

Protagoras

Plato



Where have you been now, Socrates? Ah, but of course you have been in chase of Alcibiades and his youthful beauty! Well, only the other day, as I looked at him, I thought him still handsome as a man—for a man he is, Socrates, between you and me, and with quite a growth of beard.

And what of that? Do you mean to say you do not approve of Homer, who said that youth has highest grace in him whose beard is appearing, as now in the case of Alcibiades?

Then how is the affair at present? Have you been with him just now? And how is the young man treating you?

Quite well, I considered, and especially so today: for he spoke a good deal on my side, supporting me in a discussion—in fact I have only just left him. However, there is a strange thing I have to tell you: although he was present, I not merely paid him no attention, but at times forgot him altogether.

Why, what can have happened between you and him? Something serious! For surely you did not find anyone else of greater beauty there,—no, not in our city.

Yes, of far greater.

What do you say? One of our people, or a foreigner?

A foreigner.

Of what city?

Abdera .

And you found this foreigner so beautiful that he appeared to you of greater beauty than the son of Cleinias?

Why, my good sir, must not the wisest appear more beautiful?

Do you mean it was some wise man that you met just now?

Nay, rather the wisest of our generation, I may tell you, if wisest is what you agree to call Protagoras.

Ah, what a piece of news! Protagoras come to town!

Yes, two days ago.

And it was his company that you left just now?

Yes, and a great deal I said to him, and he to me.

Then do let us hear your account of the conversation at once, if you are disengaged take my boy's place, and sit here.

Very good indeed, I shall be obliged to you, if you will listen.

And we also to you, I assure you, if you will tell us.

A twofold obligation. Well now, listen. During this night just past, in the small hours, Hippocrates, son of Apollodorus and brother of Phason, knocked violently at my door with his stick, and when they opened to him he came hurrying in at once and calling to me in a loud voice: Socrates, are you awake, or sleeping? Then I, recognizing his voice, said: Hippocrates, hallo! Some news to break to me? Only good news, he replied. Tell it, and welcome, I said: what is it, and what business brings you here at such an hour? Protagoras has come, he said, standing at my side. Yes, two days ago, I said: have you only just heard? Yes, by Heaven! he replied, last evening. With this he groped about for the bedstead, and sitting down by my feet he said: It was in the evening, after I had got in very late from Oenoe. My boy Satyrus, you see, had run away: I meant to let you know I was going in chase of him, but some other matter put it out of my head. On my return, when we had finished dinner and were about to retire, my brother told me, only then, that Protagoras had come. I made an effort, even at that hour, to get to you at once, but came to the conclusion that it was too late at night. But as soon as I had slept off my fatigue I got up at once and made my way straight here. Then I, noting the man's gallant spirit and the flutter he was in, remarked: Well, what is that to you? Has Protagoras wronged you? At this he laughed and, Yes, by the gods! he said, by being the only wise man, and not making me one. But, by Zeus! I said, if you give him a fee and win him over he will make you wise too. Would to Zeus and all the gods, he exclaimed, only that were needed! I should not spare either my own pocket or those of my friends. But it is on this very account I have come to you now, to see if you will have a talk with him on my behalf: for one thing, I am too young to do it myself; and for another, I have never yet seen Protagoras nor heard him speak a word—I was but a child when he paid us his previous visit.

You know, Socrates, how everyone praises the man and tells of his mastery of speech: let us step over to him at once, to make sure of finding him in; he is staying, so I was told, with Callias, son of Hipponicus. Now, let us be

going. To this I replied: We had better not go there yet, my good friend, it is so very early: let us rise and turn into the court here, and spend the time strolling there till daylight comes; after that we can go. Protagoras, you see, spends most of his time indoors, so have no fear, we shall find him in all right, most likely. So then we got up and strolled in the court; and I, to test Hippocrates' grit, began examining him with a few questions. Tell me, Hippocrates, I said, in your present design of going to Protagoras and paying him money as a fee for his services to yourself, to whom do you consider you are resorting, and what is it that you are to become? Suppose, for example, you had taken it into your head to call on your namesake Hippocrates of Cos, the Asclepiad, and pay him money as your personal fee, and suppose someone asked you—Tell me, Hippocrates, in purposing to pay a fee to Hippocrates, what do you consider him to be? How would you answer that? A doctor, I would say. And what would you intend to become? A doctor, he replied. And suppose you had a mind to approach Polycleitus the Argive or Pheidias the Athenian and pay them a personal fee, and somebody asked you—What is it that you consider Polycleitus or Pheidias to be, that you are minded to pay them this money? What would your answer be to that? Sculptors, I would reply. And what would you intend to become? Obviously, a sculptor. Very well then, I said; you and I will go now to Protagoras, prepared to pay him money as your fee, from our own means if they are adequate for the purpose of prevailing on him, but if not, then drawing on our friends' resources to make up the sum. Now if anyone, observing our extreme earnestness in the matter, should ask us,—Pray, Socrates and Hippocrates, what is it that you take Protagoras to be, when you purpose to pay him money? What should we reply to him? What is the other name that we commonly hear attached to Protagoras? They call Pheidias a sculptor and Homer a poet: what title do they give Protagoras? A sophist, to be sure, Socrates, is what they call him. Then we go to him and pay him the money as a sophist? Certainly.

Now suppose someone asked you this further question: And what is it that you yourself hope to become when you go to Protagoras? To this he replied with a blush—for by then there was a glimmer of daylight by which I could see him quite clearly— If it is like the previous cases, obviously, to become a sophist. In Heaven's name, I said, would you not be ashamed to present yourself before the Greeks as a sophist? Yes, on my soul I should,

Socrates, if I am to speak my real thoughts. Yet after all, Hippocrates, perhaps it is not this sort of learning that you expect to get from Protagoras, but rather the sort you had from your language-master, your harp-teacher, and your sports-instructor; for when you took your lessons from each of these it was not in the technical way, with a view to becoming a professional, but for education, as befits a private gentleman. I quite agree, he said; it is rather this kind of learning that one gets from Protagoras. Then are you aware what you are now about to do, or is it not clear to you? I asked. To what do you refer? I mean your intention of submitting your soul to the treatment of a man who, as you say, is a sophist; and as to what a sophist really is, I shall be surprised if you can tell me. And yet, if you are ignorant of this, you cannot know to whom you are entrusting your soul,—whether it is to something good or to something evil. I really think, he said, that I know. Then tell me, please, what you consider a sophist to be. I should say, he replied, from what the name implies, that he is one who has knowledge of wise matters. Well, I went on, we are able to say this of painters also, and of carpenters,—that they are the persons who have knowledge of wise matters; and if someone asked us for what those matters are wise, of which painters have knowledge, I suppose we should tell him that they are wise for the production of likenesses, and similarly with the rest. But if he should ask for what the matters of the sophist are wise, how should we answer him? What sort of workmanship is he master of? How should we describe him, Socrates,—as a master of making one a clever speaker? Perhaps, I replied, we should be speaking the truth, but yet not all the truth; for our answer still calls for a question, as to the subject on which the sophist makes one a clever speaker: just as the harp player makes one clever, I presume, at speaking on the matter of which he gives one knowledge, namely harp-playing,—you agree to that? Yes. Well, about what does the sophist make one a clever speaker? Clearly it must be the same thing as that of which he gives one knowledge. So it would seem: now what is this thing, of which the sophist himself has knowledge and gives knowledge to his pupil? Ah, there, in good faith, he said, I fail to find you an answer.

I then went on to say: Now tell me, are you aware upon what sort of hazard you are going to stake your soul? If you had to entrust your body to someone, taking the risk of its being made better or worse, you would first consider most carefully whether you ought to entrust it or not, and would

seek the advice of your friends and relations and ponder it for a number of days: but in the case of your soul, which you value much more highly than your body, and on which depends the good or ill condition of all your affairs, according as it is made better or worse, would you omit to consult first with either your father or your brother or one of us your comrades,—as to whether or no you should entrust your very soul to this newly-arrived foreigner; but choose rather, having heard of him in the evening, as you say, and coming to me at dawn, to make no mention of this question, and take no counsel upon it—whether you ought to entrust yourself to him or not; and are ready to spend your own substance and that of your friends, in the settled conviction that at all costs you must converse with Protagoras, whom you neither know, as you tell me, nor have ever met in argument before, and whom you call sophist, in patent ignorance of what this sophist may be to whom you are about to entrust yourself? When he heard this he said: It seems so, Socrates, by what you say. Then can it be, Hippocrates, that the sophist is really a sort of merchant or dealer in provisions on which a soul is nourished? For such is the view I take of him. With what, Socrates, is a soul nourished? With doctrines, presumably, I replied. And we must take care, my good friend, that the sophist, in commending his wares, does not deceive us, as both merchant and dealer do in the case of our bodily food. For among the provisions, you know, in which these men deal, not only are they themselves ignorant what is good or bad for the body, since in selling they commend them all, but the people who buy from them are so too, unless one happens to be a trainer or a doctor. And in the same way, those who take their doctrines the round of our cities, hawking them about to any odd purchaser who desires them, commend everything that they sell, and there may well be some of these too, my good sir, who are ignorant which of their wares is good or bad for the soul; and in just the same case are the people who buy from them, unless one happens to have a doctor's knowledge here also, but of the soul. So then, if you are well informed as to what is good or bad among these wares, it will be safe for you to buy doctrines from Protagoras or from anyone else you please: but if not, take care, my dear fellow, that you do not risk your greatest treasure on a toss of the dice.

For I tell you there is far more serious risk in the purchase of doctrines than in that of eatables. When you buy victuals and liquors you can carry them off from the dealer or merchant in separate vessels, and before you take

them into your body by drinking or eating you can lay them in your house and take the advice of an expert whom you can call in, as to what is fit to eat or drink and what is not, and how much you should take and when; so that in this purchase the risk is not serious. But you cannot carry away doctrines in a separate vessel: you are compelled, when you have handed over the price, to take the doctrine in your very soul by learning it, and so to depart either an injured or a benefited man. These, then, are questions which we have to consider with the aid of our elders, since we ourselves are still rather young to unravel so great a matter. For the moment, however, let us pursue our design and go and hear this person; and when we have heard him we shall proceed to consult others: for Protagoras is not the only one there; we shall find Hippias of Elis and, I believe, Prodicus of Ceos, and numerous other men of wisdom besides. This we resolved on, and set forth; and when we arrived at the doorway, we stood discussing some question or other that had occurred to us by the way: so, not to leave it unfinished, but to get it settled before we went in, we stood there and discussed in front of the door, until we had come to an agreement with each other. Now, I fancy the doorkeeper, who was a eunuch, overheard us; very likely the great number of sophists has made him annoyed with callers at the house: at any rate, when we had knocked on the door, he opened it and, on seeing us,— *Hullo, he said, sophists there! Master is engaged.* So saying, he seized the door with both hands and very smartly clapped it to with all his might. We tried knocking again, and then he spoke in answer through the closed door,— *Sirs, have you not heard, he is engaged?* But, my good fellow, I said, we have not come to see Callias, nor are we sophists. Have no fear: I tell you, we have come to ask if we may see Protagoras; so go and announce us. Then with much hesitation the fellow opened the door to us;

and when we had entered, we came upon Protagoras as he was walking round in the cloister, and close behind him two companies were walking round also; on the one side Callias, son of Hipponicus and his brother on the mother's side, Paralus, son of Pericles, and Charmides, son of Glaucon, while the other troop consisted of Pericles' other son Xanthippus, Philippides, son of Philomelus, and Antimoerus of Mende, who is the most highly reputed of Protagoras' disciples and is taking the course professionally with a view to becoming a sophist. The persons who followed in their rear, listening to what

they could of the talk, seemed to be mostly strangers, brought by the great Protagoras from the several cities which he traverses, enchanting them with his voice like Orpheus, while they follow where the voice sounds, enchanted; and some of our own inhabitants were also dancing attendance. As for me, when I saw their evolutions I was delighted with the admirable care they took not to hinder Protagoras at any moment by getting in front; but whenever the master turned about and those with him, it was fine to see the orderly manner in which his train of listeners split up into two parties on this side and on that, and wheeling round formed up again each time in his rear most admirably. And next did I mark, as Homer says, Hippias of Elis, seated high on a chair in the doorway opposite; and sitting around him on benches were Eryximachus, son of Acumenus, Phaedrus of Myrrhinous, Andron son of Androtion and a number of strangers,—fellow-citizens of Hippias and some others. They seemed to be asking him a series of astronomical questions on nature and the heavenly bodies, while he, seated in his chair, was distinguishing and expounding to each in turn the subjects of their questions. Nay more, Tantalus also did I there behold. —for you know Prodicus of Ceos is in Athens too: he was in a certain apartment formerly used by Hipponieus as a strong-room, but now cleared out by Callias to make more space for his numerous visitors, and turned into a guest-chamber. Well, Prodicus was still abed, wrapped up in sundry fleeces and rugs, and plenty of them too, it seemed; and near him on the beds hard by lay Pausanias from Cerames, and with Pausanias a lad who was still quite young, of good birth and breeding, I should say, and at all events a very good-looking person. I fancied I heard his name was Agathon, and I should not be surprised to find he is Pausanias' favorite.

Besides this youth there were the two Adeimantuses, sons of Cepis and Leucolophidas, and there seemed to be some others. The subjects of their conversation I was unable to gather from outside, despite my longing to hear Prodicus; for I regard the man as all-wise and divine: but owing to the depth of his voice the room was filled with a booming sound which made the talk indistinct. We had only just come in, when close on our heels entered Alcibiades the good-looking, as you call him and I agree that he is, and Critias, son of Callaeschrus. So, when we had entered, after some more little delays over certain points we had to examine, we went up to Protagoras, and I said:

Protagoras, you see we have come to you, Hippocrates and I. Is it your wish, he asked, to converse with me alone, or in company with others? It is all the same to us, I replied: let me first tell you our object in coming, and then you must decide. Well, what is your object? he asked. My friend Hippocrates is a native of the city, a son of Apollodorus and one of a great and prosperous family, while his own natural powers seem to make him a match for anyone of his age. I fancy he is anxious to gain consideration in our city, and he believes he can best gain it by consorting with you. So now it is for you to judge whether it will be fittest for you to converse on this matter privately with us alone, or in company with others. You do right, Socrates, he said, to be so thoughtful on my behalf. For when one goes as a stranger into great cities, and there tries to persuade the best of the young men to drop their other connexions, either with their own folk or with foreigners, both old and young, and to join one's own circle, with the promise of improving them by this connexion with oneself, such a proceeding requires great caution; since very considerable jealousies are apt to ensue, and numerous enmities and intrigues. Now I tell you that sophistry is an ancient art, and those men of ancient times who practised it, fearing the odium it involved, disguised it in a decent dress, sometimes of poetry, as in the case of Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides sometimes of mystic rites and soothsayings, as did Orpheus, Musaeus and their sects; and sometimes too, I have observed, of athletics, as with Iccus of Tarentum and another still living—as great a sophist as any— Herodicus of Selymbria , originally of Megara ; and music was the disguise employed by your own Agathocles, a great sophist, Pythocleides of Ceos , and many more. All these, as I say, from fear of ill-will made use of these arts as outer coverings.

But I do not conform to the method of all these persons, since I believe they did not accomplish any of their designs: for the purpose of all this disguise could not escape the able men of affairs in each city; the multitude, of course, perceive practically nothing, but merely echo this or that pronouncement of their leaders. Now to try to run away, and to fail through being caught in the act, shows sad folly in the mere attempt, and must needs make people far more hostile; for they regard such an one, whatever else he may be, as a rogue. Hence the road I have taken is one entirely opposite to theirs: I admit that I am a sophist and that I educate men; and I consider this precaution, of admitting rather than denying, the better of the two. There are

others besides that I have meditated, so as to avoid, under Heaven, any harm that may come of admitting that I am a sophist. And yet many long years have I now been in the profession, for many in total number are those that I have lived: not one of you all, but in age I might be his father. Hence it suits me by far the best, in meeting your wishes, to make my discourse on these matters in the presence of all who are in the house. On this, as I suspected that he wished to make a display before Prodicus and Hippias, and give himself airs on the personal attachment shown by our coming to him, I remarked: Then surely we must call Prodicus and Hippias and their followers to come and listen to us. By all means, said Protagoras. Then do you agree, said Callias, to our making a session of it, so that we may sit at ease for our conversation? The proposal was accepted; and all of us, delighted at the prospect of listening to wise men, took hold of the benches and couches ourselves and arranged them where Hippias was, since the benches were there already. Meanwhile Callias and Alcibiades came, bringing with them Prodicus, whom they had induced to rise from his couch, and Prodicus' circle also. When we had all taken our seats,— So now, Socrates, said Protagoras, since these gentlemen are also present, be so good as to tell what you were mentioning to me a little while before on the young man's behalf.

To which I replied: The same point, Protagoras, will serve me for a beginning as a moment ago, in regard to the object of my visit. My friend Hippocrates finds himself desirous of joining your classes; and therefore he says he would be glad to know what result he will get from joining them. That is all the speech we have to make. Then Protagoras answered at once, saying: Young man, you will gain this by coming to my classes, that on the day when you join them you will go home a better man, and on the day after it will be the same; every day you will constantly improve more and more. When I heard this I said: Protagoras, what you say is not at all surprising, but quite likely, since even you, though so old and so wise, would be made better if someone taught you what you happen not to know. But let me put it another way: suppose Hippocrates here should change his desire all at once, and become desirous of this young fellow's lessons who has just recently come to town, Zeuxippus of Heraclea, and should approach him, as he now does you, and should hear the very same thing from him as from you,—how on each day that he spent with him he would be better and make constant progress; and

suppose he were to question him on this and ask: In what shall I become better as you say, and to what will my progress be? Zeuxippus's reply would be, to painting. Then suppose he came to the lessons of Orthagoras the Theban, and heard the same thing from him as from you, and then inquired of him for what he would be better each day through attending his classes, the answer would be, for fluting. In the same way you also must satisfy this youth and me on this point, and tell us for what, Protagoras, and in what connexion my friend Hippocrates, on any day of attendance at the classes of Protagoras, will go away a better man, and on each of the succeeding days will make a like advance. When Protagoras heard my words,— You do right, he said, to ask that, while I am only too glad to answer those who ask the right question. For Hippocrates, if he comes to me, will not be treated as he would have been if he had joined the classes of an ordinary sophist. The generality of them maltreat the young; for when they have escaped from the arts they bring them back against their will and force them into arts, teaching them arithmetic and astronomy and geometry and music (and here he glanced at Hippias); whereas, if he applies to me, he will learn precisely and solely that for which he has come. That learning consists of good judgement in his own affairs, showing how best to order his own home; and in the affairs of his city, showing how he may have most influence on public affairs both in speech and in action.

I wonder, I said, whether I follow what you are saying; for you appear to be speaking of the civic science, and undertaking to make men good citizens. That, Socrates, he replied, is exactly the purport of what I profess. Then it is a goodly accomplishment that you have acquired, to be sure, I remarked, if indeed you have acquired it—to such a man as you I may say sincerely what I think. For this is a thing, Protagoras, that I did not suppose to be teachable; but when you say it is, I do not see how I am to disbelieve it. How I came to think that it cannot be taught, or provided by men for men, I may be allowed to explain. I say, in common with the rest of the Greeks, that the Athenians are wise. Now I observe, when we are collected for the Assembly, and the city has to deal with an affair of building, we send for builders to advise us on what is proposed to be built; and when it is a case of laying down a ship, we send for shipwrights; and so in all other matters which are considered learnable and teachable: but if anyone else, whom the people do not regard as a craftsman, attempts to advise them, no matter how handsome and wealthy and well-born

he may be, not one of these things induces them to accept him; they merely laugh him to scorn and shout him down, until either the speaker retires from his attempt, overborne by the clamor, or the tipstaves pull him from his place or turn him out altogether by order of the chair. Such is their procedure in matters which they consider professional. But when they have to deliberate on something connected with the administration of the State, the man who rises to advise them on this may equally well be a smith, a shoemaker, a merchant, a sea-captain, a rich man, a poor man, of good family or of none, and nobody thinks of casting in his teeth, as one would in the former case, that his attempt to give advice is justified by no instruction obtained in any quarter, no guidance of any master; and obviously it is because they hold that here the thing cannot be taught. Nay further, it is not only so with the service of the State, but in private life our best and wisest citizens are unable to transmit this excellence of theirs to others;

for Pericles, the father of these young fellows here, gave them a first-rate training in the subjects for which he found teachers, but in those of which he is himself a master he neither trains them personally nor commits them to another's guidance, and so they go about grazing at will like sacred oxen, on the chance of their picking up excellence here or there for themselves. Or, if you like, there is Cleinias, the younger brother of Alcibiades here, whom this same Pericles, acting as his guardian, and fearing he might be corrupted, I suppose, by Alcibiades, carried off from his brother and placed in Ariphron's family to be educated: but before six months had passed he handed him back to Alcibiades, at a loss what to do with him. And there are a great many others whom I could mention to you as having never succeeded, though virtuous themselves, in making anyone else better, either of their own or of other families. I therefore, Protagoras, in view of these facts, believe that virtue is not teachable: but when I hear you speak thus, I am swayed over, and suppose there is something in what you say, because I consider you to have gained experience in many things and to have learnt many, besides finding out some for yourself. So if you can demonstrate to us more explicitly that virtue is teachable, do not grudge us your demonstration. No, Socrates, I will not grudge it you; but shall I, as an old man speaking to his juniors, put my demonstration in the form of a fable, or of a regular exposition? Many of the company sitting by him instantly bade him treat his subject whichever way he

pleased. Well then, he said, I fancy the more agreeable way is for me to tell you a fable. There was once a time when there were gods, but no mortal creatures. And when to these also came their destined time to be created, the gods moulded their forms within the earth, of a mixture made of earth and fire and all substances that are compounded with fire and earth. When they were about to bring these creatures to light, they charged Prometheus and Epimetheus to deal to each the equipment of his proper faculty. Epimetheus besought Prometheus that he might do the dealing himself; And when I have dealt, he said, you shall examine. Having thus persuaded him he dealt; and in dealing he attached strength without speed; to some, while the weaker he equipped with speed; and some he armed, while devising for others, along with an unarmed condition, some different faculty for preservation.

To those which he invested with smallness he dealt a winged escape or an underground habitation; those which he increased in largeness he preserved by this very means; and he dealt all the other properties on this plan of compensation. In contriving all this he was taking precaution that no kind should be extinguished; and when he had equipped them with avoidances of mutual destruction, he devised a provision against the seasons ordained by Heaven, in clothing them about with thick-set hair and solid hides, sufficient to ward off winter yet able to shield them also from the heats, and so that on going to their lairs they might find in these same things a bedding of their own that was native to each; and some he shod with hoofs, others with claws and solid, bloodless hides. Then he proceeded to furnish each of them with its proper food, some with pasture of the earth, others with fruits of trees, and others again with roots; and to a certain number for food he gave other creatures to devour: to some he attached a paucity in breeding, and to others, which were being consumed by these, a plenteous brood, and so procured survival of their kind. Now Epimetheus, being not so wise as he might be, heedlessly squandered his stock of properties on the brutes; he still had left unequipped the race of men, and was at a loss what to do with it. As he was casting about, Prometheus arrived to examine his distribution, and saw that whereas the other creatures were fully and suitably provided, man was naked, unshod, unbedded, unarmed; and already the destined day was come, whereon man like the rest should emerge from earth to light. Then Prometheus, in his perplexity as to what preservation he could devise for man,

stole from Hephaestus and Athena wisdom in the arts together with fire—since by no means without fire could it be acquired or helpfully used by any—and he handed it there and then as a gift to man. Now although man acquired in this way the wisdom of daily life, civic wisdom he had not, since this was in the possession of Zeus; Prometheus could not make so free as to enter the citadel which is the dwelling-place of Zeus, and moreover the guards of Zeus were terrible: but he entered unobserved the building shared by Athena and Hephaestus for the pursuit of their arts, and stealing Hephaestus's fiery art and all Athena's also he gave them to man, and hence it is that man gets facility for his livelihood, but Prometheus, through Epimetheus' fault, later on (the story goes) stood his trial for theft.

And now that man was partaker of a divine portion, he, in the first place, by his nearness of kin to deity, was the only creature that worshipped gods, and set himself to establish altars and holy images; and secondly, he soon was enabled by his skill to articulate speech and words, and to invent dwellings, clothes, sandals, beds, and the foods that are of the earth. Thus far provided, men dwelt separately in the beginning, and cities there were none; so that they were being destroyed by the wild beasts, since these were in all ways stronger than they; and although their skill in handiwork was a sufficient aid in respect of food, in their warfare with the beasts it was defective; for as yet they had no civic art, which includes the art of war. So they sought to band themselves together and secure their lives by founding cities. Now as often as they were banded together they did wrong to one another through the lack of civic art, and thus they began to be scattered again and to perish. So Zeus, fearing that our race was in danger of utter destruction, sent Hermes to bring respect and right among men, to the end that there should be regulation of cities and friendly ties to draw them together. Then Hermes asked Zeus in what manner then was he to give men right and respect: Am I to deal them out as the arts have been dealt? That dealing was done in such wise that one man possessing medical art is able to treat many ordinary men, and so with the other craftsmen. Am I to place among men right and respect in this way also, or deal them out to all? To all, replied Zeus; let all have their share: for cities cannot be formed if only a few have a share of these as of other arts. And make thereto a law of my ordaining, that he who cannot partake of respect and right shall die the death as a public pest. Hence it comes about, Socrates, that people in cities,

and especially in Athens , consider it the concern of a few to advise on cases of artistic excellence or good craftsmanship, and if anyone outside the few gives advice they disallow it, as you say, and not without reason, as I think:

but when they meet for a consultation on civic art, where they should be guided throughout by justice and good sense, they naturally allow advice from everybody, since it is held that everyone should partake of this excellence, or else that states cannot be. This, Socrates, is the explanation of it. And that you may not think you are mistaken, to show how all men verily believe that everyone partakes of justice and the rest of civic virtue, I can offer yet a further proof. In all other excellences, as you say, when a man professes to be good at flute-playing or any other art in which he has no such skill, they either laugh him to scorn or are annoyed with him, and his people come and reprove him for being so mad: but where justice or any other civic virtue is involved, and they happen to know that a certain person is unjust, if he confesses the truth about his conduct before the public, that truthfulness which in the former arts they would regard as good sense they here call madness. Everyone, they say, should profess to be just, whether he is so or not, and whoever does not make some pretension to justice is mad; since it is held that all without exception must needs partake of it in some way or other, or else not be of human kind. Take my word for it, then, that they have good reason for admitting everybody as adviser on this virtue, owing to their belief that everyone has some of it; and next, that they do not regard it as natural or spontaneous, but as something taught and acquired after careful preparation by those who acquire it,—of this I will now endeavor to convince you. In all cases of evils which men deem to have befallen their neighbors by nature or fortune, nobody is wroth with them or reproves or lectures or punishes them, when so afflicted, with a view to their being other than they are; one merely pities them. Who, for instance, is such a fool as to try to do anything of the sort to the ugly, the puny, or the weak? Because, I presume, men know that it is by nature and fortune that people get these things, the graces of life and their opposites. But as to all the good things that people are supposed to get by application and practice and teaching, where these are lacking in anyone and only their opposite evils are found, here surely are the occasions for wrath and punishment and reproof.

One of them is injustice, and impiety, and in short all that is opposed to civic virtue; in such case anyone will be wroth with his neighbor and reprove him, clearly because the virtue is to be acquired by application and learning. For if you will consider punishment, Socrates, and what control it has over wrong-doers, the facts will inform you that men agree in regarding virtue as procured. No one punishes a wrong-doer from the mere contemplation or on account of his wrong-doing, unless one takes unreasoning vengeance like a wild beast. But he who undertakes to punish with reason does not avenge himself for the past offence, since he cannot make what was done as though it had not come to pass; he looks rather to the future, and aims at preventing that particular person and others who see him punished from doing wrong again. And being so minded he must have in mind that virtue comes by training: for you observe that he punishes to deter. This then is the accepted view of all who seek requital in either private or public life; and while men in general exact requital and punishment from those whom they suppose to have wronged them, this is especially the case with the Athenians, your fellow-citizens, so that by our argument the Athenians also share the view that virtue is procured and taught. Thus I have shown that your fellow-citizens have good reason for admitting a smith's or cobbler's counsel in public affairs, and that they hold virtue to be taught and procured: of this I have given you satisfactory demonstration, Socrates, as it appears to me. I have yet to deal with your remaining problem about good men, why it is that these good men have their sons taught the subjects in the regular teachers' courses, and so far make them wise, but do not make them excel in that virtue wherein consists their own goodness. On this point, Socrates, I shall give you argument instead of fable. Now consider: is there, or is there not, some one thing whereof all the citizens must needs partake, if there is to be a city? Here, and nowhere if not here, is the solution of this problem of yours.

For if there is such a thing, and that one thing, instead of being the joiner's or smith's or potter's art, is rather justice and temperance and holiness— in short, what I may put together and call a man's virtue; and if it is this whereof all should partake and wherewith everyone should proceed to any further knowledge or action, but should not if he lacks it; if we should instruct and punish such as do not partake of it, whether child or husband or wife, until the punishment of such persons has made them better, and should cast forth

from our cities or put to death as incurable whoever fails to respond to such punishment and instruction;—if it is like this, and yet, its nature being so, good men have their sons instructed in everything else but this, what very surprising folk the good are found to be! For we have proved that they regard this thing as teachable both in private and in public life, and then, though it may be taught and fostered, are we to say that they have their sons taught everything in which the penalty for ignorance is not death, but in a matter where the death-penalty or exile awaits their children if not instructed and cultivated in virtue—and not merely death, but confiscation of property and practically the entire subversion of their house—here they do not have them taught or take the utmost care of them? So at any rate we must conclude, Socrates. They teach and admonish them from earliest childhood till the last day of their lives. As soon as one of them grasps what is said to him, the nurse, the mother, the tutor, and the father himself strive hard that the child may excel, and as each act and word occurs they teach and impress upon him that this is just, and that unjust, one thing noble, another base, one holy, another unholy, and that he is to do this, and not do that. If he readily obeys,—so; but if not, they treat him as a bent and twisted piece of wood and straighten him with threats and blows. After this they send them to school and charge the master to take far more pains over their children's good behavior than over their letters and harp-playing.

The masters take pains accordingly, and the children, when they have learnt their letters and are getting to understand the written word as before they did only the spoken, are furnished with works of good poets to read as they sit in class, and are made to learn them off by heart: here they meet with many admonitions, many descriptions and praises and eulogies of good men in times past, that the boy in envy may imitate them and yearn to become even as they. Then also the music-masters, in a similar sort, take pains for their self-restraint, and see that their young charges do not go wrong: moreover, when they learn to play the harp, they are taught the works of another set of good poets, the song-makers, while the master accompanies them on the harp; and they insist on familiarizing the boys' souls with the rhythms and scales, that they may gain in gentleness, and by advancing in rhythmic and harmonic grace may be efficient in speech and action; for the whole of man's life requires the graces of rhythm and harmony. Again, over and above all this, people send

their sons to a trainer, that having improved their bodies they may perform the orders of their minds, which are now in fit condition, and that they may not be forced by bodily faults to play the coward in wars and other duties. This is what people do, who are most able; and the most able are the wealthiest. Their sons begin school at the earliest age, and are freed from it at the latest. And when they are released from their schooling the city next compels them to learn the laws and to live according to them as after a pattern, that their conduct may not be swayed by their own light fancies, but just as writing-masters first draw letters in faint outline with the pen for their less advanced pupils, and then give them the copy-book and make them write according to the guidance of their lines, so the city sketches out for them the laws devised by good lawgivers of yore, and constrains them to govern and be governed according to these. She punishes anyone who steps outside these borders, and this punishment among you and in many other cities, from the corrective purpose of the prosecution, is called a Correction. Seeing then that so much care is taken in the matter of both private and public virtue, do you wonder, Socrates, and make it a great difficulty, that virtue may be taught? Surely there is no reason to wonder at that: you would have far greater reason, if it were not so.

Then why is it that many sons of good fathers turn out so meanly? Let me explain this also: it is no wonder, granted that I was right in stating just now that no one, if we are to have a city, must be a mere layman in this affair of virtue. For if what I say is the case—and it is supremely true—reflect on the nature of any other pursuit or study that you choose to mention. Suppose that there could be no state unless we were all flute-players, in such sort as each was able, and suppose that everyone were giving his neighbor both private and public lessons in the art, and rebuked him too, if he failed to do it well, without grudging him the trouble—even as no one now thinks of grudging or reserving his skill in what is just and lawful as he does in other expert knowledge; for our neighbors' justice and virtue, I take it, is to our advantage, and consequently we all tell and teach one another what is just and lawful—well, if we made the same zealous and ungrudging efforts to instruct each other in flute-playing, do you think, Socrates, that the good flute-players would be more likely than the bad to have sons who were good flute-players? I do not think they would: no, wherever the son had happened to be born with

a nature most apt for flute-playing, he would be found to have advanced to distinction, and where unapt, to obscurity. Often the son of a good player would turn out a bad one, and often of a bad, a good. But, at any rate, all would be capable players as compared with ordinary persons who had no inkling of the art. Likewise in the present case you must regard any man who appears to you the most unjust person ever reared among human laws and society as a just man and a craftsman of justice, if he had to stand comparison with people who lacked education and law courts and laws and any constant compulsion to the pursuit of virtue, but were a kind of wild folk such as Pherecrates the poet brought on the scene at last year's Lenaeum. Sure enough, if you found yourself among such people, as did the misanthropes among his chorus, you would be very glad to meet with Eurybatus and Phrynondas, and would bewail yourself with longing for the wickedness of the people here. Instead of that you give yourself dainty airs, Socrates, because everyone is a teacher of virtue to the extent of his powers, and you think there is no teacher. Why, you might as well ask who is a teacher of Greek;

you would find none anywhere; and I suppose you might ask, who can teach the sons of our artisans the very crafts which of course they have learnt from their fathers, as far as the father was competent in each case, and his friends who followed the same trade,—I say if you asked who is to give these further instruction, I imagine it would be hard, Socrates, to find them a teacher, but easy enough in the case of those starting with no skill at all. And so it must be with virtue and everything else; if there is somebody who excels us ever so little in showing the way to virtue, we must be thankful. Such an one I take myself to be, excelling all other men in the gift of assisting people to become good and true, and giving full value for the fee that I charge—nay, so much more than full, that the learner himself admits it. For this reason I have arranged my charges on a particular plan: when anyone has had lessons from me, if he likes he pays the sum that I ask; if not, he goes to a temple, states on oath the value he sets on what he has learnt, and disburses that amount. So now, Socrates, I have shown you by both fable and argument that virtue is teachable and is so deemed by the Athenians, and that it is no wonder that bad sons are born of good fathers and good of bad, since even the sons of Polycleitus, companions of Paralus and Xanthippus here, are not to be compared with their father, and the same is the case in other craftsmen's

families. As for these two, it is not fair to make this complaint of them yet; there is still hope in their case, for they are young. After this great and fine performance Protagoras ceased from speaking. As for me, for a good while I was still under his spell and kept on looking at him as though he were going to say more, such was my eagerness to hear: but when I perceived that he had really come to a stop, I pulled myself together, as it were, with an effort, and looking at Hippocrates I said: Son of Apollodorus, I am very grateful to you for inducing me to come hither; for it is a great treat to have heard what I have heard from Protagoras. I used formerly to think that there was no human treatment by which the good were made good, but now I am convinced that there is. Only I find one slight difficulty, which Protagoras will of course easily explain away, since he has explained so many puzzles already.

If one should be present when any of the public speakers were dealing with these same subjects, one could probably hear similar discourses from Pericles or some other able speaker: but suppose you put a question to one of them—they are just like books, incapable of either answering you or putting a question of their own; if you question even a small point in what has been said, just as brazen vessels ring a long time after they have been struck and prolong the note unless you put your hand on them, these orators too, on being asked a little question, extend their speech over a full-length course. But Protagoras here, while able to deliver, as events have shown, a long and excellent speech, is also able when questioned to reply briefly, and after asking a question to await and accept the answer—accomplishments that few can claim. And now, Protagoras, there is one little thing wanting to the completeness of what I have got, so please answer me this. You say that virtue may be taught, and if there is anybody in the world who could convince me, you are the man: but there was a point in your speech at which I wondered, and on which my spirit would fain be satisfied. You said that Zeus had sent justice and respect to mankind, and furthermore it was frequently stated in your discourse that justice, temperance, holiness and the rest were all but one single thing, virtue: pray, now proceed to deal with these in more precise exposition, stating whether virtue is a single thing, of which justice and temperance and holiness are parts, or whether the qualities I have just mentioned are all names of the same single thing. This is what I am still hankering after. Why, the answer to that is easy, Socrates, he replied: it is that

virtue is a single thing and the qualities in question are parts of it. Do you mean parts, I asked, in the sense of the parts of a face, as mouth, nose, eyes, and ears; or, as in the parts of gold, is there no difference among the pieces, either between the parts or between a part and the whole, except in greatness and smallness? In the former sense, I think, Socrates; as the parts of the face are to the whole face. Well then, I continued, when men partake of these portions of virtue, do some have one, and some another, or if you get one, must you have them all? By no means, he replied, since many are brave but unjust, and many again are just but not wise.

Then are these also parts of virtue, I asked—wisdom and courage? Most certainly, I should say, he replied; and of the parts, wisdom is the greatest. Each of them, I proceeded, is distinct from any other? Yes. Does each also have its particular function? Just as, in the parts of the face, the eye is not like the ears, nor is its function the same; nor is any of the other parts like another, in its function or in any other respect: in the same way, are the parts of virtue unlike each other, both in themselves and in their functions? Are they not evidently so, if the analogy holds? Yes, they are so, Socrates, he said. So then, I went on, among the parts of virtue, no other part is like knowledge, or like justice, or like courage, or like temperance, or like holiness. He agreed. Come now, I said, let us consider together what sort of thing is each of these parts. First let us ask, is justice something, or not a thing at all? I think it is; what do you say? So do I, he replied. Well then, suppose someone should ask you and me: Protagoras and Socrates, pray tell me this—the thing you named just now, justice, is that itself just or unjust? I should reply, it is just: what would your verdict be? The same as mine or different? The same, he said. Then justice, I should say in reply to our questioner, is of a kind that is just: would you also? Yes, he said. Now suppose he proceeded to ask us: Do you also speak of a holiness? We should say we do, I fancy. Yes, he said. Then do you call this a thing also? We should say we do, should we not? He assented again. Do you say this thing itself is of such nature as to be unholy, or holy? For my part I should be annoyed at this question, I said, and should answer: Hush, my good sir! It is hard to see how anything could be holy, if holiness itself is not to be holy! And you—would you not make the same reply? Certainly I would, he said. Now suppose he went on to ask us: Well, and what of your statement a little while since? Perhaps I did not hear you aright, but I understood you two to say that

the parts of virtue are in such a relation to each other that one of them is not like another.

Here my answer would be: As to the substance of it, you heard aright, but you made a mistake in thinking that I had any share in that statement. It was Protagoras here who made that answer; I was only the questioner. Then suppose he were to ask: Is our friend telling the truth, Protagoras? Is it you who say that one part of virtue is not like another? Is this statement yours? What answer would you give him? I must needs admit it, Socrates, he said. Well now, Protagoras, after that admission, what answer shall we give him, if he goes on to ask this question: Is not holiness something of such nature as to be just, and justice such as to be holy, or can it be unholy? Can holiness be not just, and therefore unjust, and justice unholy? What is to be our reply? I should say myself, on my own behalf, that both justice is holy and holiness just, and with your permission I would make this same reply for you also; since justness is either the same thing as holiness or extremely like it, and above all, justice is of the same kind as holiness, and holiness as justice. Are you minded to forbid this answer, or are you in agreement with it? I do not take quite so simple a view of it, Socrates, as to grant that justice is holy and holiness just. I think we have to make a distinction here. Yet what difference does it make? he said: if you like, let us assume that justice is holy and holiness just. No, no, I said; I do not want this if you like or if you agree sort of thing to be put to the proof, but you and me together; and when I say you and me I mean that our statement will be most properly tested if we take away the if. Well, at any rate, he said, justice has some resemblance to holiness; for anything in the world has some sort of resemblance to any other thing. Thus there is a point in which white resembles black, and hard soft, and so with all the other things which are regarded as most opposed to each other; and the things which we spoke of before as having different faculties and not being of the same kind as each other—the parts of the face—these in some sense resemble one another and are of like sort. In this way therefore you could prove, if you chose, that even these things are all like one another. But it is not fair to describe things as like which have some point alike, however small, or as unlike that have some point unlike. This surprised me, and I said to him: What, do you regard just and holy as so related to each other that they have only some small point of likeness?

Not so, he replied, at all, nor yet, on the other hand, as I believe you regard them. Well then, I said, since I find you chafe at this suggestion, we will let it pass, and consider another instance that you gave. Is there a thing you call folly? Yes, he said. Is not the direct opposite to that thing wisdom? I think so, he said. And when men behave rightly and usefully, do you consider them temperate in so behaving, or the opposite? Temperate, he said. Then is it by temperance that they are temperate? Necessarily. Now those who do not behave rightly behave foolishly, and are not temperate in so behaving? I agree, he said. And behaving foolishly is the opposite to behaving temperately? Yes, he said. Now foolish behavior is due to folly, and temperate behavior to temperance? He assented. And whatever is done by strength is done strongly, and whatever by weakness, weakly? He agreed. And whatever with swiftness, swiftly, and whatever with slowness, slowly? And so whatever is done in a certain way is done by that kind of faculty, and whatever in an opposite way, by the opposite kind? He agreed. Pray now, I proceeded, is there such a thing as the beautiful? He granted it. Has this any opposite except the ugly? None. Well, is there such a thing as the good? There is. Has it any opposite but the evil? None. Tell me, is there such a thing as shrill in the voice? Yes, he said. Has it any other opposite than deep. No, he said. Now, I went on, each single opposite has but one opposite, not many? He admitted this. Come now, I said, let us reckon up our points of agreement. We have agreed that one thing has but one opposite, and no more? We have. And that what is done in an opposite way is done by opposites? Yes, he said. And we have agreed that what is done foolishly is done in an opposite way to what is done temperately? Yes, he said. And that what is done temperately is done by temperance, and what foolishly by folly? He assented. Now if it is done in an opposite way, it must be done by an opposite? Yes? And one is done by temperance, and the other by folly? Yes. In an opposite way? Certainly. And by opposite faculties? Yes. Then folly is opposite to temperance Apparently. Now do you recollect that in the previous stage we have agreed that folly is opposite to wisdom? He admitted this.

And that one thing has but one opposite? Yes. Then which, Protagoras, of our propositions are we to reject—the statement that one thing has but one opposite; or the other, that wisdom is different from temperance, and each is a part of virtue, and moreover, a different part, and that the two are as unlike,

both in themselves and in their faculties, as the parts of the face? Which are we to upset? The two of them together are not quite in tune; they do not chime in harmony. How could they, if one thing must needs have but one opposite and no more, while wisdom, and temperance likewise, appear both to be opposite to folly, which is a single thing? Such is the position, Protagoras, I said or is it otherwise? He admitted it was so, much against his will. Then temperance and wisdom must be one thing? And indeed we found before that justice and holiness were almost the same thing. Come, Protagoras, I said, let us not falter, but carry out our inquiry to the end. Tell me, does a man who acts unjustly seem to you to be temperate in so acting? I should be ashamed, Socrates, he replied, to admit that, in spite of what many people say. Then shall I address my argument to them, I asked, or to you? If you please, he answered, debate first against that popular theory. It is all the same to me, I said, so long as you make answer, whether it be your own opinion or not. For although my first object is to test the argument, the result perhaps will be that both I, the questioner, and my respondent are brought to the test. At first Protagoras appeared to be coy, alleging that the argument was too disconcerting; however he consented at length to make answer. Well now, I said, begin at the beginning, and tell me, do you consider people to be temperate when they are unjust? Let us suppose so, he said. And by being temperate you mean being sensible? Yes. And being sensible is being well-advised in their injustice? Let us grant it, he said. Does this mean, I asked, if they fare well by their injustice, or if they fare ill? If they fare well. Now do you say there are things that are good? I do. Then, I asked, are those things good which are profitable to men? Oh yes, to be sure, he replied, and also when they are not profitable to men I call them good. Here Protagoras seemed to me to be in a thoroughly provoked and harassed state, and to have set his face against answering: so when I saw him in this mood I grew wary and went gently with my questions.

Do you mean, Protagoras, I asked, things that are profitable to no human being, or things not profitable in any way at all? Can you call such things as these good? By no means, he replied; but I know a number of things that are unprofitable to men, namely, foods, drinks, drugs, and countless others, and some that are profitable; some that are neither one nor the other to men, but are one or the other to horses; and some that are profitable only to cattle, or again to dogs; some also that are not profitable to any of those, but are to trees;

and some that are good for the roots of a tree, but bad for its shoots—such as dung, which is a good thing when applied to the roots of all plants, whereas if you chose to cast it on the young twigs and branches, it will ruin all. And oil too is utterly bad for all plants, and most deadly for the hair of all animals save that of man, while to the hair of man it is helpful, as also to the rest of his body. The good is such an elusive and diverse thing that in this instance it is good for the outward parts of man's body, but at the same time as bad as can be for the inward; and for this reason all doctors forbid the sick to take oil, except the smallest possible quantity, in what one is going to eat—just enough to quench the loathing that arises in the sensations of one's nostrils from food and its dressings. When he had thus spoken, the company acclaimed it as an excellent answer; and then I remarked: Protagoras, I find I am a forgetful sort of person, and if someone addresses me at any length I forget the subject on which he is talking. So, just as you, in entering on a discussion with me, would think fit to speak louder to me than to others if I happened to be hard of hearing, please bear in mind now that you have to deal with a forgetful person, and therefore cut up your answers into shorter pieces, that I may be able to follow you. Well, what do you mean by short answers? he asked: do you want me to make them shorter than they should be? Not at all, I said. As long as they should be? he asked. Yes, I said. Then are my answers to be as long as I think they should be, or as you think they should be?

Well, for instance, I have heard, I said, that you yourself are able, in treating one and the same subject, not only to instruct another person in it but to speak on it at length, if you choose, without ever being at a loss for matter; or again briefly, so as to yield to no one in brevity of expression. So, if you are going to argue with me, employ with me the latter method, that of brevity. Socrates, he said, I have undertaken in my time many contests of speech, and if I were to do what you demand, and argue just in the way that my opponent demanded, I should not be held superior to anyone nor would Protagoras have made a name among the Greeks. Then, as I saw that he had not been quite satisfied with himself in making his former answers, and that he would not readily accept the part of answerer in debate, I considered it was not my business to attend his meetings further, and remarked: But you know, Protagoras, I too feel uncomfortable about our having this discussion against your inclination; but when you agree to argue in such a way that I can follow,

then I will argue with you. For you—as people relate of you, and you yourself assert—are able to hold a discussion in the form of either long or short speeches; you are a man of knowledge: but I have no ability for these long speeches, though I could wish that I had it. Surely you, who are proficient in both ways, ought to have made us this concession, that so we might have had our debate. But now that you refuse, and I am somewhat pressed for time and could not stay to hear you expatiate at any length—for I have an appointment—I will be off; though I daresay I should be happy enough to hear your views. With these words I rose as if to go away; but, as I was getting up, Callias laid hold of my arm with his right hand, and grasped this cloak of mine with his left, and said: We will not let you go, Socrates; for if you leave us our discussions will not go so well. I beg you therefore to stay with us, for there is nothing I would rather hear than an argument between you and Protagoras. Come, you must oblige us all. Then I said (I was now standing up as though to go out): Son of Hipponicus, I always admire your love of knowledge, but especially do I commend and love it now, so that I should be very glad to oblige you if you asked of me something that I could do:

but I am afraid it is as though you asked me to keep pace with Criso the runner of Himera in his prime, or to keep up in a match with one of the long-distance or day-course racers, and I could only tell you that I wish that of myself, without your asking, I could keep pace with such runners, but of course I cannot. If you want to have the spectacle of Criso and me running together, you must ask him to adapt his pace; for whereas I cannot run fast, he can run slowly. So if you desire to hear Protagoras and me, ask him to resume the method of answering which he used at first—in short sentences and keeping to the point raised. Otherwise what is to be our mode of discussion? For I thought that to hold a joint discussion and to make a harangue were two distinct things. Ah, but you see, Socrates, he said, Protagoras thinks it only fair to claim that he be allowed to discuss in his chosen style, in return for your claim that it should be in yours. At this Alcibiades intervened, saying: You do not state it quite philosophically, Callias, for Socrates here confesses he is no hand at long discourses, and yields therein to Protagoras; but I should be surprised if he yields to any man in ability to argue, or in understanding the interchange of reason. Now if Protagoras confesses himself inferior to Socrates in argumentation, Socrates has no more to ask: but if he challenges him, let

him discuss by question and answer; not spinning out a lecture on each question—beating off the arguments, refusing to give a reason, and so dilating until most of his hearers have forgotten the point at issue. For Socrates, I warrant you, will not forget, despite his jesting way of calling himself forgetful. Now I think Socrates' proposal is the more equitable—for each of us should declare his personal opinion. After Alcibiades, the next, I believe, to speak was Critias: Prodicus and Hippias, he said, it seems to me that Callias is all for supporting Protagoras, while Alcibiades is always for a contest in anything he takes up. It is not for us to contend on either side for Socrates or for Protagoras, but jointly to request them both not to break off our conference unconcluded.

When he had said this, Prodicus remarked: I think you are right, Critias: those who attend this sort of discussion ought to be joint, but not equal, hearers of both disputants. For there is a difference: we should listen jointly to them both, yet not give equal heed to each, but more to the wiser and less to the less intelligent. I on my part also, Protagoras and Socrates, call upon you to accede to our request, and to dispute, but not wrangle, with each other over your arguments: for friends dispute with friends, just from good feeling; whereas wrangling is between those who are at variance and enmity with one another. In this way our meeting will have highest success, since you the speakers will thus earn the greatest measure of good repute, not praise, from us who hear you. For good repute is present in the hearers' souls without deception, but praise is too often in the words of liars who hide what they really think. Again, we listeners would thus be most comforted, not pleased; for he is comforted who learns something and gets a share of good sense in his mind alone, whereas he is pleased who eats something or has some other pleasant sensation only in his body. When Prodicus had thus spoken, quite a number of the company showed their approval then after Prodicus the learned Hippias spoke: Gentlemen, he said, who are here present, I regard you all as kinsmen and intimates and fellow-citizens by nature, not by law: for like is akin to like by nature, whereas law, despot of mankind, often constrains us against nature. Hence it would be shameful if we, while knowing the nature of things, should yet—being the wisest of the Greeks, and having met together for the very purpose in the very sanctuary of the wisdom of Greece, and in this the greatest and most auspicious house of the city of cities—display no

worthy sign of this dignity, but should quarrel with each other like low churls.

Now let me beg and advise you, Protagoras and Socrates, to come to terms arranged, as it were, under our arbitration: you, Socrates, must, not require that precise form of discussion with its extreme brevity, if it is disagreeable to Protagoras, but let the speeches have their head with a loose rein, that they may give us a more splendid and elegant impression; nor must you, Protagoras, let out full sail, as you run before the breeze, and so escape into the ocean of speech leaving the land nowhere in sight; rather, both of you must take a middle course. So you shall do as I say, and I strongly urge you to choose an umpire or supervisor or chairman who will keep watch for you over the due measure of either's speeches. His proposal was approved by the company, and they all applauded it: Callias said he would not let me go, and they requested me to choose a supervisor. To this I replied that it would be a shame to choose an arbiter for our discussion; for if he who is chosen, said I, is to be our inferior, it would not be right to have the inferior overseeing the superior; while if he is our equal, that will be just as wrong, for our equal will only do very much as we do, and it will be superfluous to choose him. You may say you will choose one who is our superior. This, in very truth, I hold to be impossible—to choose someone who is wiser than our friend Protagoras; and if you choose one who is not his superior, though you may say he is, that again would cast a slur on him, as if he were some paltry fellow requiring a supervisor; for, as far as I am concerned, the matter is indifferent. But let me tell you how I would have the thing done, so that your eagerness for a conference and a discussion may be satisfied. If Protagoras does not wish to answer, let him ask questions, and I will answer: at the same time I will try to show him how the answerer, in my view, ought to answer; and when I have answered all the questions that he wishes to ask, in his turn he shall render account in like manner to me. So if he does not seem very ready to answer the particular question put to him, you and I will join in beseeching him, as you have besought me, not to upset our conference. And for this plan there is no need to have one man as supervisor; you will all supervise it together. They all resolved that it should be done in this way: Protagoras, though very unwilling, was obliged after all to agree to ask questions and then, when he had asked a sufficient number, to take his turn at making due response in short answers.

And so he began to put questions in this sort of way: I consider, Socrates, that the greatest part of a man's education is to be skilled in the matter of verses; that is, to be able to apprehend, in the utterances of the poets, what has been rightly and what wrongly composed, and to know how to distinguish them and account for them when questioned. Accordingly my question now will be on the same subject that you and I are now debating, namely virtue, but taken in connexion with poetry: that will be the only difference. Now, Simonides, I think, somewhere remarks to Scopas, the son of Creon of Thessaly — For a man, indeed, to become good truly is hard, In hands and feet and mind foursquare, Fashioned without reproach. Do you know the ode, or shall I recite the whole? To this I replied: There is no need, for I know it it happens that I have especially studied that ode. I am glad to hear it, he said. Now do you regard it as finely and correctly composed or not? Very finely and correctly, I replied. And do you regard it as finely composed, if the poet contradicts himself? No, I replied. Then observe it more closely, he said. >My good sir, I have given it ample attention. Are you aware, then, he asked, that as the ode proceeds he says at one point— Nor ringeth true to me That word of Pittacus— And yet 'twas a sage who spake—Hard, quoth he, to be good. Do you note that this and the former are statements of the same person? I know that, I said. Then do you think the second agrees with the first? So far as I can see, it does, I replied (at the same time, though, I was afraid there was something in what he said). Why, I asked, does it not seem so to you? How can anyone, he replied, be thought consistent, who says both of these things? First he laid it down himself that it is hard for a man to become good in truth, and then a little further on in his poem he forgot, and he proceeds to blame Pittacus for saying the same as he did—that it is hard to be good, and refuses to accept from him the same statement that he made himself. Yet, as often as he blames the man for saying the same as himself he obviously blames himself too, so that in either the former or the latter place his statement is wrong. This speech of his won a clamorous approval from many of his hearers; and at first I felt as though I had been struck by a skilful boxer, and was quite blind and dizzy with the effect of his words and the noise of their applause. Then—to tell you the honest truth—in order to gain time for considering the poet's meaning, I turned to Prodicus and calling him—Prodicus, I said, surely Simonides was your townsman: it behoves you to come to the man's rescue.

Accordingly I allow myself to call for your assistance— just as Scamander, in Homer, when besieged by Achilles, called Simois to his aid, saying— Dear brother, let us both together stay this warriors might. In the same way I call upon you, lest Protagoras lay Simonides in ruins. For indeed to rehabilitate Simonides requires your artistry, by which you can discriminate between wishing and desiring as two distinct things in the fine and ample manner of your statement just now. So please consider if you agree with my view. For it is not clear that Simonides does contradict himself. Now you, Prodicus, shall declare your verdict first: do you consider becoming and being to be the same or different? Different, to be sure, said Prodicus. Now in the first passage, I said, Simonides gave it as his own opinion that it is hard for a man to become good in truth. Quite true, said Prodicus. And he blames Pittacus, I went on, for saying not, as Protagoras holds, the same as himself, but something different. For what Pittacus said was not, as Simonides said, that it is hard to become but to be good. Now being and becoming, Protagoras, as our friend Prodicus says, are not the same thing; and if being and becoming are not the same thing, Simonides does not contradict himself. Perhaps Prodicus and many others might say with Hesiod that to become good is hard, for Heaven hath set hard travail on the way to virtue; and when one reacheth the summit thereof, 'tis an easy thing to possess, though hard before. When Prodicus heard this he gave me his approval: but Protagoras observed: Your correction, Socrates, contains an error greater than that which you are correcting. To which I answered: then it is a bad piece of work I have done, it would seem, Protagoras, and I am an absurd sort of physician; my treatment increases the malady. Just so, he said. How is that? I asked. Great, he replied, would be the ignorance of the poet, if he calls it such a slight matter to possess virtue, which is the hardest thing in the world, as all men agree.

Then I remarked: Upon my word, how opportunely it has happened that Prodicus is here to join in our discussion! For it is very likely, Protagoras, that Prodicus' wisdom is a gift of long ago from heaven, beginning either in the time of Simonides or even earlier. But you, so skilled in many other things, appear to be unskilled in this, and lack the skill that I can boast because I am a disciple of the great Prodicus; and so now I find you do not understand that perhaps Simonides did not conceive hard in the way that you conceive it—just as, in the case of awful, Prodicus here corrects me each time I use the word in

praising you or someone else; when I say, for instance, that Protagoras is an awfully wise man, he asks if I am not ashamed to call good things awful. For awful, he says, is bad; thus no one on this or that occasion speaks of awful wealth or awful peace or awful health, but we say awful disease, awful war or awful poverty, taking awful to be bad. So perhaps hard also was intended by the Cean and Simonides as either bad or something else that you do not understand: let us therefore ask Prodicus, for it is fair to question him on the dialect of Simonides. What did Simonides mean, Prodicus, by hard? Bad, he replied. Then it is on this account, Prodicus, I said, that he blames Pittacus for saying it is hard to be good, just as though he heard him say it is bad to be good. Well, Socrates, he said, what else do you think Simonides meant? Was he not reproaching Pittacus for not knowing how to distinguish words correctly, Lesbian as he was, and nurtured in a foreign tongue? You hear, Protagoras, I said, what Prodicus here suggests: have you anything to say upon it? The case, said Protagoras, is far otherwise, Prodicus: I am quite sure that Simonides meant by hard the same as we generally do—not bad, but whatever is not easy and involves a great amount of trouble. Ah, I agree with you, Protagoras, I said, that this is Simonides' meaning, and that our friend Prodicus knows it, but is joking and chooses to experiment on you to see if you will be able to support your own statement. For that Simonides does not mean that hard is bad we have clear proof forthwith in the next phrase, where he says— God alone can have this privilege. Surely he cannot mean that it is bad to be good, if he proceeds here to say that God alone can have this thing, and attributes this privilege to God only; otherwise Prodicus would call Simonides a rake, and no true Cean.

But I should like to tell you what I take to be Simonides' intention in this ode, if you care to test my powers, as you put it, in the matter of verses; though if you would rather, I will hear your account. When Protagoras heard me say this— As you please, Socrates, he said; then Prodicus and Hippias strongly urged me, and the rest of them also. Well then, I said, I will try to explain to you my own feeling about this poem. Now philosophy is of more ancient and abundant growth in Crete and Lacedaemon than in any other part of Greece, and sophists are more numerous in those regions: but the people there deny it and make pretence of ignorance, in order to prevent the discovery that it is by wisdom that they have ascendancy over the rest of the Greeks, like those

sophists of whom Protagoras was speaking; they prefer it to be thought that they owe their superiority to fighting and valor, conceiving that the revelation of its real cause would lead everyone to practise this wisdom. So well have they kept their secret that they have deceived the followers of the Spartan cult in our cities, with the result that some get broken ears by imitating them, bind their knuckles with thongs, go in for muscular exercises, and wear dashing little cloaks, as though it were by these means that the Spartans were the masters of Greece . And when the Spartans wish to converse unrestrainedly with their sophists, and begin to chafe at the secrecy of their meetings, they pass alien acts against the laconizing set and any other strangers within their gates, and have meetings with the sophists unknown to the foreigners; while on their part they do not permit any of their young men to travel abroad to the other cities—in this rule they resemble the Cretans—lest they unlearn what they are taught at home. In those two states there are not only men but women also who pride themselves on their education; and you can tell that what I say is true and that the Spartans have the best education in philosophy and argument by this: if you choose to consort with the meanest of Spartans, at first you will find him making a poor show in the conversation; but soon, at some point or other in the discussion, he gets home with a notable remark, short and compressed—a deadly shot that makes his interlocutor seem like a helpless child.

Hence this very truth has been observed by certain persons both in our day and in former times—that the Spartan cult is much more the pursuit of wisdom than of athletics; for they know that a man's ability to utter such remarks is to be ascribed to his perfect education. Such men were Thales of Miletus , Pittacus of Mytilene , Bias of Priene , Solon of our city, Cleobulus of Lindus , Myson of Chen, and, last of the traditional seven, Chilon of Sparta . All these were enthusiasts, lovers and disciples of the Spartan culture; and you can recognize that character in their wisdom by the short, memorable sayings that fell from each of them they assembled together and dedicated these as the first-fruits of their lore to Apollo in his Delphic temple, inscribing there those maxims which are on every tongue— Know thyself and Nothing overmuch. To what intent do I say this? To show how the ancient philosophy had this style of laconic brevity; and so it was that the saying of Pittacus was privately handed about with high approbation among the sages—that it is hard to be

good. Then Simonides, ambitious to get a name for wisdom, perceived that if he could overthrow this saying, as one might some famous athlete, and become its conqueror, he would win fame himself amongst men of that day. Accordingly it was against this saying, and with this aim, that he composed the whole poem as a means of covertly assailing and abasing this maxim, as it seems to me. Now let us all combine in considering whether my account is really true. The opening of the ode must at once appear crazy if, while intending to say that it is hard for a man to become good, he inserted indeed. There is no sort of sense, I imagine, in this insertion, unless we suppose that Simonides is addressing himself to the saying of Pittacus as a disputant: Pittacus says—It is hard to be good; and the poet controverts this by observing—No, but to become good, indeed, is hard for a man, Pittacus, truly—not truly good; he does not mention truth in this connexion, or imply that some things are truly good, while others are good but not truly so: this would seem silly and unlike Simonides.

We must rather take the truly as a poetical transposition, and first quote the saying of Pittacus in some such way as this: let us suppose Pittacus himself to be speaking and Simonides replying, as thus—Good people, he says, it is hard to be good; and the poet answers—Pittacus, what you say is not true, for it is not being but becoming good, indeed—in hands and feet and mind foursquare, fashioned without reproach—that is truly hard. In this way we see a purpose in the insertion of indeed, and that the truly is correctly placed at the end; and all that comes after corroborates this view of his meaning. There are many points in the various expressions of the poem which might be instanced to show its fine composition, for it is a work of very elegant and elaborate art; but it would take too long to detail all its beauties. However, let us go over its general outline and intention, which is assuredly to refute Pittacus' saying, throughout the ode. Proceeding a little way on from our passage, just as though he were making a speech, he says to become, indeed, a good man is truly hard (not but what it is possible for a certain space of time); but to continue in this state of what one has become, and to be a good man is, as you say, Pittacus, impossible, superhuman: God alone can have this privilege— For that man cannot help but be bad Whom irresistible mischance has overthrown. Now who is it that an irresistible mischance overthrows in the command of a ship? Clearly not the ordinary man, for he may be

overcome at any time; just as you cannot knock over one who is lying down, but one who is standing; you might knock over a standing man so as to make him lie down, not one who is lying down already. So it is a man apt to resist that an irresistible mischance would overthrow, and not one who could never resist anything. A great storm breaking over a steersman will render him helpless, and a severe season will leave a farmer helpless, and a doctor will be in the same case. For the good has the capacity of becoming bad, as we have witness in another poet who said— Nay more, the virtuous man is at one time bad, at another good. whereas the bad man has no capacity for becoming, but must ever be, what he is; so that when an irresistible mischance overthrows him who is resourceful, wise, and good, he cannot but be bad; and you say, Pittacus, that it is hard to be good—that is, to become good, indeed, is hard, though possible, but to be good is impossible: for— If he hath fared well, every man is good; Bad, if ill.

Now what is good faring in letters—the thing that makes a man good at them? Clearly, the study of letters. What welfare makes a good doctor? Clearly, the study of the cure of the ailing. Bad, if ill : who could become a bad doctor? Clearly, he who in the first place is a doctor, and in the second, a good doctor; for he could become a bad one also: whereas we, who are laymen in respect of medicine, could never by faring ill become either doctors or joiners or anything else of that sort; and if one cannot become a doctor by faring ill, clearly one cannot become a bad one either. In the same way the good man may one day become bad through the effect either of time or work or illness or some other accident; for there is only one sort of ill fare—the deprivation of knowledge. But the bad man can never become bad: he is that always. If he is to become bad, he must previously become good. Hence the upshot of this part of the poem is that it is impossible to be a good man, continuing to be good, but possible to become good, and bad also, in the case of the same person. And then— Best also for the longest space are they whom the gods love. All this has been said with reference to Pittacus, as is made still plainer by the ensuing verses, in which he says— Therefore never shall I, in quest of what cannot come to pass, vainly cast my life's lot upon a hope impracticable—of finding a man wholly blameless amongst us who partake of the fruit of the broad-based earth. If I light upon him, be sure I will report it— says he; and in this vehement tone he pursues the saying of Pittacus all through the poem:

But I praise and love everyone willingly committing no baseness; for against necessity not even the gods make war. This also is spoken with the same intent. For Simonides was not so ill-educated as to say that he praised a person who willingly did no evil, as though there were some who did evil willingly. I am fairly sure of this—that none of the wise men considers that anybody ever willingly errs or willingly does base and evil deeds; they are well aware that all who do base and evil things do them unwillingly; and so Simonides does not say he gives his praise to the person who willingly does no evil, but uses the word willingly of himself.

For he considered that a man of sense and honor often constrains himself to become a friend and approver of some person, as when a man chances to have an uncongenial mother or father or country or other such connexion. Now when this sort of thing befalls the wicked, they seem glad to see their parents' or country's faults, and complainingly point them out and inveigh against them, in order that their own neglect of them may not be denounced by their neighbors, who might otherwise reproach them for being so neglectful; and hence they multiply their complaints and add voluntary to unavoidable feuds. But good men, he knew, conceal the trouble and constrain themselves to praise, and if they have any reason to be angered against their parents or country for some wrong done to them they pacify and conciliate their feelings, compelling themselves to love and praise their own people. And many a time, I think, Simonides was conscious that he had praised and eulogized some tyrant or other such person, not willingly, but under compulsion. So he proceeds to tell Pittacus—I, Pittacus, do not reproach you merely because I am apt to reproach, since— For my part I am content with whosoever is not evil or too intractable. He who knows Right, the support of a city, is a healthy man; him I shall never blame, for to blame I am not apt. Infinite is the race of fools. So that whoever delights in reproaching would have his fill of blaming them: Verily, all things are fair that have in them no admixture of base. By this he does not mean to say, as it were, that all things are white that have no admixture of black; that would be ridiculous in many ways; but that he himself accepts the average sort without reproaching them. I do not seek, said he, a man wholly blameless amongst us who partake of the fruit of the broad-based earth: if I light upon him, be sure I will report it—meaning, If I wait for that, I shall never find anyone to praise. No, I am

content if a man be average and do nothing evil, since I love and praise all—and there he has used a Mytilenaeon word, for his I praise and love all willingly is addressed to Pittacus (here at willingly one should make a pause);—all who commit nothing base, but some there are whom I praise and love unwillingly.

Hence I should never reproach you, Pittacus, if you would only speak what is moderately reasonable and true. But as it is, since you lie so grievously about the greatest matters with an air of speaking the truth, on this score I reproach you. Such is my view, Prodicus and Protagoras, I said, of Simonides' intention in composing this ode. Then Hippias remarked: It certainly seems to me, Socrates, that you have given a good exposition of the poem: but I also have an elegant discourse upon it, which I will perform for you if you wish. Yes, Hippias, said Alcibiades, but some other time: for the moment the proper thing, according to the agreement which Protagoras and Socrates made between them, will be for Socrates to answer any questions that Protagoras may still wish to put to him, but if he prefers to answer Socrates, then it will be for Socrates to ask. On this I remarked: For my part I place it in Protagoras's hands to do whichever he likes best. But if he does not mind, let us talk no more of poems and verses, but consider the points on which I questioned you at first, Protagoras, and on which I should be glad to reach, with your help, a conclusion. For it seems to me that arguing about poetry is comparable to the wine-parties of common market-folk. These people, owing to their inability to carry on a familiar conversation over their wine by means of their own voices and discussions—such is their lack of education—put a premium on flute-girls by hiring the extraneous voice of the flute at a high price, and carry on their intercourse by means of its utterance. But where the party consists of thorough gentlemen who have had a proper education, you will see neither flute-girls nor dancing-girls nor harp-girls, but only the company contenting themselves with their own conversation, and none of these fooleries and frolics—each speaking and listening decently in his turn, even though they may drink a great deal of wine. And so a gathering like this of ours, when it includes such men as most of us claim to be, requires no extraneous voices, not even of the poets, whom one cannot question on the sense of what they say; when they are adduced in discussion we are generally told by some that the poet thought so and so, and by others, something different, and they go on

arguing about a matter which they are powerless to determine.

No, this sort of meeting is avoided by men of culture, who prefer to converse directly with each other, and to use their own way of speech in putting one another by turns to the test. It is this sort of person that I think you and I ought rather to imitate; putting the poets aside, let us hold our discussion together in our own persons, making trial of the truth and of ourselves. So if you wish to question me further, I am at your service as answerer; but if you like, put yourself at my service, so that we may clear up the several points of the inquiry in which we stopped half-way. On my saying this and something more of the sort, Protagoras gave no indication as to which course he would take. So Alcibiades, looking at Callias, said: Do you consider, Callias, that Protagoras is behaving properly now in refusing to signify whether he will or will not answer? I do not think he is. Let him either debate or say that he does not want to debate, so that we may have this understanding with him; then Socrates can debate with someone else, or another of us with some other, as may be agreed. Then Protagoras was ashamed, as it seemed to me, at these words of Alcibiades, and the more so when Callias requested him, together with almost the whole of the company; and so he reluctantly prevailed on himself to take up the debate, and asked to have questions put to him, since he was ready to answer. So I proceeded to say—Protagoras, do not suppose that I have any other desire in debating with you than to examine the difficulties which occur to myself at each point. For I hold that there is a good deal in what Homer says— When two go together, one observes before the other; for somehow it makes all of us human beings more resourceful in every deed or word or thought; but if one observes something alone, forthwith one has to go about searching until one discovers somebody to whom one can show it off and who can corroborate it. And I also have my reason for being glad to debate with you rather than with anyone else; it is that I regard you as the best person to investigate in general any matters that a sensible man may be expected to examine, and virtue in particular. Whom else should I choose but you? Not only do you consider yourself a worthy gentleman, like sundry other people, who are sensible enough themselves, but cannot make others so;

but you are both good yourself and have the gift of making others good. And you are so confident of yourself that, while others make a secret of this art, you have had yourself publicly proclaimed to all the Greeks with the title

of sophist, and have appointed yourself preceptor of culture and virtue, and are the first who has ever demanded a regular fee for such work. What then could I do but call upon you to deal with our problem both by question and communication? I had no other course. So now with regard to those points which I have raised on the subject in my opening questions, I desire to be reminded of some by you and to have your help in investigating others. The question, I believe, was this: Are the five names of wisdom, temperance, courage, justice, and holiness attached to one thing, or underlying each of these names is there a distinct existence or thing that has its own particular function, each thing being different from the others? And your answer was that they are not names attached to one thing, but that each of these names applies to a distinct thing, and that all these are parts of virtue; not like the parts of gold, which are similar to each other and to the whole of which they are parts, but like the parts of the face, dissimilar to the whole of which they are parts and to each other, and each having a distinct function. If you still hold the same opinion of them, say so; if you have a new one, define what it is, for I make no objection to your replying now on other lines. Indeed I should not be surprised if you were merely experimenting upon me when you spoke before. Well, Socrates, he replied, I say that all these are parts of virtue, and that while four of them are fairly on a par with each other, courage is something vastly different from all the rest. You may perceive the truth of what I say from this: you will find many people extremely unjust, unholy, dissolute, and ignorant, and yet pre-eminently courageous. Stop now, I said: we must duly examine what you say. Do you call courageous men bold, or something else? Yes, and impetuous also, he replied, where most men fear to tread. Well now, do you say that virtue is a good thing, and of this good thing offer yourself as teacher? Nay, it is the best of things, he said, unless I am out of my senses. Then is one part of it base and another good, or is the whole good? Surely the whole is good in the highest possible degree.

Now do you know who dive boldly into wells? I do; divers. Is this because they have knowledge, or for some other reason? Because they have knowledge. And who are bold in going to war on horseback—those who are practised horsemen, or those who are not? Practised horsemen. And who with bucklers—buckler-men, or those who are not? Buckler-men: and so with all other cases, he went on, if that is your point; those who have knowledge are

bolder than those who lack it, and individually they are bolder when they have learnt than before learning. But you must have seen at times, I said, persons who are without knowledge of any of these affairs, yet behaving boldly in each of them. I have, he said, and very boldly too. Then are these bold ones courageous also? Nay, that would make courage a base thing, he replied; for those you speak of are out of their senses. What then, I asked, do you mean by courageous men? Surely the same as bold men? Yes, I do still, he said. Then these men, I went on, who are so brave, are found to be not courageous but mad? And in those former cases our wisest men are boldest too, and being boldest are most courageous? And on this reasoning, wisdom will be courage? You do not rightly recall, Socrates, what I stated in replying to you. When you asked me whether courageous men are bold, I admitted it: I was not asked whether bold men are courageous. Had you asked me this before, I should have said— Not all. And as to proving that courageous men are not bold, you have nowhere pointed out that I was wrong in my admission that they are. Next you show that such persons individually are bolder when they have knowledge, and bolder than others who lack it, and therewith you take courage and wisdom to be the same: proceeding in this manner you might even take strength to be wisdom. On this method you might begin by asking me whether the strong are powerful, and I should say Yes ; and then, whether those who know how to wrestle are more powerful than those who do not know how to wrestle, and whether individually they are more powerful when they have learnt than before learning, and I should say Yes. And on my admitting these points it would be open to you to say, by the same token, that according to my admission wisdom is strength.

But neither there nor elsewhere do I admit that the powerful are strong, only that the strong are powerful; for I hold that power and strength are not the same, but that one of them, power, comes from knowledge, or from madness or rage, whereas strength comes from constitution and fit nurture of the body. So, in the other instance, boldness and courage are not the same, and therefore it results that the courageous are bold, but not that the bold are courageous; for boldness comes to a man from art, or from rage or madness, like power, whereas courage comes from constitution and fit nurture of the soul. Do you speak of some men, Protagoras, I asked, as living well, and others ill? Yes. Then do you consider that a man would live well if he lived in distress

and anguish? No, he said. Well now, if he lived pleasantly and so ended his life, would you not consider he had thus contrived to live well? I would, he said. And, I suppose, to live pleasantly is good, and unpleasantly, bad? Yes, he said, if one lived in the enjoyment of honorable things. But, Protagoras, will you tell me you agree with the majority in calling some pleasant things bad and some painful ones good? I mean to say—Are not things good in so far as they are pleasant, putting aside any other result they may have; and again, are not painful things in just the same sense bad—in so far as they are painful? I cannot tell, Socrates, he replied, whether I am to answer, in such absolute fashion as that of your question, that all pleasant things are good and painful things bad: I rather think it safer for me to reply, with a view not merely to my present answer but to all the rest of my life, that some pleasant things are not good, and also that some painful things are not bad, and some are, while a third class of them are indifferent—neither bad nor good. You call pleasant, do you not, I asked, things that partake of pleasure or cause pleasure? Certainly, he said. So when I put it to you, whether things are not good in so far as they are pleasant, I am asking whether pleasure itself is not a good thing. Let us examine the matter, Socrates, he said, in the form in which you put it at each point, and if the proposition seems to be reasonable, and pleasant and good are found to be the same, we shall agree upon it; if not, we shall dispute it there and then. And would you like, I asked, to be leader in the inquiry, or am I to lead? You ought to lead, he replied, since you are the inaugurator of this discussion.

Well then, I proceeded, will the following example give us the light we need? Just as, in estimating a man's health or bodily efficiency by his appearance, one might look at his face and the lower part of his arms and say: Come now, uncover your chest too and your back and show them, that I may examine you thoroughly—so the same sort of desire comes over me in regard to our inquiry. Observing your condition to be as you describe in respect of the good and the pleasant, I am fain to say something like this: Come, my good Protagoras, uncover some more of your thoughts: how are you in regard to knowledge? Do you share the view that most people take of this, or have you some other? The opinion generally held of knowledge is something of this sort—that it is no strong or guiding or governing thing; it is not regarded as anything of that kind, but people think that, while a man often has knowledge

in him, he is not governed by it, but by something else—now by passion, now by pleasure, now by pain, at times by love, and often by fear; their feeling about knowledge is just what they have about a slave, that it may be dragged about by any other force. Now do you agree with this view of it, or do you consider that knowledge is something noble and able to govern man, and that whoever learns what is good and what is bad will never be swayed by anything to act otherwise than as knowledge bids, and that intelligence is a sufficient succor for mankind? My view, Socrates, he replied, is precisely that which you express, and what is more, it would be a disgrace for me above all men to assert that wisdom and knowledge were aught but the highest of all human things. Well and truly spoken, I said. Now you know that most people will not listen to you and me, but say that many, while knowing what is best, refuse to perform it, though they have the power, and do other things instead. And whenever I have asked them to tell me what can be the reason of this, they say that those who act so are acting under the influence of pleasure or pain, or under the control of one of the things I have just mentioned. Yes, Socrates, he replied, I regard this as but one of the many erroneous sayings of mankind.

Come then, and join me in the endeavor to persuade the world and explain what is this experience of theirs, which they call being overcome by pleasure, and which they give as the reason why they fail to do what is best though they have knowledge of it. For perhaps if we said to them: What you assert, good people, is not correct, but quite untrue—they might ask us: Protagoras and Socrates, if this experience is not being overcome by pleasure what on earth is it, and what do you call it? Tell us that. Why, Socrates, must we consider the opinion of the mass of mankind, who say just what occurs to them? I fancy, I replied, that this will be a step towards discovering how courage is related to the other parts of virtue. So if you think fit to abide by the arrangement we made a while ago—that I should lead in the direction which seems best for elucidating the matter—you must now follow; but if you would rather not, to suit your wishes I will let it pass. No, he said, your plan is quite right: go on to the end as you began. Once more then, I proceeded, suppose they should ask us: Then what do you call this thing which we described as being overcome by pleasures? The answer I should give them would be this: Please attend; Protagoras and I will try to explain it to you. Do you not say that this thing occurs, good people, in the common case of a man

being overpowered by the pleasantness of food or drink or sexual acts, and doing what he does though he knows it to be wicked? They would admit it. Then you and I would ask them again: In what sense do you call such deeds wicked? Is it that they produce those pleasures and are themselves pleasant at the moment, or that later on they cause diseases and poverty, and have many more such ills in store for us? Or, even though they have none of these things in store for a later day, and cause us only enjoyment, would they still be evil just because, forsooth, they cause enjoyment in some way or other? Can we suppose, Protagoras, that they will make any other answer than that these things are evil, not according to the operation of the actual pleasure of the moment, but owing to the later results in disease and those other ills? I think, said Protagoras, that most people would answer thus. Then in causing diseases they cause pains? And in causing poverty they cause pains? They would admit this, I imagine. Protagoras agreed.

Then does it seem to you, my friends, as Protagoras and I assert, that the only reason why these things are evil is that they end at last in pains, and deprive us of other pleasures? Would they admit this? We both agreed that they would. Then again, suppose we should ask them the opposite: You, sirs, who tell us on the other hand that good things are painful—do you not give such instances as physical training, military service, and medical treatment conducted by cautery, incision, drugs, or starvation, and say that these are good, but painful? Would they not grant it? He agreed that they would. Then do you call them good because they produce extreme pangs and anguish for the moment, or because later on they result in health and good bodily condition, the deliverance of cities, dominion over others, and wealth? They would assent to this, I suppose. He agreed. And are these things good for any other reason than that they end at last in pleasures and relief and riddance of pains? Or have you some other end to mention, with respect to which you call them good, apart from pleasures and pains? They could not find one, I fancy. I too think they could not, said Protagoras. Then do you pursue pleasure as being a good thing, and shun pain as being a bad one? He agreed that we do. So one thing you hold to be bad—pain; and pleasure you hold to be good, since the very act of enjoying you call bad as soon as it deprives us of greater pleasures than it has in itself, or leads to greater pains than the pleasures it contains. For if it is with reference to something else that you call the act of

enjoyment bad, and with a view to some other end, you might be able to tell it us but this you will be unable to do. I too think that they cannot, said Protagoras. Then is not the same thing repeated in regard to the state of being pained? You call being pained a good thing as soon as it either rids us of greater pains than those it comprises, or leads to greater pleasures than its pains. Now if you have in view some other end than those which I mention when you call being pained good, you can tell it us; but you never can. Truly spoken, said Protagoras. Once more then, I proceeded; if you were to ask me, my friends, Now why on earth do you speak at such length on this point, and in so many ways? I should reply, Forgive me: in the first place, it is not easy to conclude what it is that you mean when you say overcome by pleasures ; and secondly, on this point hang all our conclusions.

But it is still quite possible to retract, if you can somehow contrive to say that the good is different from pleasure, or the bad from pain. Is it enough for you to live out your life pleasantly, without pain? If it is, and you are unable to tell us of any other good or evil that does not end in pleasure or pain, listen to what I have to say next. I tell you that if this is so, the argument becomes absurd, when you say that it is often the case that a man, knowing the evil to be evil, nevertheless commits it, when he might avoid it, because he is driven and dazed by his pleasures; while on the other hand you say that a man, knowing the good, refuses to do good because of the momentary pleasures by which he is overcome. The absurdity of all this will be manifest if we refrain from using a number of terms at once, such as pleasant, painful, good, and bad; and as there appeared to be two things, let us call them by two names—first, good and evil, and then later on, pleasant and painful. Let us then lay it down as our statement, that a man does evil in spite of knowing the evil of it. Now if someone asks us: Why? we shall answer: Because he is overcome. By what? the questioner will ask us and this time we shall be unable to reply: By pleasure—for this has exchanged its name for the good. So we must answer only with the words: Because he is overcome. By what? says the questioner. The good—must surely be our reply. Now if our questioner chance to be an arrogant person he will laugh and exclaim: What a ridiculous statement, that a man does evil, knowing it to be evil, and not having to do it, because he is overcome by the good! Is this, he will ask, because the good is not worthy of conquering the evil in you, or because it is worthy? Clearly we must

reply: Because it is not worthy; otherwise he whom we speak of as overcome by pleasures would not have offended. But in what sense, he might ask us, is the good unworthy of the bad, or the bad of the good? This can only be when the one is greater and the other smaller, or when there are more on the one side and fewer on the other. We shall not find any other reason to give; So it is clear, he will say, that by being overcome you mean getting the greater evil in exchange for the lesser good. That must be agreed.

Then let us apply the terms pleasant and painful to these things instead, and say that a man does what we previously called evil, but now call painful, knowing it to be painful, because he is overcome by the pleasant, which is obviously unworthy to conquer. What unworthiness can there be in pleasure as against pain, save an excess or defect of one compared with the other? That is, when one becomes greater and the other smaller, or when there are more on one side and fewer on the other, or here a greater degree and there a less. For if you should say: But, Socrates, the immediately pleasant differs widely from the subsequently pleasant or painful, I should reply: Do they differ in anything but pleasure and pain? That is the only distinction. Like a practised weigher, put pleasant things and painful in the scales, and with them the nearness and the remoteness, and tell me which count for more. For if you weigh pleasant things against pleasant, the greater and the more are always to be preferred: if painful against painful, then always the fewer and smaller. If you weigh pleasant against painful, and find that the painful are outbalanced by the pleasant—whether the near by the remote or the remote by the near—you must take that course of action to which the pleasant are attached; but not that course if the pleasant are outweighed by the painful. Can the case be otherwise, I should ask, than thus, my friends? I am certain they could state no alternative. To this he too assented. Since that is the case, then, I shall say, please answer me this: Does not the same size appear larger to your sight when near, and smaller when distant? They will admit this. And it is the same with thickness and number? And sounds of equal strength are greater when near, and smaller when distant? They would agree to this. Now if our welfare consisted in doing and choosing things of large dimensions, and avoiding and not doing those of small, what would be our salvation in life? Would it be the art of measurement, or the power of appearance? Is it not the latter that leads us astray, as we saw, and many a time causes us to take things topsy-turvy and

to have to change our minds both in our conduct and in our choice of great or small? Whereas the art of measurement would have made this appearance ineffective, and by showing us the truth would have brought our soul into the repose of abiding by the truth, and so would have saved our life. Would men acknowledge, in view of all this, that the art which saves our life is measurement, or some other? It is measurement, he agreed.

Well now, if the saving of our life depended on the choice of odd or even, and on knowing when to make a right choice of the greater and when of the less—taking each by itself or comparing it with the other, and whether near or distant—what would save our life? Would it not be knowledge; a knowledge of measurement, since the art here is concerned with excess and defect, and of numeration, as it has to do with odd and even? People would admit this, would they not? Protagoras agreed that they would. Well then, my friends, since we have found that the salvation of our life depends on making a right choice of pleasure and pain—of the more and the fewer, the greater and the smaller, and the nearer and the remoter—is it not evident, in the first place, that measurement is a study of their excess and defect and equality in relation to each other? This must needs be so. And being measurement, I presume it must be an art or science? They will assent to this. Well, the nature of this art or science we shall consider some other time; but the mere fact of its being a science will suffice for the proof which Protagoras and I are required to give in answer to the question you have put to us. You asked it, if you remember, when we were agreeing that there is nothing stronger than knowledge, and that knowledge, wherever it may be found, has always the upper hand of pleasure or anything else; and then you said that pleasure often masters even the man of knowledge, and on our refusing to agree with you, you went on to ask us: Protagoras and Socrates, if this experience is not being overcome by pleasure, whatever can it be, and what do you call it? Tell us. If on the spur of the moment we had replied, Ignorance, you would have laughed us to scorn: but now if you laugh at us you will be laughing at yourselves as well. For you have admitted that it is from defect of knowledge that men err, when they do err, in their choice of pleasures and pains—that is, in the choice of good and evil; and from defect not merely of knowledge but of the knowledge which you have now admitted also to be that of measurement. And surely you know well enough for yourselves that the erring act committed without knowledge

is done through ignorance. Accordingly to be overcome by pleasure means just this—ignorance in the highest degree, which Protagoras here and Prodicus and Hippias profess to cure. But you, through supposing it to be something else than ignorance, will neither go yourselves nor send your children to these sophists, who are the teachers of those things—you say it cannot be taught; you are chary of your money and will give them none, and so you fare badly both in private and in public life.

Such would have been our answer to the world at large. And I ask you now, Hippias and Prodicus, as well as Protagoras—for I would have you make a joint reply—whether you think what I say is true or false. They all thought what I had said was absolutely true. Then you agree, I continued, that the pleasant is good and the painful bad. And let me entreat my friend Prodicus to spare me his distinction of terms: for whether you say pleasant or delightful or enjoyable, my excellent Prodicus, or in whatever style or manner you may be pleased to name these things, pray reply to the sense of my question. At this Prodicus laughed and consented, as did the rest. Well now, my friends, I said, what of this? All actions aimed at living painlessly and pleasantly are honorable, are they not? And the honorable work is both good and useful? They agreed. Then if, I proceeded, the pleasant is good, no one who has knowledge or thought of other actions as better than those he is doing, and as possible, will do as he proposes if he is free to do the better ones; and this yielding to oneself is nothing but ignorance, and mastery of oneself is as certainly wisdom. They all agreed. Well then, by ignorance do you mean having a false opinion and being deceived about matters of importance? They all agreed to this also. Then surely, I went on, no one willingly goes after evil or what he thinks to be evil; it is not in human nature, apparently, to do so—to wish to go after what one thinks to be evil in preference to the good; and when compelled to choose one of two evils, nobody will choose the greater when he may the lesser. All this met with the assent of everyone. Well, I said, is there something you call dread, or fear? And is it—I address myself to you, Prodicus—the same as I have in mind—something I describe as an expectation of evil, whether you call it fear or dread? Protagoras and Hippias agreed to this description of dread or fear; but Prodicus thought this was dread, not fear. No matter, Prodicus, I said, but my point is this: if our former statements are true, will any man wish to go after what he dreads, when he may pursue what he

does not? Surely this is impossible after what we have admitted—that he regards as evil that which he dreads? And what is regarded as evil is neither pursued nor accepted willingly, we saw, by anyone. Here also they were all in agreement.

So much, then, being granted, Prodicus and Hippias, I said, let our friend Protagoras vindicate the correctness of the answer he made at first—not that which he made at the very beginning, when he said that, while there were five parts of virtue, none of them was like any other, but each had its particular function: I do not refer to that, but the statement he made afterwards, when he proceeded to say that four of them had a considerable resemblance to each other, but one was quite different from the rest—courage; and he told me I should perceive this by the following token: You will find, Socrates, said he, that men may be most unholy, most unjust, most dissolute, and most ignorant, yet most courageous; whence you may judge that courage is very different from the other parts of virtue. His answer caused me great surprise at the moment, and still more when I went into the matter with your help. But anyhow, I asked him whether by the brave he meant bold. Yes, he replied, and impetuous. Protagoras, I said, do you remember making this answer? He admitted he did. Well now, I said, tell us, towards what do you mean they are impetuous when they are courageous? Towards the same things as cowards? No, he said. Then towards other things? Yes, he said. Do cowards go after things that allow boldness, and the courageous after dreadful things? So people say, Socrates. Quite true, I said. But my point is rather, towards what, according to you, are the brave impetuous? Dreadful things, in the belief that they are dreadful, or towards what is not dreadful? No, he said; the former has just been shown, by the arguments you put forward, to be impossible. Quite true again, I said; so that if this proof was correct, no one goes to meet what he regards as dreadful, since to be overcome by oneself was found to be ignorance. He admitted this. And yet all men go also to meet what they can face boldly, whether cowardly or brave, and in this respect cowardly and brave go to meet the same things. But still, Socrates, he said, what cowards go to meet is the very opposite of what the courageous go to meet. For instance, the latter are willing to go to war, but the former are not. Is going to war an honorable thing, I asked, or a base thing? Honorable, he replied. Then if it is honorable, we have admitted, by our former argument, that it is also good for

we agreed that all honorable actions were good. True, and I abide by that decision.

You are right to do so, I said. But which sort of men do you say are not willing to go to war, that being an honorable and good thing to do? The cowardly, he replied. Then, I went on, if it is honorable and good, is it also pleasant? That certainly has been admitted, he said. Now do the cowards wittingly refuse to go to what is more honorable, better, and pleasanter? Well, if we admit that too, he replied, we shall undo our previous admissions. But what of the courageous man? Does he not go to the more honorable and better and pleasanter? I am forced to admit that, he said. Now, in general, courageous men do not feel base fears, when they fear, nor is there anything base in their boldness? True, he said. And if not base, then it must be honorable? He admitted this. And if honorable, then good? Yes. And the cowardly and the bold and the mad, on the contrary, feel base fears and base boldness? He agreed. Do they feel base and evil boldness solely through stupidity and ignorance? Just so, he said. Well now, the cause of cowards being cowardly, do you call this cowardice or courage? Cowardice, I call it, he replied. And were they not found to be cowards through ignorance of what is dreadful? Certainly, he said. And so they are cowards because of that ignorance? He agreed. And the cause of their being cowards is admitted by you to be cowardice? He assented. Then ignorance of what is dreadful and not dreadful will be cowardice? He nodded assent. But surely courage, I went on, is the opposite of cowardice. Yes. Then the wisdom that knows what is and what is not dreadful is opposed to the ignorance of these things? To this he could still nod assent. And the ignorance of them is cowardice? To this he nodded very reluctantly. So the wisdom that knows what is and what is not dreadful is courage, being opposed to the ignorance of these things? Here he could no longer bring himself to nod agreement, and remained silent. Then I proceeded: Why is it, Protagoras, that you neither affirm nor deny what I ask you? Finish it, he said, by yourself. I must first ask you, I said, just one more question: Do you still think, as at the beginning, that there are any people who are most ignorant and yet most courageous? I see, Socrates, you have set your heart on making me your answerer; so, to oblige you, I will say that by what we have admitted I consider it impossible. My only motive, I then said, in asking all these questions has been a desire to examine the various relations of virtue

and its own special nature.

For I know that, were it once made plain, that other question on which you and I have argued at such length on either side—you maintaining and I denying that virtue can be taught—would be cleared up satisfactorily. Our discussion, in its present result, seems to me as though it accused and mocked us like some human person; if it were given a voice it would say: What strange creatures you are, Socrates and Protagoras! You on the one hand, after having said at first that virtue cannot be taught, are now hot in opposition to yourself, endeavoring to prove that all things are knowledge—justice, temperance, and courage—which is the best way to make virtue appear teachable: for if virtue were anything else than knowledge, as Protagoras tried to make out, obviously it would not be teachable; but if as a matter of fact it turns out to be entirely knowledge, as you urge, Socrates, I shall be surprised if it is not teachable. Protagoras, on the other hand, though at first he claimed that it was teachable, now seems as eager for the opposite, declaring that it has been found to be almost anything but knowledge, which would make it quite unteachable! Now I, Protagoras, observing the extraordinary tangle into which we have managed to get the whole matter, am most anxious to have it thoroughly cleared up. And I should like to work our way through it until at last we reach what virtue is, and then go back and consider whether it is teachable or not, lest perchance your Epimetheus beguile and trip us up in our investigation as he overlooked us in your account of his distribution. I like the Prometheus of your fable better than the Epimetheus; for he is of use to me, and I take Promethean thought continually for my own life when I am occupied with all these questions; so, with your consent, as I said at the beginning, I should be delighted to have your aid in the inquiry. I approve your zeal, Socrates, said Protagoras, and the way you develop your arguments; for I think I am not ill-natured, and I am the last person on earth to be envious. Indeed I have told many people how I regard you—as the man I admire far above any that I meet, and as quite an exception to men of your age; and I say I should not be surprised if you won high repute for wisdom. We shall pursue the subject on some other occasion, at your pleasure: for the present, it is time to turn to another affair.

I quite agree, said I, if you think so: for I was long ago due to be where I told you I was going; I stayed merely to oblige our excellent Callias. Here our

colloquy ended, and each went his way.