particular work in view selects the things he applies to that work of his, not at random, but with the purpose of giving a certain form to whatever he is working upon.

Soc.

You have only to look, for example, at the painters, the builders, the shipwrights, or any of the other craftsmen, whichever you like, to see how each of them arranges everything according to a certain order, and forces one part to suit and fit with another, until he has combined the whole into a regular and well-ordered production; and so of course with all the other craftsmen, and the people we mentioned just now, who have to do with the body—trainers and doctors; they too, I suppose, bring order and system into the body. Do we admit this to be the case, or not?

Call.

Let it be as you say.

Soc.

Then if regularity and order are found in a house, it will be a good one, and if irregularity, a bad one?

Call.

I agree.

[41] 429 B.C. We saw at *Plat. Gorg. 473e* that the supposed date of the discussion is 405 B.C., so that "recently" here is hardly accurate.

Soc.
And it will be just the same with a ship?

---

Call.
Yes.
Soc.
And further, with our bodies also, can we say?
Call.
Certainly.
Soc.
And what of the soul? If it shows irregularity, will it be good, or if it has a certain regularity and order?
Call.
Our former statements oblige us to agree to this also.
Soc.
Then what name do we give to the effect of regularity and order in the body?
Call.
Health and strength, I suppose you mean.

---

Soc.
I do. And what, again, to the effect produced in the soul by regularity and order? Try to find the name here, and tell it me as before.
Call.
Why not name it yourself, Socrates ?
Soc.
Well, if you prefer it, I will; and do you, if I seem to you to name it rightly, say so; if not, you must refute me and not let me have my way. For it seems to me that any regularity of the body is called healthiness, and this leads to health being produced in it, and general bodily excellence. Is that so or not?
Call.
It is.

---

Soc.
And the regular and orderly states of the soul are called lawfulness and law, whereby men are similarly made law-abiding and orderly; and these states are justice and temperance. Do you agree or not?
Call.
Be it so.

Soc.
Then it is this that our orator, the man of art and virtue, will have in view, when he applies to our souls the words that he speaks, and also in all his actions, and in giving any gift he will give it, and in taking anything away he will take it, with this thought always before his mind— how justice may be engendered in the souls of his fellow-citizens, and how injustice may be removed; how temperance may be bred in them and licentiousness cut off; and how virtue as a whole may be produced and vice expelled. Do you agree to this or not?

Call.
I agree.

Soc.
For what advantage is there, Callicles, in giving to a sick and ill-conditioned body a quantity of even the most agreeable things to eat and drink, or anything else whatever, if it is not going to profit thereby any more, let us say, than by the opposite treatment, on any fair reckoning, and may profit less? Is this so?

---

Call.
Be it so.

Soc.
Because, I imagine, it is no gain for a man to live in a depraved state of body, since in this case his life must be a depraved one also. Or is not that the case?

Call.
Yes.

Soc.
And so the satisfaction of one's desires—if one is hungry, eating as much as one likes, or if thirsty, drinking—is generally allowed by doctors when one is in health; but they practically never allow one in sickness to take one's fill of things that one desires: do you agree with me in this?

Call.
I do.

---

Soc.
And does not the same rule, my excellent friend, apply to the soul? So long as it is in a bad state—thoughtless, licentious, unjust and unholy—we must restrain its desires and not permit it to do anything except what will help it to be better: do you grant this, or not?

Call.
I do.
Soc.
For thus, I take it, the soul itself is better off?
Call.
To be sure.
Soc.
And is restraining a person from what he desires correcting him?
Call.
Yes.
Soc.
Then correction is better for the soul than uncorrected licence, as you were thinking just now.

---

Call.
I have no notion what you are referring to, Socrates; do ask some one else.
Soc.
Here is a fellow who cannot endure a kindness done him, or the experience in himself of what our talk is about—a correction!
Call.
Well, and not a jot do I care, either, for anything you say; I only gave you those answers to oblige Gorgias.
Soc.
Very good. So now, what shall we do? Break off our argument midway?
Call.
You must decide that for yourself.

---

Soc.
Why, they say one does wrong to leave off even stories in the middle; one should set a head on the thing, that it may not go about headless. So proceed with the rest of your answers, that our argument may pick up a head.
Call.
How overbearing you are, Socrates! Take my advice, and let this argument drop, or find some one else to argue with.
Soc.
Then who else is willing? Surely we must not leave the argument there, unfinished?
Call.

Could you not get through it yourself, either talking on by yourself or answering your own questions?

Soc.

So that, in Epicharmus's phrase,[42] "what two men spake erewhile" I may prove I can manage single-handed. And indeed it looks as though it must of sheer necessity be so. Still, if we are to do this, for my part I think we ought all to vie with each other in attempting a knowledge of what is true and what false in the matter of our argument; for it is a benefit to all alike that it be revealed.

Soc.

Now I am going to pursue the argument as my view of it may suggest; but if any of you think the admissions I am making to myself are not the truth, you must seize upon them and refute me. For I assure you I myself do not say what I say as knowing it, but as joining in the search with you; so that if anyone who disputes my statements is found to be on the right track, I shall be the first to agree with him. This, however, I say on the assumption that you think the argument should be carried through to a conclusion; but if you would rather it were not, let us have done with it now and go our ways.

Gorg.

Well, my opinion is, Socrates, that we ought not to go away yet, but that you should go through with the argument; and I fancy the rest of them think the same. For I myself, in fact, desire to hear you going through the remainder by yourself.

Soc.

Why, to be sure, Gorgias, I myself should have liked to continue discussing with Callicles here until I had paid him an Amphion's speech in return for his of Zethus.[43] But since you, Callicles, are unwilling to join me in finishing off the argument, you must at any rate pull me up, as you listen, if it seems to you that my statements are wrong. And if you refute me, I shall not be vexed with you as you were with me; you will only be recorded in my mind as my greatest benefactor.

Call.

Proceed, good sir, by yourself, and finish it off.

Soc.

Give ear, then; but first I will resume our argument from the beginning. Are the pleasant and the good the same thing? Not the same, as

[42]Epicharmus of Cos produced philosophic comedies in Sicily during the first part of the fifth century. The saying is quoted in full by Athenaeus, vii. 308 *τὰ πρὸ τοῦ δύ' ἄνδρες ἔλεγον εἷς ἐγὼν ἀποχρέω.*

[43]Cf. *Plat. Gorg. 485* above.

Callicles and I agreed. Is the pleasant thing to be done for the sake of the good, or the good for the sake of the pleasant? The pleasant for the sake of the good. And is that thing pleasant by whose advent we are pleased, and that thing good by whose presence we are good? Certainly. But further, both we and everything else that is good, are good by the advent of some virtue? In my view this must be so, Callicles. But surely the virtue of each thing, whether of an implement or of a body, or again of a soul or any live creature, does not arrive most properly by accident, but by an order or rightness or art that is apportioned to each. Is that so? I certainly agree. Then the virtue of each thing is a matter of regular and orderly arrangement? I at least should say so. Hence it is a certain order proper to each existent thing that by its advent in each makes it good? That is my view. So then a soul which has its own proper order is better than one which is unordered? Necessarily. But further, one that has order is orderly? Of course it will be.

Soc.

And the orderly one is temperate? Most necessarily. So the temperate soul is good. For my part, I can find nothing to say in objection to this, my dear Callicles; but if you can, do instruct me.

Call.

Proceed, good sir.

Soc.

I say, then, that if the temperate soul is good, one that is in the opposite state to this sensible[44] one is bad; and that was the senseless and dissolute one. Certainly. And further, the sensible man will do what is fitting as regards both gods and men; for he could not be sensible if he did what was unfitting. That must needs be so. And again, when he does what is fitting as regards men, his actions will be just, and as regards the gods, pious; and he who does what is just and pious must needs be a just and pious man. That is so. And surely he must be brave also: for you know a sound or temperate mind is shown, not by pursuing and shunning what one ought not, but by shunning and pursuing what one ought, whether they be things or people or pleasures or pains, and by steadfastly persevering in one's duty; so that it follows of strict necessity, Callicles, that the temperate man, as shown in our exposition, being just and brave and pious, is the perfection of a good man; and that the good man does well and fairly

[44]The argument here makes use of a more literal meaning of *σώφρων*—sound-minded (verging on conscientious, as in what immediately follows).

whatever he does and that he who does well is blessed and happy,[45] while the wicked man or evil-doer is wretched. And this must be the man who is in an opposite case to the temperate,—the licentious man whom you were commending. So there is my account of the matter, and I say that this is the truth; and that, if this is true, anyone, as it seems, who desires to be happy must ensue and practice temperance, and flee from licentiousness, each of us as fast as his feet will carry him, and must contrive, if possible, to need no correction; but if he have need of it, either himself or anyone belonging to him, either an individual or a city, then right must be applied and they must be corrected, if they are to be happy. This, in my opinion, is the mark on which a man should fix his eyes throughout life; he should concentrate all his own and his city's efforts on this one business of providing a man who would be blessed with the needful justice and temperance; not letting one's desires go unrestrained and in one's attempts to satisfy them—an interminable trouble—leading the life of a robber. For neither to any of his fellow-men can such a one be dear, nor to God; since he cannot commune with any, and where there is no communion, there can be no friendship.

Soc.

And wise men tell us, Callicles, that heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, temperance, and justice; and that is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole of this world by the name of order,[46] not of disorder or dissoluteness. Now you, as it seems to me, do not give proper attention to this, for all your cleverness, but have failed to observe the great power of geometrical equality amongst both gods and men: you hold that self-advantage is what one ought to practice, because you neglect geometry. Very well: either we must refute this statement, that it is by the possession of justice and temperance that the happy are happy and by that of vice the wretched are wretched; or if this is true, we must investigate its consequences. Those former results, Callicles, must all follow, on which you asked me if I was speaking in earnest when I said that a man must accuse himself or his son or his comrade if he do any wrong, and that this is what rhetoric must be used for; and what you supposed Polus to be conceding from shame is after all true— that to do wrong is worse, in the same degree as

[45] As the various meanings of *σωφροσύνη* have been brought out to suggest that one side of virtues involves the others, so here the apparent quibble of *εὖ πράττειν* (act well and fare well) is intended to suggest a real dependence of happiness upon virtue.

[46] *Κόσμος* (order) was the name first given to the universe by the Pythagoreans.

it is baser, than to suffer it, and that whoever means to be the right sort of rhetorician must really be just and well-informed of the ways of justice, which again Polus said that Gorgias was only shamed into admitting. This being the case, let us consider what weight, if any, there is in the reproaches you cast upon me:[47] is it fairly alleged or not that I am unable to stand up for myself or any of my friends and relations, or to deliver them from the sorest perils, but am exposed like an outcast to the whim of anyone who chooses to give me— the dashing phrase is yours—a box on the ear; or strip me of my substance or expel me from the city; or, worst of all, put me to death; and that to be in such a case is the lowest depth of shame, as your account has it? But mine—though it has been frequently stated already, there can be no objection to my stating it once again—is this: I deny, Callicles, that to be wrongfully boxed on the ear is the deepest disgrace, or to have either my person cut or my purse; I hold that to strike or cut me or mine wrongfully is yet more of a disgrace and an evil, and likewise stealing and kidnapping and housebreaking, and in short any wrong whatsoever done to me or mine, are both worse and more shameful to the wrongdoer than to me the wronged.

Soc.

All this, which has been made evident in the form I have stated some way back in our foregoing discussion, is held firm and fastened—if I may put it rather bluntly—with reasons of steel and adamant (so it would seem, at least, on the face of it) which you or somebody more gallant than yourself must undo, or else accept this present statement of mine as the only possible one. For my story is ever the same, that I cannot tell how the matter stands, and yet of all whom I have encountered, before as now, no one has been able to state it otherwise without making himself ridiculous. Well now, once more I assume it to be so; but if it is so, and injustice is the greatest of evils to the wrongdoer, and still greater than this greatest, if such can be, when the wrongdoer pays no penalty, what rescue is it that a man must be able to effect for himself if he is not to be ridiculous in very truth? Is it not one which will avert from us the greatest harm? Nay, rescue must needs be at its shamefullest, if one is unable to rescue either oneself or one's own friends and relations, and second to it is inability in face of the second sort of evil, and third in face of the third, and so on with the rest; according to the gravity attaching to each evil is either the glory of being able to effect a rescue from each sort, or the shame of being

[47]Socrates proceeds to recall the reproaches of Callicles, above, *Plat. Gorg. 486.*

unable. Is it so or otherwise, Callicles?

Call.

Not otherwise.

Soc.

Then of these two, doing and suffering wrong, we declare doing wrong to be the greater evil, and suffering it the less. Now with what should a man provide himself in order to come to his own rescue, and so have both of the benefits that arise from doing no wrong on the one hand, and suffering none on the other? Is it power or will? What I mean is, will a man avoid being wronged by merely wishing not to be wronged, or will he avoid it by providing himself with power to avert it?

Call.

The answer to that is obvious: by means of power.

Soc.

But what about doing wrong? Will the mere not wishing to do it suffice—since, in that case, he will not do it—or does it require that he also provide himself with some power or art, since unless he has got such learning or training he will do wrong? I really must have your answer on this particular point, Callicles—whether you think that Polus and I were correct or not in finding ourselves forced to admit, as we did in the preceding argument, that no one does wrong of his own wish, but that all who do wrong do it against their will.

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Call.

Let it be as you would have it, Socrates, in order that you may come to a conclusion of your argument.

Soc.

Then for this purpose also, of not doing wrong, it seems we must provide ourselves with a certain power or art.

Call.

To be sure.

Soc.

Now what can be the art of providing so that we suffer no wrong, or as little as possible? Consider if you take the same view of it as I do. For in my view it is this: one must either be a ruler, or even a despot, in one's city, or else an associate of the existing government.

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Call.

Do you note, Socrates, how ready I am to praise, when you say a good thing? This seems to me excellently spoken.

Soc.

Then see if this next statement of mine strikes you as a good one too. It seems to me that the closest possible friendship between man and man is that mentioned by the sages of old time as

"like to like." Do you not agree?

Call.

I do.

Soc.

So where you have a savage, uneducated ruler as despot, if there were some one in the city far better than he, I suppose the despot would be afraid of him and could never become a friend to him with all his heart?

Call.

That is so.

Soc.

Nor a friend to anyone who was much inferior to him either; for the despot would despise him and never show him the attention due to a friend.

Call.

That is true also.

Soc.

Then the only friend of any account that remains for such a person is a man of his own temper, who blames and praises the same things, and is thus willing to be governed by him and to be subject to his rule. He is a man who will have great power in that state; him none will wrong with impunity. Is it not so?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

Hence if one of the young men in that city should reflect: In what way can I have great power, and no one may do me wrong?—this, it would seem, is the path he must take, to accustom himself from his earliest youth to be delighted and annoyed by the same things as his master, and contrive to be as like the other as possible. Is it not so?

Call.

Yes.

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Soc.

And so this man will have attained to a condition of suffering no wrong and having great power—as your party maintain—in the city.

Call.
Certainly.
Soc.
And of doing no wrong likewise? Or is it quite the contrary, if he is to be like his unjust ruler, and have great influence with him? Well, for my part, I think his efforts will be all the opposite way, that is, towards enabling himself to do as much wrong as possible and to pay no penalty for the wrong he does; will they not?
Call.
Apparently.

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Soc.
And thus he will find himself possessed of the greatest evil, that of having his soul depraved and maimed as a result of his imitation of his master and the power he has got.
Call.
You have a strange way of twisting your arguments, at each point, this way or that, Socrates! Surely you know that this imitator will put to death anyone who does not imitate his master, if he pleases, and will strip him of his property.

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Soc.
I know that, my good Callicles, if I am not deaf, as I have heard it so often of late from you and Polus, and from almost every one else in the town; but you in return must hear what I say—that he will put a man to death if he pleases, but it will be a villain slaying a good man and true.
Call.
And is not this the very thing that makes one indignant?[48]
Soc.
Not if one is a man of sense, as our argument indicates. Or do you suppose that the object of a man's efforts should be to live as long a time as possible, and to cultivate those arts which preserve us from every danger; such as that which you bid me cultivate—rhetoric, the art that preserves us in the law courts?
Call.
Yes, on my word I do, and sound advice it is that I give you.
Soc.

[48]Cf. Callicles' warning (*Plat. Gorg. 486b*) against the danger of being put to death on the false accusation of some paltry rascal.

But now, my excellent friend, do you think there is anything grand in the accomplishment of swimming?

Call.

No, in truth, not I.

Soc.

Yet, you know, that too saves men from death, when they have got into a plight of the kind in which that accomplishment is needed. But if this seems to you too small a thing, I will tell you of a more important one, the art of piloting, which saves not only our lives but also our bodies and our goods from extreme perils, as rhetoric does. And at the same time it is plain-fashioned and orderly, not giving itself grand airs in a pretence of performing some transcendent feat; but in return for performing the same as the forensic art—bringing one safely over, it may be, from Aegina—it charges a fee, I believe, of two obols[49]; or if it be from Egypt or the Pontus, at the very most—for this great service of bringing safe home, as I said just now, oneself and children and goods and womenfolk—on landing charges a couple of drachmae[50]; the actual possessor of the art, after performing all this, goes ashore and strolls on the quay by his vessel's side, with an unobtrusive demeanor. For he knows, I expect, how to estimate the uncertainty as to which of his passengers he has benefited by not letting them be lost at sea, and which he has injured, being aware that he has put them ashore not a whit better than when they came aboard, either in body or in soul.

Soc.

And so he reckons out how wrong it is that, whereas a victim of severe and incurable diseases of the body who has escaped drowning is miserable in not having died, and has got no benefit at his hands, yet, if a man has many incurable diseases in that part of him so much more precious than the body, his soul, that such a person is to live, and that he will be doing him the service of saving him either from the sea or from a law court or from any other peril whatsoever: no, he knows it cannot be better for a man who is vicious to live, since he must needs live ill. This is why it is not the custom for the pilot to give himself grand airs, though he does save our lives; nor for the engineer either, my admirable friend, who sometimes has the power of saving lives in no less degree than a general—to say nothing of a pilot—or anyone else: for at times he saves whole cities. Can you regard him as comparable with the lawyer? And yet, if he chose to speak as you people

[49] About fourpence.

[50] About two shillings

do, Callicles, magnifying his business, he would bury you in a heap of words, pleading and urging the duty of becoming engineers, as the only thing; for he would find reasons in plenty. But you none the less despise him and his special art, and you would call him "engineer" in a taunting sense, and would refuse either to bestow your daughter on his son or let your own son marry his daughter. And yet after the praises you sing of your own pursuits what fair ground have you for despising the engineer and the others whom I was mentioning just now? I know you would claim to be a better man and of better birth. But if "better" has not the meaning I give it, but virtue means just saving oneself and one's belongings, whatever one's character may be, you are merely ridiculous in cavilling at the engineer and the doctor and every other art that has been produced for our safety. No, my gifted friend, just see if the noble and the good are not something different from saving and being saved. For as to living any particular length of time, this is surely a thing that any true man should ignore, and not set his heart on mere life; but having resigned all this to Heaven and believing what the women say—that not one of us can escape his destiny—he should then proceed to consider in what way he will best live out his allotted span of life;

Soc.

whether in assimilating himself to the constitution of the state in which he may be dwelling— and so therefore now, whether it is your duty to make yourself as like as possible to the Athenian people, if you intend to win its affection and have great influence in the city: see if this is to your advantage and mine, so that we may not suffer, my distinguished friend, the fate that they say befalls the creatures who would draw down the moon—the hags of Thessaly;[51] that our choice of this power in the city may not cost us all that we hold most dear. But if you suppose that anyone in the world can transmit to you such an art as will cause you to have great power in this state without conforming to its government either for better or for worse, in my opinion you are ill-advised, Callicles; for you must be no mere imitator, but essentially like them, if you mean to achieve any genuine sort of friendship with Demus the Athenian people, ay, and I dare swear, with Demus son of Pyrilampes[52] as well. So whoever can render you most like them is the person to make you a statesman in the way that you desire to be

[51] Socrates alludes to the popular theory that the practice of witchcraft is a serious danger or utter destruction to the practicer.

[52] Cf. above, *Plat. Gorg. 481d.*

a statesman, and a rhetorician; for everybody is delighted with words that are designed for his special temper, but is annoyed by what is spoken to suit aliens—unless you have some other view, dear creature. Have we any objection to this, Callicles?

Call.

It seems to me, I cannot tell how, that your statement is right, Socrates, but I share the common feeling; I do not quite believe you.

Soc.

Because the love of Demus, Callicles, is there in your soul to resist me: but if haply we come to examine these same questions more than once, and better, you will believe. Remember, however, that we said there were two treatments that might be used in the tendance of any particular thing, whether body or soul: one, making pleasure the aim in our dealings with it; the other, working for what is best, not indulging it but striving with it as hard as we can. Was not this the distinction we were making at that point?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

Then the one, aiming at pleasure, is ignoble and really nothing but flattery, is it not?

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Call.

Be it so, if you like.

Soc.

And the aim of the other is to make that which we are tending, whether it be body or soul, as good as may be.

Call.

To be sure.

Soc.

Then ought we not to make it our endeavor, in tending our city and its citizens, to make those citizens as good as possible? For without this, you see, as we found in our former argument, there is no use in offering any other service, unless the intentions of those who are going to acquire either great wealth or special authority or any other sort of power be fair and honorable. Are we to grant that?

Call.

Certainly, if you so prefer.

Soc.

Then if you and I, Callicles, in setting about some piece of public

business for the state, were to invite one another to see to the building part of it, say the most important erections either of walls or arsenals or temples, would it be our duty to consider and examine ourselves, first as to whether we understood the art of building or not, and from whom we had learnt it? Would we have to do this, or not?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And so again, in the second place, whether we had ever erected any building privately for one of our friends or for ourselves, and whether such building was handsome or ugly? And if we found on consideration that we had been under good and reputable masters, and that there were many handsome buildings that had been erected by us with our masters' guidance, and many also by ourselves alone, after we had dispensed with our masters, it might, in those circumstances, be open to men of sense to enter upon public works: but if we had neither a master of ourselves to point to, nor any buildings at all, or only a number of worthless ones, in that case surely it would be senseless to attempt public works or invite one another to take them in hand. Shall we agree to the correctness of this statement or not?

Call.

Yes, to be sure.

Soc.

And so too with all the rest: suppose, for instance, we had undertaken the duties of state-physicians, and were to invite one another to the work as qualified doctors, we should, I presume, have first inquired of each other, I of you and you of me: Let us see now, in Heaven's name; how does Socrates himself stand as regards his body's health? Or has anyone else, slave or free, ever had Socrates to thank for ridding him of a disease? And I also, I fancy, should make the same sort of inquiry about you; and then, if we found we had never been the cause of an improvement in the bodily condition of anyone, stranger or citizen, man or woman,—by Heaven, Callicles, would it not in truth be ridiculous that men should descend to such folly that, before having plenty of private practice, sometimes with indifferent results, sometimes with success, and so getting adequate training in the art, they should, as the saying is, try to learn pottery by starting on a wine-jar,[53] and start public practice themselves and invite others of their like to do so? Do you not think it would be mere folly to act thus?

[53]That is, instead of a small pot involving little waste in case of failure.

Call.
I do.

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Soc.
And now, most excellent sir, since you are yourself just entering upon a public career, and are inviting me to do the same, and reproaching me for not doing it, shall we not inquire of one another: Let us see, has Callicles ever made any of the citizens better? Is there one who was previously wicked, unjust, licentious, and senseless, and has to thank Callicles for making him an upright, honorable man, whether stranger or citizen, bond or free? Tell me, if anyone examines you in these terms, Callicles, what will you say? What human being will you claim to have made better by your intercourse? Do you shrink from answering, if there really is some work of yours in private life that can serve as a step to your public practice?

Call.
You are contentious, Socrates!

Soc.
No, it is not from contentiousness that I ask you this, but from a real wish to know in what manner you can imagine you ought to conduct yourself as one of our public men. Or can it be, then, that you will let us see you concerning yourself with anything else in your management of the city's affairs than making us, the citizens, as good as possible? Have we not more than once already admitted that this is what the statesman ought to do? Have we admitted it or not? Answer. We have: I will answer for you. Then if this is what the good man ought to accomplish for his country, recall now those men whom you mentioned a little while ago, and tell me if you still consider that they showed themselves good citizens— Pericles and Cimon and Miltiades and Themistocles.

Call.
Yes, I do.

Soc.
Then if they were good, clearly each of them was changing the citizens from worse to better. Was this so, or not?

Call.
Yes.

Soc.
So when Pericles began to speak before the people, the Athenians were worse than when he made his last speeches?

Call.
Perhaps.
Soc.
Not "perhaps," as you say, excellent sir; it follows of necessity from what we have admitted, on the assumption that he was a good citizen.
Call.
Well, what then?
Soc.
Nothing: but tell me one thing in addition,—whether the Athenians are said to have become better because of Pericles, or quite the contrary, to have been corrupted by him. What I, for my part, hear is that Pericles has made the Athenians idle, cowardly, talkative, and avaricious, by starting the system of public fees.[54]
Call.
You hear that from the folk with battered ears,[55] Socrates.
Soc.
Ah, but what is no longer a matter of hearsay, but rather of certain knowledge, for you as well as for me, is that Pericles was popular at first, and the Athenians passed no degrading sentence upon him so long as they were "worse"; but as soon as they had been made upright and honorable by him, at the end of our Pericles' life they convicted him of embezzlement, and all but condemned him to death, clearly because they thought him a rogue.
Call.
What then? Was Pericles a bad man on that account?
Soc.
Well, at any rate a herdsman in charge of asses or horses or oxen would be considered a bad one for being like that—if he took over animals that did not kick him or butt or bite, and in the result they were found to be doing all these things out of sheer wildness. Or do you not consider any keeper of any animal whatever a bad one, if he turns out the creature he received tame so much wilder than he found it? Do you, or do you not?
Call.
Certainly I do, to oblige you.
Soc.
Then oblige me still further by answering this: is man also one of the

[54]This refers especially to the payment of dicasts or jurors, introduced by Pericles in 462-1 B.C.

[55]i.e. people who show their Spartan sympathies by an addiction to boxing; cf. *Plat. Prot. 342b.*

animals, or not?

Call.

Of course he is.

Soc.

And Pericles had charge of men?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

Well now, ought they not, as we admitted this moment, to have been made by him more just instead of more unjust, if he was a good statesman while he had charge of them?

Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And the just are gentle, as Homer said.[56] But what say you? Is it not so?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

But, however, he turned them out wilder than when he took them in hand, and that against himself, the last person he would have wished them to attack.

Call.

You wish me to agree with you?

Soc.

Yes, if you consider I am speaking the truth.

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Call.

Then be it so.

Soc.

And if wilder, more unjust and worse?

Call.

Be it so.

Soc.

Then Pericles was not a good statesman, by this argument.

Call.

You at least say not.

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[56] Our text of Homer contains no such saying. The nearest is that in *Hom. Od. 6.120*, and *Hom. Od. 9.175*—*ἦ ῥ' ὀΐγ' ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι, οὐδὲ δίκαιοι*, Wanton and wild are they, not just.

Soc.

And you too, I declare, by what you admitted. And now about Cimon once more, tell me, did not the people whom he tended ostracize him in order that they might not hear his voice for ten years? And Themistocles, did they not treat him in just the same way, and add the punishment of exile? And Miltiades, the hero of Marathon, they sentenced to be flung into the pit, and had it not been for the president, in he would have gone. And yet these men, had they been good in the way that you describe them, would never have met with such a fate. Good drivers, at any rate, do not keep their seat in the chariot at their first race to be thrown out later on, when they have trained their teams and acquired more skill in driving! This never occurs either in charioteering or in any other business; or do you think it does?

Call.

No, I do not.

Soc.

So what we said before, it seems, was true, that we know of nobody who has shown himself a good statesman in this city of ours. You admitted there was nobody among those of the present day, but thought there were some amongst those of former times, and you gave these men the preference. But these we have found to be on a par with ours of the present day and so, if they were orators, they employed neither the genuine art of rhetoric—else they would not have been thrown out—nor the flattering form of it.

Call.

But still there can be no suggestion, Socrates, that any of the present-day men has ever achieved anything like the deeds of anyone you may choose amongst those others.

Soc.

My admirable friend, neither do I blame the latter, at least as servants of the state; indeed, I consider they have shown themselves more serviceable than those of our time, and more able to procure for the city the things she desired. But in diverting her desires another way instead of complying with them—in persuading or compelling her people to what would help them to be better— they were scarcely, if at all, superior to their successors; and that is the only business of a good citizen. But in providing ships and walls and arsenals, and various other things of the sort, I do grant you that they were cleverer than our leaders. Thus you and I are doing an absurd thing in this discussion: for during all the time that we have been debating we have never ceased circling round to the same point and misunderstanding each other. I at

all events believe you have more than once admitted and decided that this management of either body or soul is a twofold affair, and that on one side it is a menial service, whereby it is possible to provide meat for our bodies when they are hungry, drink when thirsty, and when they are cold, clothing, bedding, shoes, or anything else that bodies are apt to desire: I purposely give you the same illustrations, in order that you may the more easily comprehend. For as to being able to supply these things, either as a tradesman or a merchant or a manufacturer of any such actual things—baker or cook or weaver or shoemaker or tanner—it is no wonder that a man in such capacity should appear to himself and his neighbors to be a minister of the body; to every one, in fact, who is not aware that there is besides all these an art of gymnastics and medicine which really is, of course, ministration to the body, and which actually has a proper claim to rule over all those arts and to make use of their works, because it knows what is wholesome or harmful in meat and drink to bodily excellence, whereas all those others know it not;

Soc.

and hence it is that, while those other arts are slavish and menial and illiberal in dealing with the body, gymnastics and medicine can fairly claim to be their mistresses. Now, that the very same is the case as regards the soul you appear to me at one time to understand to be my meaning, and you admit it as though you knew what I meant; but a little later you come and tell me that men have shown themselves upright and honorable citizens in our city, and when I ask you who, you seem to me to be putting forward men of exactly the same sort in public affairs; as if, on my asking you who in gymnastics have ever been or now are good trainers of the body, you were to tell me, in all seriousness,

"Thearion, the baker, Mithaecus, the author of the book on Sicilian cookery, Sarambus, the vintner—these have shown themselves wonderful ministers of the body; the first providing admirable loaves, the second tasty dishes, and the third wine." Now perhaps you would be indignant should I then say to you:

"Sir, you know nothing about gymnastics; servants you tell me of, and caterers to appetites, fellows who have no proper and respectable knowledge of them, and who peradventure will first stuff and fatten men's bodies to the tune of their praises, and then cause them to lose even the flesh they had to start with; and these in their turn will be too ignorant to cast the blame of their maladies and of their loss of original weight upon their regalers, but any people who chance to be

by at the time and offer them some advice—just when the previous stuffing has brought, after the lapse of some time, its train of disease, since it was done without regard to what is wholesome—these are the people they will accuse and chide and harm as far as they can, while they will sing the praises of that former crew who caused the mischief." And you now, Callicles, are doing something very similar to this: you belaud men who have regaled the citizens with all the good cheer they desired.

Soc.

People do say they have made the city great; but that it is with the swelling of an imposthume, due to those men of the former time, this they do not perceive. For with no regard for temperance and justice they have stuffed the city with harbors and arsenals and walls and tribute and suchlike trash; and so whenever that access of debility comes they will lay the blame on the advisers who are with them at the time, and belaud Themistocles and Cimon and Pericles, who caused all the trouble; and belike they will lay hold of you, if you are not on your guard, and my good friend Alcibiades, when they are losing what they had originally as well as what they have acquired, though you are not the authors, except perhaps part-authors, of the mischief. And yet there is a senseless thing which I see happening now, and hear of, in connection with the men of former times. For I observe that whenever the state proceeds against one of her statesmen as a wrongdoer, they are indignant and protest loudly against such monstrous treatment: after all their long and valuable services to the state they are unjustly ruined at her hands, so they protest. But the whole thing is a lie; since there is not a single case in which a ruler of a city could ever be unjustly ruined by the very city that he rules. For it is very much the same with pretenders to statesmanship as with professors of sophistry. The sophists, in fact, with all their other accomplishments, act absurdly in one point: claiming to be teachers of virtue, they often accuse their pupils of doing them an injury by cheating them of their fees and otherwise showing no recognition of the good they have done them. Now what can be more unreasonable than this plea? That men, after they have been made good and just, after all their injustice has been rooted out by their teacher and replaced by justice, should be unjust through something that they have not! Does not this seem to you absurd, my dear friend? In truth you have forced me to make quite a harangue, Callicles, by refusing to answer.

Call.

And you are the man who could not speak unless somebody answered

you?

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Soc.

Apparently I can. Just now, at any rate, I am rather extending my speeches, since you will not answer me. But in the name of friendship, my good fellow, tell me if you do not think it unreasonable for a man, while professing to have made another good, to blame him for being wicked in spite of having been made good by him and still being so?

Call.

Yes, I do.

Soc.

Well, and you hear such things said by those who profess to give men education in virtue?

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Call.

I do; but what is one to say of such worthless people?

Soc.

And what is one to say of those who, professing to govern the state and take every care that she be as good as possible, turn upon her and accuse her, any time it suits them, of being utterly wicked? Do you see any difference between these men and the others? Sophist and orator, my estimable friend, are the same thing, or very much of a piece, as I was telling Polus; but you in your ignorance think the one thing, rhetoric, a very fine affair, and despise the other. Yet in reality sophistic is a finer thing than rhetoric by so much as legislation is finer than judicature, and gymnastic than medicine: in fact, for my own part, I always regarded public speakers and sophists as the only people who have no call to complain of the thing that they themselves educate, for its wickedness towards them; as otherwise they must in the same words be also charging themselves with having been of no use to those whom they say they benefit. Is it not so?

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Call.

Certainly.

Soc.

And they alone, I presume, could most likely afford to give away their services without fee, if their words were true. For when a man has received any other service, for example, if he has acquired a fast pace from a trainer's lessons, he might possibly cheat him of his due if the trainer freely offered himself and did not stipulate for a fee to be

paid down by the other as nearly as possible at the moment when he imparted to him the fast pace he required; for it is not through a slow pace, I conceive, that men act unjustly, but through injustice; is it not?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

And so whoever removes this particular thing, injustice, need never have a fear of being unjustly treated; this benefit alone may be freely bestowed without risk, granted that one really had the power of making people good. Is it not so?

Call.

I agree.

Soc.

Then this, it seems, is the reason why there is no disgrace in taking money for giving every other kind of advice, as about building or the rest of the arts.

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Call.

It does seem so.

Soc.

But about this business of finding the way to be as good as possible, and of managing one's own household or city for the best, it is recognized to be a disgrace for one to decline to give advice except for a payment in cash, is it not?

Call.

Yes.

Soc.

The reason evidently being that this is the only sort of service that makes the person so served desire to do one in return and hence it is felt to be a good sign when this service that one has done is repaid to one in kind; but when this is not so, the contrary is felt. Is the case as I say?

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Call.

It is.

Soc.

Then please specify to which of these two ministrations to the state you are inviting me—that of struggling hard, like a doctor, with the Athenians to make them as good as possible, or that of seeking to serve their wants and humor them at every turn? Tell me the truth, Callicles;

for it is only right that, as you began by speaking to me frankly, you should continue to tell me what you think. So now speak out like a good, generous man.

Call.

I say then, the way of seeking to serve them.

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Soc.

So it is to a flatterer's work, most noble sir, that you invite me?

Call.

Work for a mean Mysian,[57] if you prefer the name, Socrates; for unless you do as I say—

Soc.

Do not tell me, what you have so often repeated, that anyone who pleases will put me to death, lest I on my side should have to tell you that it will be a villain killing a good man; nor that anyone may strip me of whatever I have, lest I should have to say in my turn: Well, but when he has stripped me, he will not know what use to make of his spoil, but as he stripped me unjustly so will he use his spoil unjustly, and if unjustly, foully, and if foully, ill.

Call.

It quite strikes me, Socrates, that you believe not one of these troubles could befall you, as though you dwelt out of the way, and could never be dragged into a law court by some perhaps utterly paltry rascal.

Soc.

Then I am a fool, Callicles, in truth, if I do not suppose that in this city anyone, whoever he was, might find himself, as luck should have it, in any sort of plight. Of one thing, however, I am sure—that if ever I am brought before the court and stand in any such danger as you mention, it will be some villain who brings me there, for no honest man would prosecute a person who had done no wrong; and it would be no marvel if I were put to death. Would you like me to tell you my reason for expecting this?

Call.

Do, by all means.

Soc.

I think I am one of few, not to say the only one, in Athens who attempts the true art of statesmanship, and the only man of the present time

[57] The Mysians, like the Carians (cf. Euthydemus 285 C), were regarded as the lowest of the low. Callicles heatedly taunts Socrates with putting the matter in its worst light.

who manages affairs of state: hence, as the speeches that I make from time to time are not aimed at gratification, but at what is best instead of what is most pleasant, and as I do not care to deal in

"these pretty toys"[58] that you recommend, I shall have not a word to say at the bar. The same case that I made out to Polus will apply to me; for I shall be like a doctor tried by a bench of children on a charge brought by a cook.[59]

Soc.

Just consider what defence a person like that would make at such a pass, if the prosecutor should speak against him thus:

"Children, this fellow has done you all a great deal of personal mischief, and he destroys even the youngest of you by cutting and burning, and starves and chokes you to distraction, giving you nasty bitter draughts and forcing you to fast and thirst; not like me, who used to gorge you with abundance of nice things of every sort." What do you suppose a doctor brought to this sad pass could say for himself? Or if he spoke the truth—

"All this I did, my boys, for your health"—how great, think you, would be the outcry from such a bench as that? A loud one, would it not?

Call.

I daresay: one must suppose so.

Soc.

Then you suppose he would be utterly at a loss what to say?

Call.

Quite so.

Soc.

Such, however, I am sure would be my own fate if I were brought before the court. For not only shall I have no pleasures to plead as having been provided by me—which they regard as services and benefits, whereas I envy neither those who provide them nor those for whom they are provided—but if anyone alleges that I either corrupt the younger men by reducing them to perplexity, or revile the older with bitter expressions whether in private or in public, I shall be unable either to tell the truth and say—

"It is on just ground that I say all this, and it is your interest that I serve thereby, gentlemen of the jury"—or to say anything else; and

[58] Socrates retorts the phrase of Euripides, which Callicles applied (above, *Plat. Gorg. 486c*) to philosophic debate, upon the practical pursuits which Callicles recommended.

[59] Cf. *Plat. Gorg. 464d.*

so I daresay any sort of thing, as luck may have it, will befall me.

Call.

Then do you think, Socrates, that a man in such a case and with no power of standing up for himself makes a fine figure in a city?

Soc.

Yes, if he had that one resource, Callicles, which you have repeatedly admitted; if he had stood up for himself by avoiding any unjust word or deed in regard either to men or to gods. For this has been repeatedly admitted by us to be the most valuable kind of self-protection. Now if I were convicted of inability to extend this sort of protection to either myself or another, I should be ashamed, whether my conviction took place before many or few, or as between man and man; and if that inability should bring about my death, I should be sorely vexed: but if I came to my end through a lack of flattering rhetoric, I am quite sure you would see me take my death easily. For no man fears the mere act of dying, except he be utterly irrational and unmanly; doing wrong is what one fears: for to arrive in the nether world having one's soul full fraught with a heap of misdeeds is the uttermost of all evils. And now, if you do not mind, I would like to tell you a tale to show you that the case is so.

Call.

Well, as you have completed the rest of the business, go on and complete this also.

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Soc.

Give ear then, as they say, to a right fine story, which you will regard as a fable, I fancy, but I as an actual account; for what I am about to tell you I mean to offer as the truth. By Homer's account,[60] Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto divided the sovereignty amongst them when they took it over from their father. Now in the time of Cronos there was a law concerning mankind, and it holds to this very day amongst the gods, that every man who has passed a just and holy life departs after his decease to the Isles of the Blest, and dwells in all happiness apart from ill; but whoever has lived unjustly and impiously goes to the dungeon of requital and penance which, you know, they call Tartarus. Of these men there were judges in Cronos' time, and still of late in the reign of Zeus—living men to judge the living upon the day when each was to breathe his last; and thus the cases were being decided amiss. So Pluto and the overseers from the Isles of the Blest came

[60] *Hom. Il. 15.187 ff.*

before Zeus with the report that they found men passing over to either abode undeserving. Then spake Zeus:

"Nay," said he,

"I will put a stop to these proceedings. The cases are now indeed judged ill and it is because they who are on trial are tried in their clothing, for they are tried alive. Now many," said he,

"who have wicked souls are clad in fair bodies and ancestry and wealth, and at their judgement appear many witnesses to testify that their lives have been just. Now, the judges are confounded not only by their evidence but at the same time by being clothed themselves while they sit in judgement, having their own soul muffled in the veil of eyes and ears and the whole body. Thus all these are a hindrance to them, their own habiliments no less than those of the judged. Well, first of all," he said,

"we must put a stop to their foreknowledge of their death; for this they at present foreknow. However, Prometheus has already been given the word to stop this in them. Next they must be stripped bare of all those things before they are tried; for they must stand their trial dead. Their judge also must be naked, dead, beholding with very soul the very soul of each immediately upon his death, bereft of all his kin and having left behind on earth all that fine array, to the end that the judgement may be just."

Soc.

"Now I, knowing all this before you, have appointed sons of my own to be judges; two from Asia, Minos and Rhadamanthus, and one from Europe, Aeacus. These, when their life is ended, shall give judgement in the meadow at the dividing of the road, whence are the two ways leading, one to the Isles of the Blest, and the other to Tartarus. And those who come from Asia shall Rhadamanthus try, and those from Europe, Aeacus; and to Minos I will give the privilege of the final decision, if the other two be in any doubt; that the judgement upon this journey of mankind may be supremely just." This, Callicles, is what I have heard and believe to be true; and from these stories, on my reckoning, we must draw some such moral as this: death, as it seems to me, is actually nothing but the disconnection of two things, the soul and the body, from each other. And so when they are disconnected from one another, each of them keeps its own condition very much as it was when the man was alive, the body having its own nature, with its treatments and experiences all manifest upon it. For instance, if anyone's body was large by nature or by feeding or by both when he was alive, his corpse will be large also when he is dead; and if he was

fat, it will be fat too after his death, and so on for the rest; or again, if he used to follow the fashion of long hair, long-haired also will be his corpse. Again, if anyone had been a sturdy rogue, and bore traces of his stripes in scars on his body, either from the whip or from other wounds, while yet alive, then after death too his body has these marks visible upon it; or if anyone's limbs were broken or distorted in life, these same effects are manifest in death. In a word, whatever sort of bodily appearance a man had acquired in life, that is manifest also after his death either wholly or in the main for some time. And so it seems to me that the same is the case with the soul too, Callicles: when a man's soul is stripped bare of the body, all its natural gifts, and the experiences added to that soul as the result of his various pursuits, are manifest in it. So when they have arrived in presence of their judge, they of Asia before Rhadamanthus, these Rhadamanthus sets before him and surveys the soul of each, not knowing whose it is; nay, often when he has laid hold of the Great King or some other prince or potentate, he perceives the utter unhealthiness of his soul, striped all over with the scourge, and a mass of wounds, the work of perjuries and injustice;

Soc.

where every act has left its smirch upon his soul, where all is awry through falsehood and imposture, and nothing straight because of a nurture that knew not truth: or, as the result of an unbridled course of fastidiousness, insolence, and incontinence, he finds the soul full fraught with disproportion and ugliness. Beholding this he sends it away in dishonor straight to the place of custody, where on its arrival it is to endure the sufferings that are fitting. And it is fitting that every one under punishment rightly inflicted on him by another should either be made better and profit thereby, or serve as an example to the rest, that others seeing the sufferings he endures may in fear amend themselves. Those who are benefited by the punishment they get from gods and men are they who have committed remediable offences; but still it is through bitter throes of pain that they receive their benefit both here and in the nether world; for in no other way can there be riddance of iniquity. But of those who have done extreme wrong and, as a result of such crimes, have become incurable, of those are the examples made; no longer are they profited at all themselves, since they are incurable, but others are profited who behold them undergoing for their transgressions the greatest, sharpest, and most fearful sufferings evermore, actually hung up as examples there in the infernal dungeon, a spectacle and a lesson to such of the wrongdoers as arrive from

time to time. Among them I say Archelaus also will be found, if what Polus tells us is true, and every other despot of his sort. And I think, moreover, that most of these examples have come from despots and kings and potentates and public administrators; for these, since they have a free hand, commit the greatest and most impious offences. Homer also testifies to this; for he has represented kings and potentates as those who are punished everlastingly in the nether world—Tantalus and Sisyphus and Tityus; but Thersites, or any other private person who was wicked, has been portrayed by none as incurable and therefore subjected to heavy punishment; no doubt because he had not a free hand, and therefore was in fact happier than those who had.

Soc.

For in fact, Callicles, it is among the powerful that we find the specially wicked men. Still there is nothing to prevent good men being found even among these, and it deserves our special admiration when they are; for it is hard, Callicles, and deserving of no slight praise, when a man with a perfectly free hand for injustice lives always a just life. The men of this sort are but few; for indeed there have been, and I expect there yet will be, both here and elsewhere, men of honor and excellence in this virtue of administering justly what is committed to their charge. One in fact there has been whose fame stands high among us and throughout the rest of Greece, Aristeides, son of Lysimachus; but most of those in power, my excellent friend, prove to be bad. So, as I was saying, whenever the judge Rhadamanthus has to deal with such a one, he knows nothing else of him at all, neither who he is nor of what descent, but only that he is a wicked person and on perceiving this he sends him away to Tartarus, first setting a mark on him to show whether he deems it a curable or an incurable case; and when the man arrives there he suffers what is fitting. Sometimes, when he discerns another soul that has lived a holy life in company with truth, a private man's or any others—especially, as I claim, Callicles, a philosopher's who has minded his own business and not been a busybody in his lifetime—he is struck with admiration and sends it off to the Isles of the Blest. And exactly the same is the procedure of Aeacus: each of these two holds a rod in his hand as he gives judgement; but Minor sits as supervisor, distinguished by the golden scepter that he holds, as Odysseus in Homer tells how he saw him—"Holding a golden scepter,speaking dooms to the dead."*Hom. Od. 11.569*Now for my part, Callicles, I am convinced by these accounts, and I consider how I may be able to show my judge that my soul is in the best of health. So giving the go-by to the honors that most men seek I shall

try, by inquiry into the truth, to be really good in as high a degree as I am able, both in my life and, when I come to die, in my death. And I invite all other men likewise, to the best of my power, and you particularly I invite in return,[61] to this life and this contest, which I say is worth all other contests on this earth; and I make it a reproach to you, that you will not be able to deliver yourself when your trial comes and the judgement of which I told you just now;

Soc.

but when you go before your judge, the son of Aegina,[62] and he grips you and drags you up, you will gape and feel dizzy there no less than I do here, and some one perhaps will give you, yes, a degrading box on the ear, and will treat you with every kind of contumely. Possibly, however, you regard this as an old wife's tale, and despise it; and there would be no wonder in our despising it if with all our searching we could somewhere find anything better and truer than this: but as it is, you observe that you three, who are the wisest of the Greeks in our day—you and Polus and Gorgias— are unable to prove that we ought to live any other life than this, which is evidently advantageous also in the other world. But among the many statements we have made, while all the rest are refuted this one alone is unshaken—that doing wrong is to be more carefully shunned than suffering it; that above all things a man should study not to seem but to be good both in private and in public; that if one becomes bad in any respect one must be corrected; that this is good in the second place,— next to being just, to become so and to be corrected by paying the penalty; and that every kind of flattery, with regard either to oneself or to others, to few or to many, must be avoided; and that rhetoric is to be used for this one purpose always, of pointing to what is just, and so in every other activity. Take my advice, therefore, and follow me where, if you once arrive, you will be happy both in life and after life's end, as this account declares. And allow anyone to contemn you as a fool and foully maltreat you if he chooses; yes, by Heaven, and suffer undaunted the shock of that ignominious cuff; for you will come to no harm if you be really a good and upright man, practicing virtue. And afterwards, having practiced it together, we shall in due course, if we deem it right, embark on politics, or proceed to consult on whatever we may think fit, being then better equipped for such counsel than we are now. For

[61] i.e. in return for Callicles' invitation to him to pursue the life of rhetoric and politics, *Plat. Gorg. 521a.*

[62] Aegina, daughter of the river-god Asopus, was the mother of Aeacus by Zeus.

it is disgraceful that men in such a condition as we now appear to be in should put on a swaggering, important air when we never continue to be of the same mind upon the same questions, and those the greatest of all—we are so sadly uneducated. Let us therefore take as our guide the doctrine now disclosed, which indicates to us that this way of life is best—to live and die in the practice alike of justice and of all other virtue. This then let us follow, and to this invite every one else; not that to which you trust yourself and invite me, for it is nothing worth, Callicles.

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