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PLATO

IV



PLATO

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

IV

LACHES PROTAGORAS MENO
EUTHYDEMUS

BY

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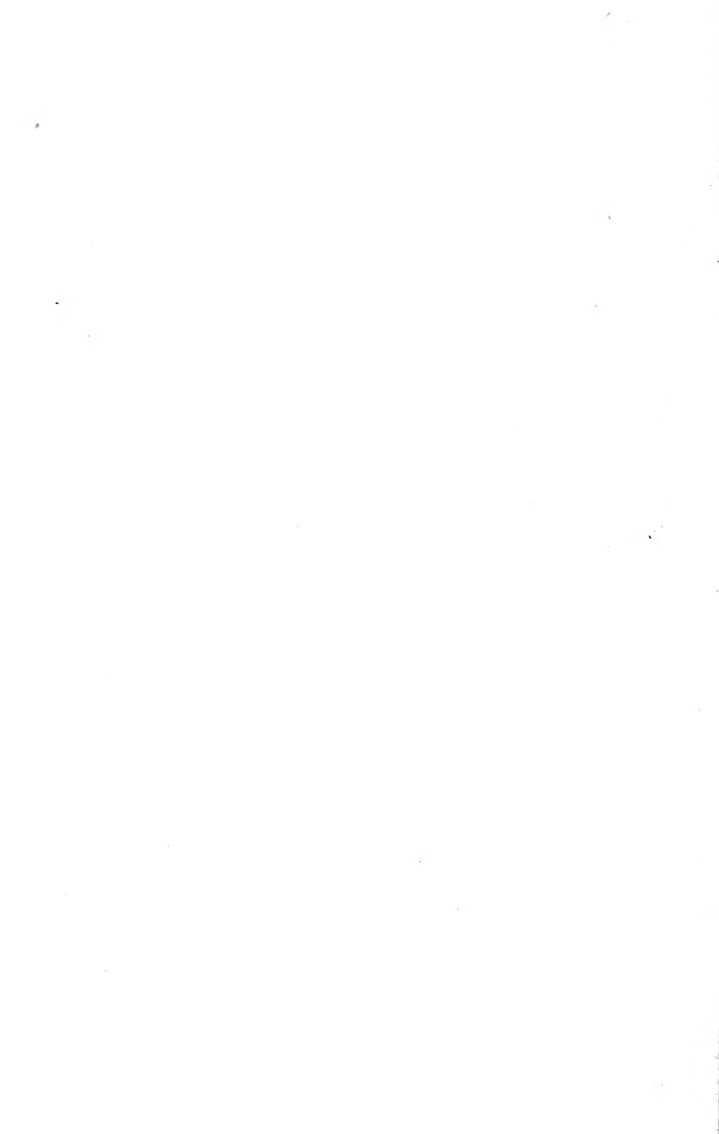
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PREFACE

THE Greek text in this volume is based on the recension of Schanz: a certain number of emendations by other scholars have been adopted, and these are noted as they occur.

The special introductions are intended merely to prepare the reader for the general character and purpose of each dialogue.

W. R. M. LAMB.



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INTRODUCTION TO THE *MENO*

THE *Meno* takes up the question which the *Protagoras* left waiting for an answer—Can virtue be taught? This dialogue proceeds in the direct dramatic form, without descriptive introduction or connecting narrative, and in a series of five scenes we are shown the various resources of Socratic method in a determined attempt to solve that important problem. Thus (1) (70 A–80 D) we find that the first requisite for progress in the search is a definition of virtue; (2) (80 D–86 C) the inquiry is shifted to the origin of knowledge, which is demonstrated, by an experiment on one of Meno's young attendants, to be latent in us, and recoverable by the proper stimulation of our memory; (3) (86 C–90 B) we return to the question of what virtue is, and while it appears to be teachable we are faced with the awkward fact that it has no real teachers—it is not taught; (4) (90 B–95 A) Anytus, the typical man of affairs, is convicted of error in his reliance on convention and common sense; and lastly (5) (95 A–100 B) Socrates discusses with Meno the relation of knowledge, in which virtue must somehow consist, to the true opinion which guides practical men along the right path in everyday life.

The first two of these scenes are preparatory: they point out that by some means or other we must

INTRODUCTION TO THE *MENO*

obtain a definition of the thing itself—virtue—on which our inquiry is bent, and then we are given a specimen of the method by which we are most likely to acquire such a piece of real knowledge. With these two lessons in mind, we return to the question as it stood at the end of the *Protagoras*, and come to grips once more with that great defaulter—the received system of education. The only hope of finding our way to the truth for which we are groping seems to lie in a study of the instinctive opinion which occasionally guides men of superior character to the right course of action, and in a comparison of this “inspired” thought—which has helped us already (81) towards the educational principle of “recollection”—with the reasoned knowledge which we may look to as an abiding and unfailing support to ourselves and as a power that we can transmit to others.

The sane and profound wisdom which moves beneath the whole discussion is as remarkable as the clearness and acuteness of its argumentation. The detection of insufficiency in existing modes of instruction, and the recognition of rightness in certain high examples of conduct, are marked by a gentle humour and a breadth of vision and sympathy which doubtless distinguished the actual Socrates: the purpose to which those points are applied—of turning our gaze to a higher level of education and a surer basis of all thought and action—is derived indeed from the Master, but brought into full flower, with promise of later fruit, by the personal ardour and art of Plato. We feel the splendid determination of a new master-mind; and although his attempt at a deeper probing of the question has

INTRODUCTION TO THE *MENO*

to be given up for the present without an answer, we are subtly prepared for the ambitious elaboration and demonstration of the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*.

Besides this main impression, the *Meno* has many subsidiary interests. The sophists Protagoras and Gorgias are referred to with respect, though their teaching is proved to be seriously defective. We find here (81) perhaps the first, because so tentative and diffident, statement in Plato of the soul's experience of previous existence, and its present possession of a sort of latent or suppressed knowledge of general notions, which has to be elicited and revived by methodical inquiry. We have also (79) an account of the effect of Socrates' conversations upon his disciples, which is a useful counterpart and complement to the excited rhapsody of Alcibiades in the *Symposium* (215); while the humorous, mystifying modesty of Socrates in ascribing his highest beliefs to converse with poets, priests, and priestesses (81) is of a piece with his manner in the *Symposium* and elsewhere. Finally we should notice the suddenness of Anytus' appearance on the scene, and his abrupt exit: remembering that he was afterwards the accuser of Socrates, and observing the language and tone of his warning to that reckless critic of the democracy, we must conclude that Plato contrived the episode with the deliberate purpose of showing that he did not blame any single person for his beloved Master's death, but cherished a nobler grudge against a world that was politically and intellectually out of joint. He thus brings us almost unawares to the edge of the rift which was opening in his mind between philosophy and the ordinary life of affairs: we see it gaping

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wide and grim in the *Gorgias*; when we come to the *Republic*, it is a well-known gulf, to be carefully measured and mapped.

Meno was a young Thessalian of noble and wealthy family. He is supposed here to be on a visit to Athens about 402 B.C., three years before the death of Socrates. He has acquired some literary and scientific knowledge by association with Gorgias, who spent his last few years in Thessaly. He took part as a general in the great march of the Ten Thousand with Cyrus in 401 B.C. Xenophon depicts him in the *Anabasis* as greedy, self-seeking and treacherous. Plato shows us his pleasanter side, though we find here that he is rather conceited and lacking in self-control (76 A, 80 B, c, 86 D).

The *Meno* has been edited, with ample introduction and notes, by E. S. Thompson (Macmillan, 1901).

ΜΕΝΩΝ

[Η ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΕΤΗΣ · ΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΙΚΟΣ]

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΜΕΝΩΝ, ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ, ΠΑΙΣ ΜΕΝΩΝΟΣ, ΑΝΤΟΣ

St. II.
p. 70
ΜΕΝ. Ἐχεις μοι εἰπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἄρα διδακτὸν ἢ ἀρετῆ; ἢ οὐ διδακτὸν ἀλλ' ἀσκητὸν; ἢ οὔτε ἀσκητὸν οὔτε μαθητὸν, ἀλλὰ φύσει παραγίνεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἄλλω τινὶ τρόπῳ;

ΣΩ. ὦ Μένων, πρὸ τοῦ μὲν Θετταλοὶ εὐδόκιμοι ἦσαν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησι καὶ ἐθαυμάζοντο ἐφ' ἵππικῇ τε καὶ πλούτῳ, νῦν δέ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, καὶ ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ, καὶ οὐχ ἦκιστα οἱ τοῦ σοῦ ἐταίρου Ἀριστίππου πολῖται Λαρισαῖοι. τούτου δὲ ὑμῖν αἰτιὸς ἐστὶ Γοργίας· ἀφικόμενος γὰρ εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐραστὰς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ εἴληφεν Ἀλευαδῶν τε τοὺς πρώτους, ὧν ὁ σὸς ἐραστής ἐστὶν Ἀρίστιππος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Θετταλῶν· καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔθος ὑμᾶς εἴθικεν, ἀφόβως τε καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἐάν τις τι ἔρηται, ὥσπερ
C εἰκὸς τοὺς εἰδότας, ἅτε καὶ αὐτὸς παρέχων αὐτὸν ἐρωτᾶν τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλομένῳ ὅ τι ἂν τις βούληται, καὶ οὐδενὶ ὄτῳ οὐκ ἀποκρινόμενος. ἐν-
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MENO

[OR ON VIRTUE: TESTING]

CHARACTERS

MENO, SOCRATES, MENO'S BOY, ANYTUS

MEN. Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue can be taught, or is acquired by practice, not teaching? Or if neither by practice nor by learning, whether it comes to mankind by nature or in some other way?

SOC. Meno, of old the Thessalians were famous and admired among the Greeks for their riding and their riches; but now they have a name, I believe, for wisdom also, especially your friend Aristippus's people, the Larisaeans. For this you have to thank Gorgias; for when he came to that city he made the leading men of the Aleuadae—among them your lover Aristippus—and the Thessalians generally enamoured of wisdom. Nay more, he has given you the regular habit of answering any chance question in a fearless, magnificent manner, as befits those who know: for he sets the example of offering himself to be questioned by any Greek who chooses, and on any point one likes, and he has an answer for everybody. Now in this place, my dear Meno,

θάδε δέ, ὦ φίλε Μένων, τὸ ἐναντίον περιέστηκεν·
 71 ὥσπερ αὐχμός τις τῆς σοφίας γέγονεν, καὶ κιν-
 δυνεύει ἐκ τῶνδε τῶν τόπων παρ' ὑμᾶς οἴχεσθαι
 ἢ σοφία· εἰ γοῦν τινὰ ἐθέλεις οὕτως ἐρέσθαι τῶν
 ἐνθάδε, οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ γελάσεται καὶ ἐρεῖ· ὦ
 ξένε, κινδυνεύω σοι δοκεῖν μακάριός τις εἶναι,
 ἀρετὴν γοῦν εἶτε διδακτὸν εἶθ' ὅτῳ τρόπῳ παρα-
 γίγνεται εἰδέναί· ἐγὼ δὲ τοσοῦτον δέω εἶτε
 διδακτὸν εἶτε μὴ διδακτὸν εἰδέναί, ὥστ' οὐδὲ αὐτό,
 ὃ τι ποτ' ἐστὶ τὸ παράπαν ἀρετῆ, τυγχάνω εἰδῶς.

B Ἐγὼ οὖν καὶ αὐτός, ὦ Μένων, οὕτως ἔχω· συμ-
 πένομαι τοῖς πολίταις τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, καὶ
 ἐμαυτὸν καταμέμφομαι ὡς οὐκ εἰδῶς περὶ ἀρετῆς
 τὸ παράπαν· ὃ δὲ μὴ οἶδα τί ἐστὶ, πῶς ἂν ὁποῖόν
 γέ τι εἰδείην; ἢ δοκεῖ σοι οἶόν τε εἶναι, ὅστις
 Μένωνα μὴ γιγνώσκει τὸ παράπαν ὅστις ἐστὶ;
 τοῦτον εἰδέναί εἶτε καλὸς εἶτε πλούσιος εἶτε καὶ
 γενναῖός ἐστιν, εἶτε καὶ τὰναντία τούτων; δοκεῖ
 σοι οἶόν τ' εἶναι;

MEN. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε. ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες,
 C ἀληθῶς οὐδ' ὃ τι ἀρετῆ ἐστὶν οἶσθα, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα
 περὶ σοῦ καὶ οἴκαδε ἀπαγγέλλωμεν;

ΣΩ. Μὴ μόνον γε, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτι οὐδ'
 ἄλλῳ πω ἐνέτυχον εἰδοῖ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκῶ.

MEN. Τί δέ; Γοργία οὐκ ἐνέτυχες ὅτε ἐνθάδε
 ἦν;

ΣΩ. Ἐγωγε.

MEN. Εἶτα οὐκ ἐδόκει σοι εἰδέναί;

ΣΩ. Οὐ πάνυ εἰμὶ μνήμων, ὦ Μένων, ὥστε
 οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ἐν τῷ παρόντι, πῶς μοι τότε
 ἔδοξεν. ἀλλ' ἴσως ἐκεῖνός τε οἶδε, καὶ σὺ ἂ

D ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγεν· ἀνάμνησον οὖν με, πῶς ἔλεγεν.
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MENO

we have a contrary state of things : a drought of wisdom, as it were, has come on ; and it seems as though wisdom had deserted our borders in favour of yours. You have only to ask one of our people a question such as that, and he will be sure to laugh and say : Stranger, you must think me a specially favoured mortal, to be able to tell whether virtue can be taught, or in what way it comes to one : so far am I from knowing whether it can be taught or not, that I actually do not even know what the thing itself, virtue, is at all.

And I myself, Meno, am in the same case ; I share my townsmen's poverty in this matter : I have to reproach myself with an utter ignorance about virtue ; and if I do not know what a thing is, how can I know what its nature may be ? Or do you imagine it possible, if one has no cognisance at all of Meno, that one could know whether he is handsome or rich or noble, or the reverse of these ? Do you suppose that one could ?

MEN. Not I. But is it true, Socrates, that you do not even know what virtue is ? Are we to return home with this report of you ?

soc. Not only this, my friend, but also that I never yet came across anybody who did know, in my opinion.

MEN. What ? You did not meet Gorgias when he was here ?

soc. I did.

MEN. And you didn't consider that he knew ?

soc. I have not a very good memory, Meno, so I cannot tell at the moment how he struck me then. It may be that he did know, and that you know what he said : remind me therefore how he expressed

εἰ δὲ βούλει, αὐτὸς εἰπέ· δοκεῖ γὰρ δήπου σοὶ ἄπερ ἐκείνω.

ΜΕΝ. Ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. Ἐκείνον μὲν τοίνυν ἐώμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἄπεστιν· σὺ δὲ αὐτός, ὧ πρὸς θεῶν, Μένων, τί φῆς ἀρετὴν εἶναι; εἶπον καὶ μὴ φθονήσης, ἵνα εὐτυχέστατον ψεῦσμα ἐψευσμένος ὦ, ἂν φανῆς σὺ μὲν εἰδὼς καὶ Γοργίας, ἐγὼ δὲ εἰρηκῶς μηδενὶ πώποτε εἰδότι ἐντετυχηκέναί.

Ε ΜΕΝ. Ἄλλ' οὐ χαλεπὸν, ὧ Σώκρατες, εἰπεῖν. πρῶτον μὲν, εἰ βούλει ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν, ῥάδιον, ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴ, ἱκανὸν εἶναι τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράττειν, καὶ πράττοντα τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς, καὶ αὐτὸν εὐλαβεῖσθαι μηδὲν τοιοῦτον παθεῖν. εἰ δὲ βούλει γυναικὸς ἀρετὴν, οὐ χαλεπὸν διελθεῖν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὴν τὴν οἰκίαν εὖ οἰκεῖν, σῶζουσάν τε τὰ ἔνδον καὶ κατήκοον οὔσαν τοῦ ἀνδρός. καὶ ἄλλη ἐστὶ παιδὸς ἀρετὴ, καὶ θηλείας καὶ ἄρρενος, καὶ πρεσβυτέρου ἀνδρός, εἰ μὲν βούλει, ἐλευθέρου, εἰ δὲ 72 βούλει, δούλου. καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι ἀρεταὶ εἰσιν, ὥστε οὐκ ἀπορία εἰπεῖν ἀρετῆς περί ὃ τι ἔστι· καθ' ἐκάστην γὰρ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῶν ἡλικιωῶν πρὸς ἕκαστον ἔργον ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἢ ἀρετὴ ἐστίν· ὡσαύτως δέ, οἶμαι, ὧ Σώκρατες, καὶ ἡ κακία.

ΣΩ. Πολλῇ γέ τιμι εὐτυχία ἔοικα κεχρηῆσθαι, ὧ Μένων, εἰ μίαν ζητῶν ἀρετὴν σμῆνός τι ἀνηύρηκα ἀρετῶν παρὰ σοὶ κειμένων. ἀτάρ, ὧ Μένων, κατὰ ταύτην τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν περὶ τὰ Β σμῆνη, εἴ μου ἐρομένου μελίττης περὶ οὐσίας

MENO

it ; or if you like, make your own statement, for I expect you share his views.

MEN. I do.

SOC. Then let us pass him over, since in fact he is not present, and do you tell me, in heaven's name, what is your own account of virtue. Speak out frankly, that I may find myself the victim of a most fortunate falsehood, if you and Gorgias prove to have knowledge of it, while I have said that I never yet came across anyone who had.

MEN. Why, there is no difficulty, Socrates, in telling. First of all, if you take the virtue of a man, it is easily stated that a man's virtue is this—that he be competent to manage the affairs of his city, and to manage them so as to benefit his friends and harm his enemies, and to take care to avoid suffering harm himself. Or take a woman's virtue : there is no difficulty in describing it as the duty of ordering the house well, looking after the property indoors, and obeying her husband. And the child has another virtue—one for the female, and one for the male ; and there is another for elderly men—one, if you like, for freemen, and yet another for slaves. And there are very many other virtues besides, so that one cannot be at a loss to explain what virtue is ; for it is according to each activity and age that every one of us, in whatever we do, has his virtue ; and the same, I take it, Socrates, will hold also of vice.

SOC. I seem to be in a most lucky way, Meno ; for in seeking one virtue I have discovered a whole swarm of virtues there in your keeping. Now, Meno, to follow this figure of a swarm, suppose I should ask you what is the real nature of the bee,

PLATO

ὁ τί ποτ' ἔστι, πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς ἔλεγεσ
αὐτὰς εἶναι, τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω μοι, εἴ σε ἠρόμην·
ἄρα τούτῳ φῆς πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς εἶναι
καὶ διαφερούσας ἀλλήλων, τῷ μελίττας εἶναι;
ἢ τούτῳ μὲν οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν, ἄλλῳ δέ τῳ,
οἷον ἢ κάλλει ἢ μεγέθει ἢ ἄλλῳ τῷ τῶν τοιούτων;
εἰπέ, τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω οὕτως ἐρωτηθεῖς;

MEN. Τοῦτ' ἔγωγε, ὅτι οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν,
ἢ μέλιτται εἰσίν, ἢ ἑτέρα τῆς ἑτέρας.

C ΣΩ. Εἰ οὖν εἶπον μετὰ ταῦτα· τοῦτο τοίνυν
μοι αὐτὸ εἰπέ, ὦ Μένων· ὦ οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν
ἀλλὰ ταυτόν εἰσιν ἅπασαι, τί τοῦτο φῆς εἶναι;
εἶχες δήπου ἂν τί μοι εἰπεῖν;

MEN. Ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν· κἄν εἰ
πολλαὶ καὶ παντοδαπαὶ εἰσιν, ἐν γέ τι εἶδος ταυτόν
ἅπασαι ἔχουσι, δι' ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί, εἰς ὃ καλῶς
που ἔχει ἀποβλέψαντα τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ
ἐρωτήσαντι ἐκεῖνο δηλῶσαι, ὃ τυγχάνει οὐσα
D ἀρετή· ἢ οὐ μανθάνεις ὃ τι λέγω;

MEN. Δοκῶ γέ μοι μανθάνειν· οὐ μέντοι ὡς
βούλομαί γέ πω κατέχω τὸ ἐρωτώμενον.

ΣΩ. Πότερον δὲ περὶ ἀρετῆς μόνον σοι οὕτω
δοκεῖ, ὦ Μένων, ἄλλη μὲν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι, ἄλλη δὲ
γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἢ καὶ περὶ ὑγείας καὶ
περὶ μεγέθους καὶ περὶ ἰσχύος ὡσαύτως; ἄλλη
μὲν ἀνδρὸς δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι ὑγεία, ἄλλη δὲ γυναι-
E ὑγεία ἢ, ἕαντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ ἕαντε ἐν ἄλλῳ ὄψοῦν ἢ;

MENO

and you replied that there are many different kinds of bees, and I rejoined : Do you say it is by being bees that they are of many and various kinds and differ from each other, or does their difference lie not in that, but in something else—for example, in their beauty or size or some other quality ? Tell me, what would be your answer to this question ?

MEN. Why, this—that they do not differ, as bees, the one from the other.

soc. And if I went on to say : Well now, there is this that I want you to tell me, Meno : what do you call the quality by which they do not differ, but are all alike ? You could find me an answer, I presume ?

MEN. I could.

soc. And likewise also with the virtues, however many and various they may be, they all have one common character whereby they are virtues, and on which one would of course be wise to keep an eye when one is giving a definitive answer to the question of what virtue really is. You take my meaning, do you not ?

MEN. My impression is that I do ; but still I do not yet grasp the meaning of the question as I could wish.

soc. Is it only in the case of virtue, do you think, Meno, that one can say there is one kind belonging to a man, another to a woman, and so on with the rest, or is it just the same, too, in the case of health and size and strength ? Do you consider that there is one health for a man, and another for a woman ? Or, wherever we find health, is it of the same character universally, in a man or in anyone else ?

PLATO

MEN. Ἡ αὐτὴ μοι δοκεῖ ὑγίειά γε εἶναι καὶ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικός.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ μέγεθος καὶ ἰσχὺς; εἴανπερ ἰσχυρὰ γυνὴ ἦ, τῷ αὐτῷ εἶδει καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ ἰσχυῖ ἰσχυρὰ ἔσται; τὸ γὰρ τῇ αὐτῇ τοῦτο λέγω· οὐδὲν διαφέρει πρὸς τὸ ἰσχυρὸς εἶναι ἢ ἰσχύς, εἴαντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ ἦ εἴαντε ἐν γυναικί· ἢ δοκεῖ τί σοι διαφέρειν;

MEN. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

73 ΣΩ. Ἡ δὲ ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὸ ἀρετὴ εἶναι διοίσει τι, εἴαντε ἐν παιδί ἦ εἴαντε ἐν πρεσβύτῃ, εἴαντε ἐν γυναικί εἴαντε ἐν ἀνδρί;

MEN. Ἐμοιγέ πως δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο οὐκέτι ὁμοιον εἶναι τοῖς ἄλλοις τούτοις.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; οὐκ ἀνδρὸς μὲν ἀρετὴν ἔλεγες πόλιν εὖ διοικεῖν, γυναικὸς δὲ οἰκίαν;

MEN. Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ἄρ' οὖν οἷόν τε εὖ διοικεῖν ἢ πόλιν ἢ οἰκίαν ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν, μὴ σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως διοικοῦντα;

B MEN. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἄνπερ δικαίως καὶ σωφρόνως διοικῶσι, δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη διοικήσουσιν;

MEN. Ἀνάγκη.

ΣΩ. Τῶν αὐτῶν ἄρα ἀμφοτέροι δέονται, εἴπερ μέλλουσιν ἀγαθοὶ εἶναι, καὶ ἢ γυνὴ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ, δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης.

MEN. Φαίνονται.

ΣΩ. Τί δὲ παῖς καὶ πρεσβύτης; μῶν ἀκόλαστοι ὄντες καὶ ἄδικοι ἀγαθοὶ ἂν ποτε γένοιντο;

MEN. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ σώφρονες καὶ δίκαιοι;

MENO

MEN. I think that health is the same, both in man and in woman.

soc. Then is it not so with size and strength also? If a woman is strong, she will be strong by reason of the same form and the same strength; by "the same" I mean that strength does not differ as strength, whether it be in a man or in a woman. Or do you think there is any difference?

MEN. I do not.

soc. And will virtue, as virtue, differ at all whether it be in a child or in an elderly person, in a woman or in a man?

MEN. I feel somehow, Socrates, that here we cease to be on the same ground as in those other cases.

soc. Why? Were you not saying that a man's virtue is to manage a state well, and a woman's a house?

MEN. I was.

soc. And is it possible to manage a state well, or a house, or anything at all, if you do not manage it temperately and justly?

MEN. Surely not.

soc. Then whoever manages temperately and justly will manage with temperance and justice?

MEN. That must be.

soc. Then both the woman and the man require the same qualities of justice and temperance, if they are to be good.

MEN. Evidently.

soc. And what of a child or an old man? Can they ever hope to be good if they are intemperate and unjust?

MEN. Surely not.

soc. Only if they are temperate and just?

PLATO

MEN. Ναί.

C ΣΩ. Πάντες ἄρ' ἄνθρωποι τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ ἀγαθοὶ εἰσι· τῶν αὐτῶν γὰρ τυχόντες ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται.

MEN. Ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκ ἂν δήπου, εἴ γε μὴ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ἦν αὐτῶν, τῷ αὐτῷ ἂν τρόπῳ ἀγαθοὶ ἦσαν.

MEN. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ πάντων ἐστὶ, πειρῶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀναμνησθῆναι, τί αὐτὸ φησι Γοργίας εἶναι καὶ σὺ μετ' ἐκείνου.

D MEN. Τί ἄλλο γ' ἢ ἄρχειν οἷόν τ' εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων; εἴπερ ἔν γέ τι ζητεῖς κατὰ πάντων.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλὰ μὴν ζητῶ γε. ἀλλ' ἄρα καὶ παιδὸς ἢ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ, ὧ Μένων, καὶ δούλου, ἄρχειν οἷω τε εἶναι τοῦ δεσπότου, καὶ δοκεῖ σοι ἔτι ἂν δούλος εἶναι ὁ ἄρχων;

MEN. Οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ, ὧ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Οὐ γὰρ εἰκός, ὧ ἄριστε. ἔτι γὰρ καὶ τὸδε σκόπει· ἄρχειν φῆς οἷόν τ' εἶναι· οὐ προσθήσομεν αὐτόσε τὸ δικαίως, ἀδίκως δὲ μῆ;

MEN. Οἶμαι ἔγωγε· ἡ γὰρ δικαιοσύνη, ὧ Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ ἐστίν.

E ΣΩ. Πότερον ἀρετὴ, ὧ Μένων, ἢ ἀρετὴ τις;

MEN. Πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις;

ΣΩ. Ὡς περὶ ἄλλου ὄτουου· οἷον, εἰ βούλει, στρογγυλότητος πέρι εἴπομι' ἂν ἔγωγε, ὅτι σχῆμά τί ἐστίν, οὐχ οὕτως ἀπλῶς ὅτι σχῆμα. διὰ ταῦτα δὲ οὕτως ἂν εἴπομι, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα ἔστι σχήματα.

MEN. Ὅρθως γε λέγων σύ, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐγὼ λέγω οὐ μόνον δικαιοσύνην ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλας εἶναι ἀρετάς.

MENO

MEN. Yes.

soc. So all mankind are good in the same way ; for they become good when they acquire the same qualities.

MEN. So it seems.

soc. And I presume, if they had not the same virtue, they would not be good in the same way.

MEN. No, indeed.

soc. Seeing then that it is the same virtue in all cases, try and tell me, if you can recollect, what Gorgias—and you in agreement with him—say it is.

MEN. Simply that it is the power of governing mankind—if you want some single description to cover all cases.

soc. That is just what I am after. But is virtue the same in a child, Meno, and in a slave—an ability to govern each his master ? And do you think he who governed would still be a slave ?

MEN. I should say certainly not, Socrates.

soc. No, indeed, it would be unlikely, my excellent friend. And again, consider this further point : you say it is “ to be able to govern ” ; shall we not add to that—“ justly, not unjustly ” ?

MEN. Yes, I think so ; for justice, Socrates, is virtue.

soc. Virtue, Meno, or a virtue ?

MEN. What do you mean by that ?

soc. What I would in any other case. To take roundness, for instance ; I should call it a figure, and not figure pure and simple. And I should name it so because there are other figures as well.

MEN. You would be quite right—just as I say there are other virtues besides justice.

74 ΣΩ. Τίνας ταύτας; εἶπέ· οἶον καὶ ἐγὼ σοὶ εἶπομι ἂν καὶ ἄλλα σχήματα, εἴ με κελεύοις· καὶ σὺ οὖν ἐμοὶ εἶπέ ἄλλας ἀρετάς.

MEN. Ἡ ἀνδρεία τοίνυν ἐμοίγε δοκεῖ ἀρετὴ εἶναι καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ σοφία καὶ μεγαλοπρέπεια καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι.

ΣΩ. Πάλιν, ὦ Μένων, ταῦτὸν πεπόνθαμεν· πολλὰς αὖ ἠύρηκαμεν ἀρετὰς μίαν ζητοῦντες, ἄλλον τρόπον ἢ νυνδὴ· τὴν δὲ μίαν, ἣ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἐστίν, οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀνευρεῖν.

B MEN. Οὐ γὰρ δύναμαί πω, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὡς σὺ ζητεῖς, μίαν ἀρετὴν λαβεῖν κατὰ πάντων, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις.

ΣΩ. Εἰκότως γε· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ προθυμήσομαι, ἂν οἴός τ' ὦ, ἡμᾶς προβιβάσαι. μανθάνεις γὰρ πω, ὅτι οὕτωσὶ ἔχει περὶ παντός· εἴ τίς σε ἀνέροιτο τοῦτο, ὃ νυνδὴ ἐγὼ ἔλεγον, τί ἐστὶ σχῆμα, ὦ Μένων; εἰ αὐτῷ εἶπες ὅτι στρογγυλότης, εἴ σοι εἶπεν ἄπερ ἐγὼ, πότερον σχῆμα ἢ στρογγυλότης ἐστὶν ἢ σχῆμά τι; εἶπες δήπου ἂν ὅτι σχῆμά τι.

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

C ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν διὰ ταῦτα, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα ἐστὶ σχήματα;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Καὶ εἴ γε προσانهρώτα σε ὁποῖα, ἔλεγες ἂν;

MEN. Ἐγώ γε.

ΣΩ. Καὶ αὖ εἰ περὶ χρώματος ὡσαύτως ἀνῆρετο ὃ τι ἐστὶ, καὶ εἰπόντος σου, ὅτι τὸ λευκόν, μετὰ ταῦτα ὑπέλαβεν ὁ ἐρωτῶν, πότερον τὸ λευκὸν χρώμά ἐστὶν ἢ χρώμά τι; εἶπες ἂν ὅτι χρώμά τι, διότι καὶ ἄλλα τυγχάνει ὄντα;

MENO

soc. What are they? Tell me. In the same way as I can tell you of other figures, if you request me, so do you tell me of other virtues.

MEN. Well then, courage, I consider, is a virtue, and temperance, and wisdom, and loftiness of mind; and there are a great many others.

soc. Once more, Meno, we are in the same plight: again we have found a number of virtues when we were looking for one, though not in the same way as we did just now; but the one that runs through them all, this we are not able to find.

MEN. No, for I am not yet able, Socrates, to follow your line of search, and find a single virtue common to all, as one can in other cases.

soc. And no wonder; but I will make an effort, so far as I can, to help us onward. You understand, of course, that this principle of mine applies to everything: if someone asked you the question I put to you just now: What is figure, Meno? and you replied: Roundness; and then he said, as I did: Is roundness figure or a figure? I suppose you would answer: A figure.

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And for this reason—that there are other figures as well?

MEN. Yes.

soc. And if he went on to ask you of what sort they were, you would tell him?

MEN. I would.

soc. And if he asked likewise what colour is, and on your answering "white" your questioner then rejoined: Is "white" colour or a colour? your reply would be: A colour; because there are other colours besides.

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MEN. Ἐγωγε.

σν. Καὶ εἴ γέ σε ἐκέλευε λέγειν ἄλλα χρώματα,
D ἔλεγες ἂν ἄλλα, ἃ οὐδὲν ἦττον τυγχάνει ὄντα χρώ-
ματα τοῦ λευκοῦ;

MEN. Ναί.

σν. Εἰ οὖν ὥσπερ ἐγὼ μετῆει τὸν λόγον,
καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι αἰεὶ εἰς πολλὰ ἀφικνούμεθα, ἀλλὰ
μή μοι οὕτως, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τὰ πολλὰ ταῦτα ἐνί
τινι προσαγορεύεις ὀνόματι, καὶ φῆς οὐδὲν αὐτῶν
ὅ τι οὐ σχῆμα εἶναι, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ ἐναντία ὄντα
ἀλλήλοις, ὅ τι ἔστι τοῦτο, ὃ οὐδὲν ἦττον κατέχει
E καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῆς τὸ στρογγύλον σχῆμα εἶναι
ἢ τὸ εὐθύ; ἢ οὐχ οὕτω λέγεις;

MEN. Ἐγωγε.

σν. Ἄρ' οὖν, ὅταν οὕτω λέγῃς, τότε οὐδὲν
μᾶλλον φῆς τὸ στρογγύλον εἶναι στρογγύλον ἢ
εὐθύ, οὐδὲ τὸ εὐθὺ εὐθὺ ἢ στρογγύλον;

MEN. Οὐ δήπου, ὦ Σώκρατες.

σν. Ἀλλὰ μὴν σχῆμά γε οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῆς
εἶναι τὸ στρογγύλον τοῦ εὐθέος, οὐδὲ τὸ ἕτερον
τοῦ ἐτέρου.

MEN. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

σν. Τί ποτε οὖν τοῦτο, οὐ τοῦτο ὀνομά ἐστι,
τὸ σχῆμα; πειρῶ λέγειν. εἰ οὖν τῷ ἐρωτῶντι
75 οὕτως ἢ περὶ σχήματος ἢ χρώματος εἶπες ὅτι
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μαθάνω ἔγωγε ὅ τι βούλει, ὦ ἄνθρωπε,
οὐδὲ οἶδα ὅ τι λέγεις· ἴσως ἂν ἐθαύμασε καὶ
εἶπεν· οὐ μαθάνεις, ὅτι ζητῶ τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τούτοις
ταῦτόν; ἢ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὦ Μένων, ἔχouis ἂν

MENO

MEN. It would.

soc. And if he bade you mention other colours, you would tell him of others that are colours just as much as white ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. Now suppose that, like me, he pursued the argument and said: We are always arriving at a variety of things, but let me have no more of that: since you call these many things by one single name, and say they are figures, every one of them, even when they are opposed to one another, tell me what is that which comprises round and straight alike, and which you call figure—including straight equally with round under that term. For that is your statement, is it not ?

MEN. It is.

soc. And in making it, do you mean to say that round is no more round than straight, or straight no more straight than round ?

MEN. No, to be sure, Socrates.

soc. What you mean is that the round shape is no more a figure than the straight, or the straight than the round.

MEN. Quite right.

soc. Then what can this thing be, which bears the name of figure ? Try and tell me. Suppose that, on being asked this question by someone, either about figure or about colour, you had replied: Why, I don't so much as understand what you want, sir, or even know what you are saying: he might well have shown surprise, and said: Do you not understand that I am looking for that which is the same common element in all these things ? Or would you still be unable to reply, Meno, if you were

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εἰπεῖν, εἴ τις ἐρωτῶη· τί ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τῷ στρογγύλῳ καὶ εὐθεῖ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἃ δὴ σχήματα καλεῖς, ταῦτόν ἐπὶ πᾶσι; πειρῶ εἰπεῖν, ἵνα καὶ γένηταί σοι μελέτη πρὸς τὴν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπόκρισιν.

B MEN. Μὴ, ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰπέ.

ΣΩ. Βούλει σοι χαρίσωμαι;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ἐθελήσεις οὖν καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς;

MEN. Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Προθυμητέον τοίνυν· ἄξιον γάρ.

MEN. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Φέρε δὴ, πειρώμεθά σοι εἰπεῖν, τί ἐστὶ σχῆμα. σκόπει οὖν εἰ τόδε ἀποδέχη αὐτὸ εἶναι· ἔστω γὰρ δὴ ἡμῖν τοῦτο σχῆμα, ὃ μόνον τῶν ὄντων τυγχάνει χρώματι αἰεὶ ἐπόμενον. ἱκανῶς σοι, ἢ ἄλλως πως ζητεῖς; ἐγὼ γὰρ κἂν οὕτως ἀγαπῶν εἴ μοι ἀρετὴν εἴποις.

C MEN. Ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε εὐήθες, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Πῶς λέγεις;

MEN. Ὅτι σχῆμά πού ἐστι κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον, ὃ αἰεὶ χροῶν ἔπεται. εἶεν· εἰ δὲ δὴ τὴν χροῶν τις μὴ φαίη εἶδέναι, ἀλλὰ ὡσαύτως ἀποροῖ ὥσπερ περὶ τοῦ σχήματος, τί ἂν οἶε σοι ἀποκεκρίσθαι;

ΣΩ. Τάληθῆ ἔγωγε· καὶ εἰ μὲν γε τῶν σοφῶν τις εἴη καὶ ἐριστικῶν τε καὶ ἀγωνιστικῶν ὁ

D ἐρόμενος, εἴποιμ' ἂν αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐμοὶ μὲν εἶρηται· εἰ δὲ μὴ ὀρθῶς λέγω, σὸν ἔργον λαμβάνειν λόγον καὶ ἐλέγχειν. εἰ δὲ ὥσπερ ἐγὼ τε καὶ σὺ νυνὶ φίλοι ὄντες βούλοιντο ἀλλήλοις διαλέγεσθαι, δεῖ

MENO

approached on other terms, and were asked: What is it that is common to the round and the straight and everything else that you call figures—the same in all? Try and tell me; it will be good practice for your answer about virtue.

MEN. No, it is you who must answer, Socrates.

SOC. You wish me to do you the favour?

MEN. By all means.

SOC. And then you will agree to take your turn and answer me on virtue?

MEN. I will.

SOC. Well then, I must make the effort, for it is worth our while.

MEN. Certainly.

SOC. Come now, let me try and tell you what figure is. Just consider if you accept this description of it: figure, let us say, is the only existing thing that is found always following colour. Are you satisfied, or are you looking for something different? I am sure I should be content with a similar account of virtue from you.

MEN. But it is such a silly one, Socrates.

SOC. How do you mean?

MEN. Well, figure, as I understand by your account, is what always follows colour. Very good; but if some one said he did not know colour, and was in the same difficulty about it as about figure, what answer do you suppose would have come from you?

SOC. The truth, from me; and if my questioner were a professor of the eristic and contentious sort, I should say to him: I have made my statement; if it is wrong, your business is to examine and refute it. But if, like you and me on this occasion, we were friends and chose to have a discussion together, I

δὴ πραότερόν πως καὶ διαλεκτικώτερον ἀποκρίνεσθαι. ἔστι δὲ ἴσως τὸ διαλεκτικώτερον μὴ μόνον ἀληθῆ ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἐκείνων ὧν ἂν προσομολογῆ εἶδέναι ὁ ἐρωτώμενος. πειράσομαι δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ σοι οὕτως εἰπεῖν. λέγε γάρ μοι· τελευτὴν καλεῖς τι; τοιόνδε λέγω οἶον

Ε. πέρασ καὶ ἔσχατον· πάντα ταῦτα ταῦτόν τι λέγω· ἴσως δ' ἂν ἡμῖν Πρόδικος διαφέροιτο· ἀλλὰ σὺ γέ που καλεῖς πεπεράνθαι τι καὶ τετελευτηκέναι· τὸ τοιοῦτον βούλομαι λέγειν, οὐδὲν ποικίλον.

MEN. Ἄλλὰ καλῶ, καὶ οἶμαι μανθάνειν ὁ λέγεις.

76 ΣΩ. Τί δ'; ἐπίπεδον καλεῖς τι, καὶ ἕτερον αὖ στερεόν, οἶον ταῦτα τὰ ἐν γεωμετρίαις;

MEN. Ἐγώ γε καλῶ.

ΣΩ. Ἦδη τοίνυν ἂν μάθοις μου ἐκ τούτων, σχῆμα ὁ λέγω. κατὰ γὰρ παντὸς σχήματος τοῦτο λέγω, εἰς ὃ τὸ στερεόν περαίνει, τοῦτ' εἶναι σχῆμα· ὅπερ ἂν συλλαβῶν εἴπομι στερεοῦ πέρασ σχῆμα εἶναι.

MEN. Τὸ δὲ χρῶμα τί λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. Ὑβριστῆς γ' εἶ, ὦ Μένων· ἀνδρὶ πρεσβύτη πράγματα προστάττεισ ἀποκρίνεσθαι, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐκ ἐθέλεις ἀναμνησθεῖσ εἰπεῖν, ὃ τί ποτε λέγει Β Γοργίας ἀρετὴν εἶναι.

MEN. Ἄλλ' ἐπειδάν μοι σὺ τοῦτ' εἴπῃς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐρῶ σοι.

ΣΩ. Κἂν κατακεκαλυμμένος τις γνοιή, ὦ Μένων, διαλεγόμενου σου, ὅτι καλὸς εἶ καὶ ἐρασταί σοι ἔτι εἰσίν.

MENO

should have to reply in some milder tone more suited to dialectic. The more dialectical way, I suppose, is not merely to answer what is true, but also to make use of those points which the questioned person acknowledges he knows. And this is the way in which I shall now try to argue with you. Tell me, is there something you call an end? Such a thing, I mean, as a limit, or extremity—I use all these terms in the same sense, though I daresay Prodicus¹ might quarrel with us. But you, I am sure, refer to a thing as terminated or ended: something of that sort is what I mean—nothing complicated.

MEN. Yes, I do, and I think I grasp your meaning.

SOC. Well then, you speak of a surface, and also of a solid—the terms employed in geometrical problems?

MEN. I do.

SOC. So now you are able to comprehend from all this what I mean by figure. In every instance of figure I call that figure in which the solid ends; and I may put that more succinctly by saying that figure is “limit of solid.”

MEN. And what do you say of colour, Socrates?

SOC. How overbearing of you, Meno, to press an old man with demands for answers, when you will not trouble yourself to recollect and tell me what account Gorgias gives of virtue!

MEN. When you have answered my question, Socrates, I will answer yours.

SOC. One might tell even blindfolded, Meno, by the way you discuss, that you are handsome and still have lovers.

¹ Cf. *Protag.* 337 A.

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MEN. Τί δή;

ΣΩ. "Οτι οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ ἐπιτάττεις ἐν τοῖς λόγοις· ὅπερ ποιούσιν οἱ τρυφῶντες, ἅτε τυραννεύοντες, ἕως ἂν ἐν ὄρα ὦσι. καὶ ἅμα ἐμοῦ
C ἴσως κατέγνωκας, ὅτι εἰμὶ ἡττων τῶν καλῶν. χαριουῖμαι οὖν σοι καὶ ἀποκρινοῦμαι.

MEN. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν χάρισαι.

ΣΩ. Βούλει οὖν σοι κατὰ Γοργίαν ἀποκρίνωμαι, ἢ ἂν σὺ μάλιστα ἀκολουθήσῃς;

MEN. Βούλομαι· πῶς γὰρ οὔ;

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν λέγετε ἀπορροάς τινας τῶν ὄντων κατὰ Ἐμπεδοκλέα;

MEN. Σφόδρα γε.

ΣΩ. Καὶ πόρους, εἰς οὓς καὶ δι' ὧν αἱ ἀπορροαὶ πορεύονται;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Καὶ τῶν ἀπορροῶν τὰς μὲν ἀρμόττειν
D ἐνίοις τῶν πόρων, τὰς δὲ ἐλάττους ἢ μείζους εἶναι;

MEN. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ ὄψιν καλεῖς τι;

MEN. Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ἐκ τούτων δὴ ξύνες ὃ τοι λέγω, ἔφη Πίνδαρος. ἔστι γὰρ χροῖα ἀπορροὴ σχημάτων ὄψι σύμμετρος καὶ αἰσθητός.

MEN. Ἀριστά μοι δοκεῖς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ταύτην τὴν ἀπόκρισιν εἰρηκέναι.

ΣΩ. Ἴσως γὰρ σοι κατὰ συνήθειαν εἴρηται.

¹ There is something of Gorgias's stately style in the definition that follows; but the implication seems mainly to be that the substance of it will be familiar to Meno because

MENO

MEN. Why so ?

soc. Because you invariably speak in a peremptory tone, after the fashion of spoilt beauties, holding as they do a despotic power so long as their bloom is on them. You have also, I daresay, made a note of my weakness for handsome people. So I will indulge you, and answer.

MEN. You must certainly indulge me.

soc. Then would you like me to answer you in the manner of Gorgias,¹ which you would find easiest to follow ?

MEN. I should like that, of course.

soc. Do not both of you say there are certain effluences² of existent things, as Empedocles held ?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And passages into which and through which the effluences pass ?

MEN. To be sure.

soc. And some of the effluences fit into various passages, while some are too small or too large ?

MEN. That is so.

soc. And further, there is what you call sight ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. So now "conceive my meaning," as Pindar³ says : colour is an effluence of figures, commensurate with sight and sensible.

MEN. Your answer, Socrates, seems to me excellently put.

soc. Yes, for I expect you find its terms familiar ;

he was a pupil of Gorgias, who had learnt his science from Empedocles.

² Empedocles taught that material objects are known to us by means of effluences or films given off by them and suited in various ways to our sense-organs.

³ Fr. 82 (Bergk) ; cf. Aristoph. *Birds*, 939.

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καὶ ἄμα, οἶμαι, ἐννοεῖς, ὅτι ἔχοις ἂν ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰπεῖν καὶ φωνήν, ὃ ἔστι, καὶ ὁσμὴν καὶ ἄλλα
 E πολλὰ τῶν τοιούτων.

MEN. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Τραγικὴ γάρ ἐστιν, ὦ Μένων, ἡ ἀπόκρισις, ὥστε ἀρέσκει σοι μᾶλλον ἢ ἡ περὶ τοῦ σχήματος.

MEN. Ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ Ἀλεξιδήμου, ὡς ἐγὼ ἐμαυτὸν πείθω, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη βελτίων· οἶμαι δὲ οὐδ' ἂν σοὶ δόξαι, εἰ μὴ, ὥσπερ χθές ἔλεγες, ἀναγκαῖόν σοι ἀπιέναι πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων, ἀλλ' εἰ περιμέναις τε καὶ μνηθείης.

77 MEN. Ἄλλὰ περιμένοιμ' ἂν, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἴ μοι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα λέγοις.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλὰ μὴν προθυμίας γε οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω, καὶ σοῦ ἔνεκα καὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, λέγων τοιαῦτα· ἀλλ' ὅπως μὴ οὐχ οἴός τ' ἔσομαι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα λέγειν. ἀλλ' ἴθι δὴ πειρῶ καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν ἀποδοῦναι, κατὰ ὅλου εἰπὼν ἀρετῆς πέρι, ὃ τι ἔστι, καὶ παῦσαι πολλὰ ποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ ενός, ὅπερ φασὶ τοὺς συντρίβοντάς τι ἐκάστοτε οἱ σκώπτοντες, ἀλλ'
 B ἐάσας ὅλην καὶ ὑγιῆ εἰπέ τί ἐστιν ἀρετῆ. τὰ δέ γε παραδείγματα παρ' ἐμοῦ εἴληφας.

MEN. Δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ εἶναι, καθάπερ ὁ ποιητὴς λέγει, χαίρειν τε καλοῖσι καὶ δύνασθαι· καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦτο λέγω ἀρετὴν, ἐπιθυμοῦντα τῶν καλῶν δυνατὸν εἶναι πορίζεσθαι.

ΣΩ. Ἄρα λέγεις τὸν τῶν καλῶν ἐπιθυμοῦντα ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι;

MEN. Μάλιστα γε.

ΣΩ. Ἄρα ὡς ὄντων τινῶν οἱ τῶν κακῶν ἐπι-

¹ Perhaps from Simonides.

MENO

and at the same time I fancy you observe that it enables you to tell what sound and smell are, and numerous other things of the kind.

MEN. Certainly.

soc. It is an answer in the high poetic style, Meno, and so more agreeable to you than that about figure.

MEN. Yes, it is.

soc. But yet, son of Alexidemus, I am inclined to think the other was the better of the two; and I believe you also would prefer it, if you were not compelled, as you were saying yesterday, to go away before the mysteries, and could stay awhile and be initiated.

MEN. But I should stay, Socrates, if you would give me many such answers.

soc. Well then, I will spare no endeavour, both for your sake and for my own, to continue in that style; but I fear I may not succeed in keeping for long on that level. But come now, you in your turn must try and fulfil your promise by telling me what virtue is in a general way; and you must stop producing a plural from the singular, as the wags say whenever one breaks something, but leave virtue whole and sound, and tell me what it is. The pattern you have now got from me.

MEN. Well, in my view, Socrates, virtue is, in the poet's words, "to rejoice in things honourable and be able for them"¹; and that, I say, is virtue—to desire what is honourable and be able to procure it.

soc. Do you say that he who desires the honourable is desirous of the good?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. Implying that there are some who desire

PLATO

C θυμοῦσιν, ἑτέρων δὲ οἱ τῶν ἀγαθῶν; οὐ πάντες,
ὤριστε, δοκοῦσί σοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμεῖν;

MEN. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλά τινες τῶν κακῶν;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οἰόμενοι τὰ κακὰ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, λέγεις, ἢ
καὶ γινώσκοντες, ὅτι κακὰ ἐστίν, ὅμως ἐπι-
θυμοῦσιν αὐτῶν;

MEN. Ἀμφότερα ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Ἡ γὰρ δοκεῖ τίς σοι, ὦ Μένων, γινώσκων
τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακὰ ἐστίν ὅμως ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῶν;

MEN. Μάλιστα.

ΣΩ. Τί ἐπιθυμεῖν λέγεις; ἢ γενέσθαι αὐτῶ;

D MEN. Γενέσθαι· τί γὰρ ἄλλο;

ΣΩ. Πότερον ἠγούμενος τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν
ἐκεῖνον ᾧ ἂν γένηται, ἢ γινώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι
βλάπτει ᾧ ἂν παρῆ;

MEN. Εἰσὶ μὲν οἱ ἠγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν,
εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ γινώσκοντες ὅτι βλάπτει.

ΣΩ. Ἡ καὶ δοκοῦσί σοι γινώσκειν τὰ κακὰ,
ὅτι κακὰ ἐστίν, οἱ ἠγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν;

MEN. Οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν δῆλον ὅτι οὔτοι μὲν οὐ τῶν κακῶν
ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτά, ἀλλὰ ἐκείνων, ἃ
E ᾧοντο ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, ἔστι δὲ ταῦτά γε κακὰ· ὥστε
οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτά καὶ οἰόμενοι ἀγαθὰ εἶναι δῆλον
ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν· ἢ οὐ;

MEN. Κινδυνεύουσιν οὗτοί γε.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; οἱ τῶν κακῶν μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντες,
ὡς φῆς σύ, ἠγούμενοι δὲ τὰ κακὰ βλάπτειν ἐκεῖνον,
ᾧ ἂν γίγνηται, γινώσκουσι δήπου ὅτι βλαβήσονται
ὑπ' αὐτῶν;

MENO

the evil, and others the good? Do not all men, in your opinion, my dear sir, desire the good?

MEN. I think not.

SOC. There are some who desire the evil?

MEN. Yes.

SOC. Thinking the evil to be good, do you mean, or actually recognizing it to be evil, and desiring it nevertheless?

MEN. Both, I believe.

SOC. Do you really believe, Meno, that a man knows the evil to be evil, and still desires it?

MEN. Certainly.

SOC. What do you mean by "desires"? Desires the possession of it?

MEN. Yes; what else could it be?

SOC. And does he think the evil benefits him who gets it, or does he know that it harms him who has it?

MEN. There are some who think the evil is a benefit, and others who know that it does harm.

SOC. And, in your opinion, do those who think the evil a benefit know that it is evil?

MEN. I do not think that at all.

SOC. Obviously those who are ignorant of the evil do not desire it, but only what they supposed to be good, though it is really evil; so that those who are ignorant of it and think it good are really desiring the good. Is not that so?

MEN. It would seem to be so in their case.

SOC. Well now, I presume those who, as you say, desire the evil, and consider that the evil harms him who gets it, know that they will be harmed by it?

PLATO

MEN. Ἀνάγκη.

78 ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ τοὺς βλαπτομένους οὗτοι οὐκ οἴονται ἀθλίους εἶναι καθ' ὅσον βλάπτονται;

MEN. Καὶ τοῦτο ἀνάγκη.

ΣΩ. Τοὺς δὲ ἀθλίους οὐ κακοδαίμονας;

MEN. Οἶμαι ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις βούλεται ἄθλιος καὶ κακοδαίμων εἶναι;

MEN. Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Οὐκ ἄρα βούλεται, ὦ Μένων, τὰ κακὰ οὐδέεις, εἴπερ μὴ βούλεται τοιοῦτος εἶναι. τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἄθλιον εἶναι, ἢ ἐπιθυμεῖν τε τῶν κακῶν καὶ κτᾶσθαι;

B MEN. Κινδυνεύεις ἀληθῆ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες· καὶ οὐδέεις βούλεσθαι τὰ κακὰ.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν νῦν δὴ ἔλεγες, ὅτι ἔστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ βούλεσθαι τε τὰγαθὰ καὶ δύνασθαι;

MEN. Εἶπον γάρ.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τοῦ¹ λεχθέντος τὸ μὲν βούλεσθαι πᾶσιν ὑπάρχει, καὶ ταύτῃ γε οὐδὲν ὁ ἕτερος τοῦ ἐτέρου βελτίων;

MEN. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι, εἴπερ ἐστὶ βελτίων ἄλλος ἄλλου, κατὰ τὸ δύνασθαι ἂν εἴῃ ἀμείνων.

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ἀρετῆ, δύναμις τοῦ πορίζεσθαι τὰγαθὰ.

C MEN. Παντάπασί μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως ἔχειν, ὡς σὺ νῦν ὑπολαμβάνεις.

ΣΩ. Ἴδωμεν δὴ καὶ τοῦτο εἰ ἀληθὲς λέγεις· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν εὐ λέγοις. τὰγαθὰ φῆς οἷόν τ' εἶναι πορίζεσθαι ἀρετὴν εἶναι;

MENO

MEN. They needs must.

soc. But do they not hold that those who are harmed are miserable in proportion to the harm they suffer ?

MEN. That too must be.

soc. And are not the miserable ill-starred ?

MEN. I think so.

soc. Then is there anyone who wishes to be miserable and ill-starred ?

MEN. I do not suppose there is, Socrates.

soc. No one, then, Meno, desires evil, if no one desires to be such an one : for what is being miserable but desiring evil and obtaining it ?

MEN. It seems that what you say is true, Socrates, and that nobody desires evil.

soc. Well now, you were saying a moment ago that virtue is the desire and ability for good ?

MEN. Yes, I was.

soc. One part of the statement—the desire—belongs to our common nature, and in this respect one man is no better than another ?

MEN. Apparently.

soc. But it is plain that if one man is not better than another in this, he must be superior in the ability.

MEN. Certainly.

soc. Then virtue, it seems by your account, is ability to procure goods.

MEN. I entirely agree, Socrates, with the view which you now take of the matter.

soc. Then let us see whether your statement is true in another respect ; for very likely you may be right. You say virtue is the ability to procure goods ?

¹ τοῦ Ast: τούτου MSS.

PLATO

MEN. Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ἀγαθὰ δὲ καλεῖς οὐχὶ οἶον ὑγίειάν τε καὶ πλοῦτον;

MEN. Καὶ χρυσίον λέγω καὶ ἀργύριον κτᾶσθαι καὶ τιμὰς ἐν πόλει καὶ ἀρχάς.

ΣΩ. Μὴ ἄλλ' ἅττα λέγεις τὰγαθὰ ἢ τὰ τοιαῦτα;

MEN. Οὐκ, ἀλλὰ πάντα λέγω τὰ τοιαῦτα.

D ΣΩ. Εἶεν· χρυσίον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀργύριον πορίζεσθαι ἀρετὴ ἐστίν, ὡς φησι Μένων ὁ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως πατρικὸς ξένος. πότερον προστιθεῖς τούτῳ τῷ πόρῳ, ὧ Μένων, τὸ δικαίως καὶ ὀσίως, ἢ οὐδέν σοι διαφέρει, ἀλλὰ καὶν ἀδίκως τις αὐτὰ πορίζεται, ὁμοίως σὺ αὐτὰ ἀρετὴν καλεῖς;

MEN. Οὐ δήπου, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ κακίαν.

MEN. Πάντως δήπου.

ΣΩ. Δεῖ ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, τούτῳ τῷ πόρῳ δικαιοσύνην ἢ σωφροσύνην ἢ ὀσιότητα προσεῖναι, ἢ ἄλλο
E τι μόνον ἀρετῆς· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐκ ἔσται ἀρετὴ, καίπερ ἐκπορίζουσα τὰγαθὰ.

MEN. Πῶς γὰρ ἄνευ τούτων ἀρετὴ γένοιτ' ἄν;

ΣΩ. Τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐκπορίζειν χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον, ὅταν μὴ δίκαιον ἦ, μήτε αὐτῷ μήτε ἄλλῳ, οὐκ ἀρετὴ καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπορία;

MEN. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Οὐδὲν ἄρα μᾶλλον ὁ πόρος τῶν τοιούτων ἀγαθῶν ἢ ἡ ἀπορία ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη, ἀλλὰ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὁ μὲν ἂν μετὰ δικαιοσύνης γίγνηται, ἀρετὴ ἔσται,
79 ὁ δ' ἂν ἄνευ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων, κακία.

MENO

MEN. I do.

soc. And do you not mean by goods such things as health and wealth ?

MEN. Yes, and I include the acquisition of gold and silver, and of state honours and offices.

soc. Are there any things besides this sort, that you class as goods ?

MEN. No, I refer only to everything of that sort.

soc. Very well : procuring gold and silver is virtue, according to Meno, the ancestral friend of the Great King. Tell me, do you add to such procuring, Meno, that it is to be done justly and piously, or is this indifferent to you, but even though a man procures these things unjustly, do you call them virtue all the same ?

MEN. Surely not, Socrates.

soc. Rather, vice.

MEN. Yes, of course.

soc. Then it seems that justice or temperance or holiness or some other part of virtue must accompany the procuring of these things ; otherwise it will not be virtue, though it provides one with goods.

MEN. Yes, for how, without these, could it be virtue ?

soc. And not to procure gold and silver, when it would be unjust—what we call the want of such things—is virtue, is it not ?

MEN. Apparently.

soc. So the procuring of this sort of goods will be no more virtue than the want of them ; but it seems that whatever comes accompanied by justice will be virtue, and whatever comes without any such quality, vice.

PLATO

MEN. Δοκεῖ μοι ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι ὡς λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τούτων ἕκαστον ὀλίγον πρότερον μόριον ἀρετῆς ἔφαμεν εἶναι, τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Εἶτα, ὦ Μένων, παίζεις πρὸς με;

MEN. Τί δῆ, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. Ὅτι ἄρτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος σου μὴ καταγνῦναι μηδὲ κερματίζειν τὴν ἀρετὴν, καὶ δόντος παραδείγματα καθ' ἃ δέοι ἀποκρίνεσθαι, τούτου μὲν ἡμέλησας, λέγεις δέ μοι, ὅτι ἀρετὴ ἐστὶν οἷόν B τ' εἶναι τὰγαθὰ πορίζεσθαι μετὰ δικαιοσύνης· τοῦτο δὲ φῆς μόριον ἀρετῆς εἶναι;

MEN. Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν συμβαίνει ἐξ ὧν σὺ ὁμολογεῖς, τὸ μετὰ μορίου ἀρετῆς πράττειν, ὃ τι ἂν πράττη, τοῦτο ἀρετὴν εἶναι· τὴν γὰρ δικαιοσύνην μόριον φῆς ἀρετῆς εἶναι, καὶ ἕκαστα τούτων. τί οὖν δὴ τοῦτο λέγω; ὅτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος ὅλον εἰπεῖν τὴν ἀρετὴν, αὐτὴν μὲν πολλοῦ δεῖς εἰπεῖν ὃ τι ἐστὶ, πᾶσαν δὲ φῆς πράξιν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, εἴανπερ μετὰ C μορίου ἀρετῆς πράττηται, ὥσπερ εἰρηκῶς ὃ τι ἀρετὴ ἐστὶ τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἤδη γνωσομένου ἐμοῦ, καὶ εἴαν σὺ κατακερματίζης αὐτὴν κατὰ μόρια. δεῖται οὖν σοι πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, τῆς αὐτῆς ἐρωτήσεως, ὦ φίλε Μένων, τί ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ, εἰ μετὰ μορίου ἀρετῆς πᾶσα πράξις ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη; τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ λέγειν, ὅταν λέγῃ τις, ὅτι πᾶσα ἢ μετὰ δικαιοσύνης πράξις ἀρετὴ ἐστὶν. ἢ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι πάλιν δεῖσθαι τῆς αὐτῆς ἐρωτήσεως, ἀλλ' οἶε τινα εἰδέναί μοριον ἀρετῆς ὃ τι ἐστὶν, αὐτὴν μὴ εἰδότα;

MENO

MEN. I agree that it must be as you say.

SOC. And were we saying a little while ago that each of these things was a part of virtue—justice and temperance and the rest of them ?

MEN. Yes.

SOC. And here you are, Meno, making fun of me ?

MEN. How so, Socrates ?

SOC. Because after my begging you not to break up virtue into small change, and giving you a pattern on which you should answer, you have ignored all this, and now tell me that virtue is the ability to procure good things with justice ; and this, you tell me, is a part of virtue ?

MEN. I do.

SOC. Then it follows from your own admission that doing whatever one does with a part of virtue is itself virtue ; for you say that justice is a part of virtue, and so is each of such qualities. You ask the meaning of my remark. It is that after my requesting you to speak of virtue as a whole, you say not a word as to what it is in itself, but tell me that every action is virtue provided that it is done with a part of virtue ; as though you had told me what virtue is in the whole, and I must understand it forthwith—when you are really splitting it up into fragments ! I think therefore that you must face the same question all over again, my dear Meno—What is virtue?—if we are to be told that every action accompanied by a part of virtue is virtue ; for that is the meaning of the statement that every action accompanied by justice is virtue. Or do you not agree that you have to meet the same question afresh ? Do you suppose that anyone can know a part of virtue when he does not know virtue itself ?

PLATO

MEN. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

D ΣΩ. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ μέμνησαι, ὅτ' ἐγὼ σοι ἄρτι ἀπεκρινάμην περὶ τοῦ σχήματος, ἀπεβάλλομένου πρὸς τὴν τοιαύτην ἀπόκρισιν τὴν διὰ τῶν ἐτι ζητουμένων καὶ μήπω ὠμολογημένων ἐπιχειροῦσαν ἀποκρίνεσθαι.

MEN. Καὶ ὀρθῶς γε ἀπεβάλλομεν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Μὴ τοίνυν, ὦ ἄριστε, μηδὲ σὺ ἐτι ζητουμένης ἀρετῆς ὅλης ὅ τι ἔστιν οἴου διὰ τῶν ταύτης μορίων ἀποκρινόμενος δηλώσειν αὐτὴν ὅτωσιν, ἢ
E ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν τούτῳ τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ λέγων, ἀλλὰ πάλιν τῆς αὐτῆς δεήσεσθαι ἐρωτήσεως, τίνος ὄντος ἀρετῆς λέγεις ἢ λέγεις· ἢ οὐδὲν σοι δοκῶ λέγειν;

MEN. Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖς ὀρθῶς λέγειν.

ΣΩ. Ἀπόκριναι τοίνυν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς· τί φῆς ἀρετὴν εἶναι καὶ σὺ καὶ ὁ ἑταῖρός σου;

80 MEN. Ὡς Σώκρατες, ἤκουον μὲν ἔγωγε πρὶν καὶ συγγενέσθαι σοι, ὅτι σὺ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ αὐτός τε ἀπορεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖς ἀπορεῖν· καὶ νῦν, ὡς γέ μοι δοκεῖς, γοητεύεις με καὶ φαρμάττεις καὶ ἀτεχνῶς κατεπάδεις, ὥστε μεστὸν ἀπορίας γεγονέναι· καὶ δοκεῖς μοι παντελῶς, εἰ δεῖ τι καὶ σκῶψαι, ὁμοιότατος εἶναι τό τε εἶδος καὶ τὰλλα ταύτῃ τῇ πλατεῖα νάρκη τῇ θαλαττία. καὶ γὰρ αὕτη τὸν αἰεὶ πλησιάζοντα καὶ ἀπτόμενον ναρκᾶν ποιεῖ· καὶ σὺ δοκεῖς μοι νῦν ἐμὲ τοιοῦτόν τι πεποιηκέναι [ναρκᾶν].¹ ἀληθῶς γὰρ ἔγωγε καὶ
B τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ στόμα ναρκῶ, καὶ οὐκ ἔχω ὅ τι ἀποκρίνωμαί σοι. καίτοι μυριάκις γε περὶ ἀρετῆς

¹ ναρκᾶν secl. Dobree.

MENO

MEN. No, I do not.

soc. And I daresay you remember, when I answered you a while ago about figure, how we rejected the sort of answer that attempts to proceed in terms which are still under inquiry and has not yet been admitted.

MEN. Yes, and we were right in rejecting it, Socrates.

soc. Well then, my good sir, you must not in your turn suppose that while the nature of virtue as a whole is still under inquiry you will explain it to anyone by replying in terms of its parts, or by any other statement on the same lines: you will only have to face the same question over again—What *is* this virtue, of which you are speaking all the time? Or do you see no force in what I say?

MEN. I think what you say is right.

soc. Then answer me again from the beginning: what do both you and your associate say that virtue is?

MEN. Socrates, I used to be told, before I began to meet you, that yours was just a case of being in doubt yourself and making others doubt also; and so now I find you are merely bewitching me with your spells and incantations, which have reduced me to utter perplexity. And if I am indeed to have my jest, I consider that both in your appearance and in other respects you are extremely like the flat torpedo sea-fish; for it benumbs anyone who approaches and touches it, and something of the sort is what I find you have done to me now. For in truth I feel my soul and my tongue quite benumbed, and I am at a loss what answer to give you. And yet on countless occasions I have made abundant

PLATO

παμπόλλους λόγους εἶρηκα καὶ πρὸς πολλούς, καὶ πάνυ εὖ, ὡς γε ἐμαντῶ ἐδόκουν· νῦν δὲ οὐδ' ὃ τι ἔστι τὸ παράπαν ἔχω εἰπεῖν. καὶ μοι δοκεῖς εὖ βουλευέσθαι οὐκ ἐκπλέων ἐνθένδε οὐδ' ἀποδημῶν· εἰ γὰρ ξένος ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει τοιαῦτα ποιοῖς, τάχ' ἂν ὡς γόης ἀπαχθείης.

ΣΗ. Πανούργος εἶ, ὦ Μένων, καὶ ὀλίγου ἐξηπάτησάς με.

MEN. Τί μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες;

C ΣΗ. Γιγνώσκω οὐ ἔνεκά με εἵκασας.

MEN. Τίνος δὴ οἶει;

ΣΗ. Ἴνα σε ἀντεικάσω. ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο οἶδα περὶ πάντων τῶν καλῶν, ὅτι χαίρουσιν εἰκαζόμενοι. λυσιτελεῖ γὰρ αὐτοῖς· καλαὶ γάρ, οἶμαι, τῶν καλῶν καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀντεικάσομαί σε. ἐγὼ δέ, εἰ μὲν ἢ νάρκη αὐτῇ ναρκῶσα οὕτω καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖ ναρκᾶν, ἔοικα αὐτῇ· εἰ δὲ μῆ, οὐ. οὐ γὰρ εὐπορῶν αὐτὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ποιῶ ἀπορεῖν, ἀλλὰ παντὸς μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ἀπορῶν οὕτως καὶ

D τοὺς ἄλλους ποιῶ ἀπορεῖν. καὶ νῦν περὶ ἀρετῆς, ὃ ἔστιν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ οἶδα, σὺ μέντοι ἴσως πρότερον μὲν ἤδησθα πρὶν ἐμοῦ ἄψασθαι, νῦν μέντοι ὅμοιος εἶ οὐκ εἰδότι. ὅμως δὲ ἐθέλω μετὰ σοῦ σκέψασθαι καὶ συζητῆσαι ὃ τί ποτέ ἐστιν.

MEN. Καὶ τίνα τρόπον ζητήσεις, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο, ὃ μὴ οἶσθα τὸ παράπαν ὃ τι ἔστι; ποῖον γὰρ ὦν οὐκ οἶσθα προθέμενος ζητήσεις; ἢ εἰ καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα ἐντύχους αὐτῶ, πῶς εἴσῃ ὅτι τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὃ σὺ οὐκ ἤδησθα;

MENO

speeches on virtue to various people—and very good speeches they were, so I thought—but now I cannot say one word as to what it is. You are well advised, I consider, in not voyaging or taking a trip away from home ; for if you went on like this as a stranger in any other city you would very likely be taken up for a wizard.

soc. You are a rogue, Meno, and had almost deceived me.

MEN. How is that, Socrates ?

soc. I perceive your aim in thus comparing me.

MEN. What was it ?

soc. That I might compare you in return. One thing I know about all handsome people is this—they delight in being compared to something. They do well over it, since fine features, I suppose, must have fine similes. But I am not for playing your game. As for me, if the torpedo is torpid itself while causing others to be torpid, I am like it, but not otherwise. For it is not from any sureness in myself that I cause others to doubt : it is from being in more doubt than anyone else that I cause doubt in others. So now, for my part, I have no idea what virtue is, whilst you, though perhaps you may have known before you came in touch with me, are now as good as ignorant of it also. But none the less I am willing to join you in examining it and inquiring into its nature.

MEN. Why, on what lines will you look, Socrates, for a thing of whose nature you know nothing at all ? Pray, what sort of thing, amongst those that you know not, will you treat us to as the object of your search ? Or even supposing, at the best, that you hit upon it, how will you know it is the thing you did not know ?

- ζη. Μανθάνω οἶον βούλει λέγειν, ὦ Μένων.
 Ε ὄρα^ς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις, ὡς οὐκ
 ἄρα ἔστι ζητεῖν ἀνθρώπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδεν οὔτε ὃ μὴ
 οἶδεν; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδε ζητοῖ· οἶδε γάρ, καὶ
 οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως· οὔτε ὃ μὴ
 οἶδεν· οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὃ τι ζητήσει.
- 81 ΜΕΝ. Οὐκοῦν καλῶς σοι δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι ὁ
 λόγος οὗτος, ὦ Σώκρατες;
 ζη. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε.
 ΜΕΝ. Ἐχεις λέγειν ὅπη;
 ζη. Ἐγωγε· ἀκήκοα γὰρ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναι-
 κῶν σοφῶν περὶ τὰ θεῖα πράγματα—
 ΜΕΝ. Τίνα λόγον λεγόντων;
 ζη. Ἀληθῆ, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖν, καὶ καλόν.
 ΜΕΝ. Τίνα τοῦτον, καὶ τίνες οἱ λέγοντες;
 ζη. Οἱ μὲν λέγοντές εἰσι τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ
 ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται
 λόγον οἷοις τ' εἶναι διδόναι· λέγει δὲ καὶ Πίνδαρος
 Β καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν, ὅσοι θεῖοί εἰσιν.
 ἃ δὲ λέγουσι, ταυτί ἐστιν· ἀλλὰ σκόπει, εἴ σοι
 δοκοῦσιν ἀληθῆ λέγειν. φασὶ γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν
 τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι ἀθάνατον, καὶ τοτὲ μὲν
 τελευτᾶν, ὃ δὴ ἀποθνήσκειν καλοῦσι, τοτὲ δὲ
 πάλιν γίγνεσθαι, ἀπόλλυσθαι δ' οὐδέποτε· δεῖν
 δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ὡς ὀσιώτατα διαβιῶναι τὸν βίον·
 οἷσι γὰρ ἂν—
 Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος
 δέξεται, εἰς τὸν ὑπερθεὺν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳ ἔτει
 ἀντιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν,

MENO

soc. I understand the point you would make, Meno. Do you see what a captious argument you are introducing—that, forsooth, a man cannot inquire either about what he knows or about what he does not know? For he cannot inquire about what he knows, because he knows it, and in that case is in no need of inquiry; nor again can he inquire about what he does not know, since he does not know about what he is to inquire.

MEN. Now does it seem to you to be a good argument, Socrates?

soc. It does not.

MEN. Can you explain how not?

soc. I can; for I have heard from wise men and women who told of things divine that—

MEN. What was it they said?

soc. Something true, as I thought, and admirable.

MEN. What was it? And who were the speakers?

soc. They were certain priests and priestesses who have studied so as to be able to give a reasoned account of their ministry; and Pindar also and many another poet of heavenly gifts. As to their words, they are these: mark now, if you judge them to be true. They say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time comes to an end, which is called dying, and at another is born again, but never perishes. Consequently one ought to live all one's life in the utmost holiness.

For from whomsoever Persephone shall accept requital for ancient wrong,¹ the souls of these she restores in the ninth year to the upper sun again; from them arise glorious

¹ πένθος ("affliction") in mystic language means something like "fall" or "sin." These lines are probably from one of Pindar's *Dirges* (Bergk, fr. 133).

C ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγανοὶ
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὖξοντ'.¹ ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἤρωες
ἀγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλεῦνται.

Ἄτε οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός τε οὔσα καὶ πολλάκις
γεγονυῖα, καὶ ἑωρακυῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ
ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ πάντα χρήματα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὃ τι
οὐ μεμάθηκεν· ὥστε οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν καὶ περὶ
ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ ἄλλων οἰόν τε εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀνα-
μνησθῆναι, ἃ γε καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο. ἄτε γὰρ

D τῆς φύσεως ἀπάσης συγγενοῦς οὔσης, καὶ μεμα-
θηκυῖας τῆς ψυχῆς ἅπαντα, οὐδὲν κωλύει ἐν μόνον
ἀναμνησθέντα, ὃ δὴ μάθησιν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι,
τᾶλλα πάντα αὐτὸν ἀνευρεῖν, εἴαν τις ἀνδρείος ἦ καὶ
μὴ ἀποκάμνη ζητῶν· τὸ γὰρ ζητεῖν ἄρα καὶ τὸ
μανθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν. οὐκ οὖν δεῖ
πείθεσθαι τούτῳ τῷ ἐριστικῷ λόγῳ· οὗτος μὲν
γὰρ ἂν ἡμᾶς ἀργοὺς ποιήσειε καὶ ἔστι τοῖς μαλα-
κοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἠδὺς ἀκοῦσαι, ὅδε δὲ ἐργα-

E στικούς τε καὶ ζητητικούς ποιεῖ· ὧ ἐγὼ πιστεύων
ἀληθεῖ εἶναι ἐθέλω μετὰ σοῦ ζητεῖν ἀρετὴν ὃ τι ἔστιν.

MEN. Naί, ὧ Σώκρατες· ἀλλὰ πῶς λέγεις
τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ μανθάνομεν, ἀλλὰ ἦν καλοῦμεν
υἰάθησιν ἀνάμνησις ἐστίν; ἔχεις με τοῦτο διδάξαι
ὡς οὕτως ἔχει;

82 ΣΩ. Καὶ ἄρτι εἶπον, ὧ Μένων, ὅτι πανούργος
εἶ, καὶ νῦν ἐρωτᾷς εἰ ἔχω σε διδάξαι, ὃς οὐ φημι
82 διδαχὴν εἶναι ἀλλ' ἀνάμνησιν, ἵνα δὴ εὐθύς φαίνω-
μαι αὐτὸς ἐμαυτῷ τάναντία λέγων.

MEN. Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὧ Σώκρατες, οὐ πρὸς
τοῦτο βλέψας εἶπον, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔθους· ἀλλ' εἰ

¹ αὖξοντ' Boeckh: αὖξονται mss.

MENO

kings and men of splendid might and surpassing wisdom, and for all remaining time are they called holy heroes amongst mankind.

Seeing then that the soul is immortal and has been born many times, and has beheld all things both in this world and in the nether realms, she has acquired knowledge of all and everything; so that it is no wonder that she should be able to recollect all that she knew before about virtue and other things. For as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no reason why we should not, by remembering but one single thing—an act which men call learning—discover everything else, if we have courage and faint not in the search; since, it would seem, research and learning are wholly recollection. So we must not hearken to that captious argument: it would make us idle, and is pleasing only to the indolent ear, whereas the other makes us energetic and inquiring. Putting my trust in its truth, I am ready to inquire with you into the nature of virtue.

MEN. Yes, Socrates, but what do you mean by saying that we do not learn, and that what we call learning is recollection? Can you instruct me that this is so?

SOC. I remarked just now, Meno, that you are a rogue; and so here you are asking if I can instruct you, when I say there is no teaching but only recollection: you hope that I may be caught contradicting myself forthwith.

MEN. I assure you, Socrates, that was not my intention; I only spoke from habit. But if you can

PLATO

πώς μοι ἔχεις ἐνδείξασθαι, ὅτι ἔχει ὡσπερ λέγεις, ἐνδείξαι.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλ' ἔστι μὲν οὐ ράδιον, ὅμως δὲ ἐθέλω προθυμηθῆναι σοῦ ἕνεκα. ἀλλά μοι προσκάλεσον τῶν πολλῶν ἀκολουθῶν τουτωνὶ τῶν σαυτοῦ ἕνα,

B ὄντινα βούλει, ἵνα ἐν τούτῳ σοι ἐπιδείξωμαι.

ΜΕΝ. Πάνυ γε. δεῦρο πρόσελθε.

ΣΩ. Ἐλλην μὲν ἔστι καὶ ἐλληνίζει;

ΜΕΝ. Πάνυ γε σφόδρα, οἰκογενῆς γε.

ΣΩ. Πρόσεχε δὴ τὸν νοῦν, ὅποτέρ' ἂν σοι φαίνεται, ἢ ἀναμιμνησκόμενος ἢ μανθάνων παρ' ἐμοῦ.

ΜΕΝ. Ἄλλὰ προσέξω.

ΣΩ. Εἰπέ δὴ μοι, ὦ παῖ, γινώσκεις τετράγωνον χωρίον ὅτι τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἐγώ γε.

C ΣΩ. Ἔστιν οὖν τετράγωνον χωρίον ἴσας ἔχον τὰς γραμμὰς ταύτας πάσας, τέτταρας οὔσας;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Οὐ καὶ ταυτασὶ τὰς διὰ μέσου ἐστὶν ἴσας ἔχον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἴη ἂν τοιοῦτον χωρίον καὶ μείζον καὶ ἔλαττον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Εἰ οὖν εἴη αὕτη ἢ πλευρὰ δυοῖν ποδοῖν καὶ αὕτη δυοῖν, πόσων ἂν εἴη ποδῶν τὸ ὅλον; ὦδε δὲ σκόπει· εἰ ἦν ταύτη δυοῖν ποδοῖν, ταύτη δὲ ἐνὸς ποδὸς μόνον, ἄλλο τι ἄπαξ ἂν ἦν δυοῖν ποδοῖν τὸ χωρίον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

D ΣΩ. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ δυοῖν ποδοῖν καὶ ταύτη, ἄλλο τι ἢ δις δυοῖν γίγνεται;

MENO

somehow prove to me that it is as you say, pray do so.

soc. It is no easy matter, but still I am willing to try my best for your sake. Just call one of your own troop of attendants there, whichever one you please, that he may serve for my demonstration.

MEN. Certainly. You, I say, come here.

soc. He is a Greek, I suppose, and speaks Greek?

MEN. Oh yes, to be sure—born in the house.

soc. Now observe closely whether he strikes you as recollecting or as learning from me.

MEN. I will.

soc. Tell me, boy, do you know that a square figure is like this? ¹

BOY. I do.

soc. Now, a square figure has these lines, four in number, all equal?

BOY. Certainly.

soc. And these, drawn through the middle,² are equal too, are they not?

BOY. Yes.

soc. And a figure of this sort may be larger or smaller?

BOY. To be sure.

soc. Now if this side were two feet and that also two, how many feet would the whole be? Or let me put it thus: if one way it were two feet, and only one foot the other, of course the space would be two feet taken once?

BOY. Yes.

soc. But as it is two feet also on that side, it must be twice two feet?

¹ Socrates draws in the sand.

² *i.e.* the middle of each side of the square.

PLATO

ΠΑΙΣ. Γίγνεται.

ΣΩ. Δυοῖν ἄρα δις γίγνεται ποδῶν;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Πόσοι οὖν εἰσὶν οἱ δύο δις πόδες; λογι-
σάμενος εἰπέ.

ΠΑΙΣ. Τέτταρες, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν γένοιτ' ἂν τούτου τοῦ χωρίου
ἕτερον διπλασίον, τοιοῦτον δέ, ἴσας ἔχον πάσας
τὰς γραμμὰς ὥσπερ τούτο;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Πόσων οὖν ἔσται ποδῶν;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ὁκτώ.

ΣΩ. Φέρε δὴ, πειρῶ μοι εἰπεῖν πηλίκη τις ἔσται
Ε ἐκείνου ἢ γραμμὴ ἐκάστη. ἢ μὲν γὰρ τούδε δυοῖν
ποδοῖν· τί δὲ ἢ ἐκείνου τοῦ διπλασίου;

ΠΑΙΣ. Δῆλον δὴ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι διπλασία.

ΣΩ. Ὅρας, ὦ Μένων, ὡς ἐγὼ τούτον οὐδὲν
διδάσκω, ἀλλ' ἐρωτῶ πάντα; καὶ νῦν οὗτος οἶεται
εἰδέναί, ὅποια ἐστὶν ἀφ' ἧς τὸ ὀκτώπων χωρίον
γενήσεται· ἢ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι;

ΜΕΝ. Ἐμοιγε.

ΣΩ. Οἶδεν οὖν;

ΜΕΝ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Οἶεται δέ γε ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας;

ΜΕΝ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Θεῶ δὴ αὐτὸν ἀναμιμνησκόμενον ἐφεξῆς,
ὡς δεῖ ἀναμιμνήσκεισθαι. σὺ δέ μοι λέγε· ἀπὸ
83 τῆς διπλασίας γραμμῆς φῆς τὸ διπλασίον χωρίον
γίγνεσθαι; τοιόνδε λέγω, μὴ ταύτη μὲν μακρόν,
τῇ δὲ βραχύ, ἀλλὰ ἴσον πανταχῇ ἔστω ὥσπερ τουτί,

MENO

BOY. It is.

SOC. Then the space is twice two feet ?

BOY. Yes.

SOC. Well, how many are twice two feet ? Count and tell me.

BOY. Four, Socrates.

SOC. And might there not be another figure twice the size of this, but of the same sort, with all its sides equal like this one ?

BOY. Yes.

SOC. Then how many feet will it be ?

BOY. Eight.

SOC. Come now, try and tell me how long will each side of that figure be. This one is two feet long : what will be the side of the other, which is double in size ?

BOY. Clearly, Socrates, double.

SOC. Do you observe, Meno, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but merely asking him each time ? And now he supposes that he knows about the line required to make a figure of eight square feet ; or do you not think he does ?

MEN. I do.

SOC. Well, does he know ?

MEN. Certainly not.

SOC. He just supposes it, from the double size required ?

MEN. Yes.

SOC. Now watch his progress in recollecting, by the proper use of memory. Tell me, boy, do you say we get the double space from the double line ? The space I speak of is not long one way and short the other, but must be equal each way like this one,

PLATO

διπλάσιον δὲ τούτου, ὀκτώπουν· ἀλλ' ὄρα, εἰ ἔτι σοι ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας δοκεῖ ἔσεσθαι.

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἐμοιγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν διπλασία αὕτη ταύτης γίγνεται, ἂν ἑτέραν τοσαύτην προσθῶμεν ἐνθένδε;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ἀπὸ ταύτης δὴ, φῆς, ἔσται τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον, ἂν τέτταρες τοσαῦται γένωνται;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

Β ΣΩ. Ἀναγραφώμεθα δὴ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἴσας τέτταρας. ἄλλο τι ἢ τουτὶ ἂν εἴη ὃ φῆς τὸ ὀκτώπουν εἶναι;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστὶ ταυτὶ τέτταρα, ὧν ἕκαστον ἴσον τούτῳ ἐστὶ τῷ τετράποδι;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Πόσον οὖν γίγνεται; οὐ τετράκισ τοσοῦτον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πῶς δ' οὔ;

ΣΩ. Διπλάσιον οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ τετράκισ τοσοῦτον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Οὐ μὰ Δία.

ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ ποσαπλάσιον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Τετραπλάσιον.

Γ ΣΩ. Ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας ἄρα, ὦ παῖ, οὐ διπλάσιον ἀλλὰ τετραπλάσιον γίγνεται χωρίον.

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Τεττάρων γὰρ τετράκισ ἐστὶν ἑκκαίδεκα. οὐχί;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Ὀκτώπουν δ' ἀπὸ ποίας γραμμῆς; οὐχὶ ἀπὸ μὲν ταύτης τετραπλάσιον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Φημί.

MENO

while being double its size—eight square feet. Now see if you still think we get this from a double length of line.

BOY. I do.

soc. Well, this line is doubled, if we add here another of the same length ?

BOY. Certainly.

soc. And you say we shall get our eight-foot space from four lines of this length ?

BOY. Yes.

soc. Then let us describe the square, drawing four equal lines of that length. This will be what you say is the eight-foot figure, will it not ?

BOY. Certainly.

soc. And here, contained in it, have we not four squares, each of which is equal to this space of four feet ?

BOY. Yes.

soc. Then how large is the whole ? Four times that space, is it not ?

BOY. It must be.

soc. And is four times equal to double ?

BOY. No, to be sure.

soc. But how much is it ?

BOY. Fourfold.

soc. Thus, from the double-sized line, boy, we get a space, not of double, but of fourfold size.

BOY. That is true.

soc. And if it is four times four it is sixteen, is it not ?

BOY. Yes.

soc. What line will give us a space of eight feet ? This one gives us a fourfold space, does it not ?

BOY. It does.

ΣΩ. Τετράπουν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμισείας ταυτησὶ τουτί;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Εἶεν· τὸ δὲ ὀκτώπουν οὐ τοῦδε μὲν διπλάσιόν ἐστι, τούτου δὲ ἡμισυ;

ΠΑΙΣ. <Ναί>¹.

ΣΩ. Οὐκ ἀπὸ μὲν μείζονος ἔσται ἢ τοσαύτης
D γραμμῆς, ἀπὸ ἐλάττονος δὲ ἢ τοσησδὶ; ἢ οὐ;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Καλῶς· τὸ γάρ σοι δοκοῦν τοῦτο ἀποκρίνου. καί μοι λέγε· οὐχ ἦδε μὲν δυοῖν ποδοῖν ἦν, ἡ δὲ τεττάρων;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Δεῖ ἄρα τὴν τοῦ ὀκτώποδος χωρίου γραμμὴν μείζω μὲν εἶναι τῆσδε τῆς δίποδος, ἐλάττω δὲ τῆς τετράποδος.

ΠΑΙΣ. Δεῖ.

E ΣΩ. Πειρῶ δὴ λέγειν πηλίκην τιὰ φῆς αὐτῆν εἶναι.

ΠΑΙΣ. Τρίποδα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἄνπερ τρίπους ἦ, τὸ ἡμισυ ταύτης προσληψόμεθα καὶ ἔσται τρίπους; δύο μὲν γὰρ οἶδε, ὁ δὲ εἷς· καὶ ἐνθένδε ὡσαύτως δύο μὲν οἶδε, ὁ δὲ εἷς· καὶ γίνεταί τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ὁ φῆς.

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἂν ἢ τῆδε τριῶν καὶ τῆδε τριῶν, τὸ ὅλον χωρίον τριῶν τρεῖς ποδῶν γίνεταί;

ΠΑΙΣ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Τρεῖς δὲ τρεῖς πόσοι εἰσὶ πόδες;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἐννέα.

ΣΩ. Ἐδει δὲ τὸ διπλάσιον πόσων εἶναι ποδῶν;

¹ Ναί om. mss.

MENO

soc. And a space of four feet is made from this line of half the length ?

BOY. Yes.

soc. Very well ; and is not a space of eight feet double the size of this one, and half the size of this other ?

BOY. Yes.

soc. Will it not be made from a line longer than the one of these, and shorter than the other ?

BOY. I think so.

soc. Excellent : always answer just what you think. Now tell me, did we not draw this line two feet, and that four ?

BOY. Yes.

soc. Then the line on the side of the eight-foot figure should be more than this of two feet, and less than the other of four ?

BOY. It should.

soc. Try and tell me how much you would say it is.

BOY. Three feet.

soc. Then if it is to be three feet, we shall add on a half to this one, and so make it three feet ? For here we have two, and here one more, and so again on that side there are two, and another one ; and that makes the figure of which you speak.

BOY. Yes.

soc. Now if it be three this way and three that way, the whole space will be thrice three feet, will it not ?

BOY. So it seems.

soc. And thrice three feet are how many ?

BOY. Nine.

soc. And how many feet was that double one to be ?

ΠΑΙΣ. Ὀκτώ.

ΣΩ. Οὐδ' ἄρα ἀπὸ τῆς τρίποδός πω τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον γίγνεται.

ΠΑΙΣ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλ' ἀπὸ ποίας; πειρώ ἡμῖν εἰπεῖν ἀκρι-
84 βῶς· καὶ εἰ μὴ βούλει ἀριθμεῖν, ἀλλὰ δεῖξον ἀπὸ ποίας.

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἄλλὰ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔγωγε οὐκ οἶδα.

ΣΩ. Ἐννοεῖς αὖ, ὦ Μένων, οὗ ἐστὶν ἤδη βαδίζων ὄδε τοῦ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι; ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἦδει μὲν οὖ, ἢ τις ἔστιν ἢ τοῦ ὀκτώποδος χωρίου γραμμῆ, ὡσπερ οὐδὲ νῦν πω οἶδεν, ἀλλ' οὖν ᾤετό γ' αὐτὴν τότε εἰδέναί, καὶ θαρραλέως ἀπεκρίνετο ὡς εἰδώς, καὶ οὐχ ἠγείτο ἀπορεῖν· νῦν δὲ ἠγείται ἀπορεῖν ἤδη, καὶ ὡσπερ οὐκ οἶδεν, οὐδ' οἶεται
B εἰδέναί.

ΜΕΝ. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν νῦν βέλτιον ἔχει περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὁ οὐκ ἦδει;

ΜΕΝ. Καὶ τοῦτό μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Ἀπορεῖν οὖν αὐτὸν ποιήσαντες καὶ ναρκᾶν ὡσπερ ἢ νάρκη, μῶν τι ἐβλάψαμεν;

ΜΕΝ. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Προὔργου γοῦν τι πεποιθήκαμεν, ὡς ἔοικε, πρὸς τὸ ἐξευρεῖν ὅπη ἔχει· νῦν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ζητή-
σειεν ἂν ἠδέως οὐκ εἰδώς, τότε δὲ ῥαδίως ἂν καὶ πρὸς πολλοὺς καὶ πολλάκις ᾤετ' ἂν εὖ λέγειν περὶ
C τοῦ διπλασίου χωρίου, ὡς δεῖ διπλασίαν τὴν γραμ-
μὴν ἔχειν μήκει.

MENO

BOY. Eight.

soc. So we fail to get our eight-foot figure from this three-foot line.

BOY. Yes, indeed.

soc. But from what line shall we get it? Try and tell us exactly; and if you would rather not reckon it out, just show what line it is.

BOY. Well, on my word, Socrates, I for one do not know.

soc. There now, Meno, do you observe what progress he has already made in his recollection? At first he did not know what is the line that forms the figure of eight feet, and he does not know even now: but at any rate he thought he knew then, and confidently answered as though he knew, and was aware of no difficulty; whereas now he feels the difficulty he is in, and besides not knowing does not think he knows.

MEN. That is true.

soc. And is he not better off in respect of the matter which he did not know?

MEN. I think that too is so.

soc. Now, by causing him to doubt and giving him the torpedo's shock, have we done him any harm?

MEN. I think not.

soc. And we have certainly given him some assistance, it would seem, towards finding out the truth of the matter: for now he will push on in the search gladly, as lacking knowledge; whereas then he would have been only too ready to suppose he was right in saying, before any number of people any number of times, that the double space must have a line of double the length for its side.

PLATO

ΜΕΝ. Ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. Οἶει οὖν ἂν αὐτὸν πρότερον ἐπιχειρήσαι
ζητεῖν ἢ μαθάνειν τοῦτο, ὃ ᾤετο εἰδέναι οὐκ
εἰδώς, πρὶν εἰς ἀπορίαν κατέπεσεν ἠγησάμενος μὴ
εἰδέναι, καὶ ἐπόθησε τὸ εἰδέναι;

ΜΕΝ. Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Ὄνητο ἄρα ναρκήσας;

ΜΕΝ. Δοκεῖ μοι.

ΣΩ. Σκέψαι δὴ ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἀπορίας ὅ τι καὶ
ἀνευρήσει ζητῶν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ ἐρωτῶντος
D ἐμοῦ καὶ οὐ διδάσκοντος· φύλαττε δὲ ἂν που
εὐρύς με διδάσκοντα καὶ διεξιόντα αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ
μὴ τὰς τούτου δόξας ἀνερωτῶντα.

Λέγε γάρ μοι σύ· οὐ τὸ μὲν τετράπουν τοῦτο
ἡμῖν ἐστὶ χωρίον; μαθάνεις;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Ἐτερον δὲ αὐτῷ προσθεῖμεν ἂν τουτὶ
ἴσον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Καὶ τρίτον τόδε ἴσον ἐκατέρω τούτων;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν προσαναπληρωσαίμεθ' ἂν τὸ ἐν
τῇ γωνίᾳ τόδε;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλο τι οὖν γένοιτ' ἂν τέτταρα ἴσα χωρία
τάδε;

E ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

MENO

MEN. It seems so.

soc. Now do you imagine he would have attempted to inquire or learn what he thought he knew, when he did not know it, until he had been reduced to the perplexity of realizing that he did not know, and had felt a craving to know?

MEN. I think not, Socrates.

soc. Then the torpedo's shock was of advantage to him?

MEN. I think so.

soc. Now you should note how, as a result of this perplexity, he will go on and discover something by joint inquiry with me, while I merely ask questions and do not teach him; and be on the watch to see if at any point you find me teaching him or expounding to him, instead of questioning him on his opinions.

Tell me, boy: here we have a square of four feet,¹ have we not? You understand?

BOY. Yes.

soc. And here we add another square² equal to it?

BOY. Yes.

soc. And here a third,³ equal to either of them?

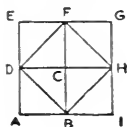
BOY. Yes.

soc. Now shall we fill up this vacant space⁴ in the corner?

BOY. By all means.

soc. So here we must have four equal spaces?

BOY. Yes.



¹ ABCD.

² DCFE.

³ CHGF.

⁴ BIHC.

PLATO

ΣΩ. Τί οὖν; τὸ ὅλον τόδε ποσαπλάσιον τοῦδε γίγνεται;

ΠΑΙΣ. Τετραπλάσιον.

ΣΩ. Ἐδει δὲ διπλάσιον ἡμῖν γενέσθαι ἢ οὐ μέμνησαι;

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ γε.

85 ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἔστιν αὕτη γραμμὴ ἐκ γωνίας εἰς γωνίαν τείνουσα, τέμνουσα δίχα ἕκαστον τούτων τῶν χωρίων;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τέτταρες αὗται γίνονται γραμμαὶ ἴσαι, περιέχουσαι τουτὶ τὸ χωρίον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Γίνονται γάρ.

ΣΩ. Σκόπει δὴ· πηλίκον τί ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον;

ΠΑΙΣ. Οὐ μανθάνω.

ΣΩ. Οὐχὶ τεττάρων ὄντων τούτων ἡμισυ ἑκάστου ἐκάστη ἢ γραμμὴ ἀποτέτμηκεν ἐντός; ἢ οὐ;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Πόσα οὖν τηλικαῦτα ἐν τούτῳ ἔνεστιν;

ΠΑΙΣ. Τέτταρα.

ΣΩ. Πόσα δὲ ἐν τῷδε;

ΠΑΙΣ. Δύο.

ΣΩ. Τὰ δὲ τέτταρα τοῖν δυοῖν τί ἐστὶν;

ΠΑΙΣ. Διπλάσια.

B ΣΩ. Τόδε οὖν ποσάπουν γίγνεται;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ὀκτώπουν.

ΣΩ. Ἀπὸ ποίας γραμμῆς;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ἀπὸ ταύτης.

ΣΩ. Ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκ γωνίας εἰς γωνίαν τεινούσης τοῦ τετράποδος;

ΠΑΙΣ. Ναί.

MENO

soc. Well now, how many times larger is this whole space than this other ?

boy. Four times.

soc. But it was to have been only twice, you remember ?

boy. To be sure.

soc. And does this line,¹ drawn from corner to corner, cut in two each of these spaces ?

boy. Yes.

soc. And have we here four equal lines² containing this space³ ?

boy. We have.

soc. Now consider how large this space³ is.

boy. I do not understand.

soc. Has not each of the inside lines cut off half of each of these four spaces ?

boy. Yes.

soc. And how many spaces of that size are there in this part ?

boy. Four.

soc. And how many in this⁴ ?

boy. Two.

soc. And four is how many times two ?

boy. Twice.

soc. And how many feet is this space⁵ ?

boy. Eight feet.

soc. From what line do we get this figure ?

boy. From this.

soc. From the line drawn corner-wise across the four-foot figure ?

boy. Yes.

¹ BD. ² BD, DF, FH, HB. ³ BDFH.

⁴ ABCD.

⁵ BDFH.

PLATO

ΣΩ. Καλοῦσι δέ γε ταύτην διάμετρον οἱ σοφισταί· ὥστ' εἰ ταύτῃ διάμετρος ὄνομα, ἀπὸ τῆς διαμέτρου ἄν, ὡς σὺ φῆς, ὦ παῖ Μένωνος, γίνουτ' ἂν τὸ διπλάσιον χωρίον.

ΠΑΙΣ. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Τί σοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Μένων; ἔστιν ἤντινα δόξαν οὐχ αὐτοῦ οὗτος ἀπεκρίνατο;

C ΜΕΝ. Οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῦ.

ΣΩ. Καὶ μὴν οὐκ ἦδει γε, ὡς ἔφαμεν ὀλίγον πρότερον.

ΜΕΝ. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Ἐνήσαν δέ γε αὐτῷ αὐται αἱ δόξαι· ἢ οὐ;

ΜΕΝ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Τῷ οὐκ εἰδότι ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἰδῆ ἔνεισιν ἀληθεῖς δόξαι περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδεν;

ΜΕΝ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Καὶ νῦν μὲν γε αὐτῷ ὥσπερ ὄναρ ἄρτι ἀνακεκίνηται αἱ δόξαι αὐται· εἰ δὲ αὐτόν τις ἀνερήσεται πολλάκις τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα καὶ πολλαχῆ, οἶσθ' ὅτι τελευτῶν οὐδενὸς ἦττον ἀκριβῶς ἐπι-

D στήσεται περὶ τούτων.

ΜΕΝ. Ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οὐδενὸς διδάξαντος ἀλλ' ἐρωτήσαντος ἐπιστήσεται, ἀναλαβὼν αὐτὸς ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην;

ΜΕΝ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Τὸ δὲ ἀναλαμβάνειν αὐτὸν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐπιστήμην οὐκ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαί ἐστιν;

ΜΕΝ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ἄρ' οὖν οὐ τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἣν νῦν οὗτος ἔχει, ἦτοι ἔλαβέ ποτε ἢ αἰεὶ εἶχεν

ΜΕΝ. Ναί.

MENO

soc. The professors call it the diagonal : so if the diagonal is its name, then according to you, Meno's boy, the double space is the square of the diagonal.

BOY. Yes, certainly it is, Socrates.

soc. What do you think, Meno ? Was there any opinion that he did not give as an answer of his own thought ?

MEN. No, they were all his own.

soc. But you see, he did not know, as we were saying a while since.

MEN. That is true.

soc. Yet he had in him these opinions, had he not ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. So that he who does not know about any matters, whatever they be, may have true opinions on such matters, about which he knows nothing ?

MEN. Apparently.

soc. And at this moment those opinions have just been stirred up in him, like a dream ; but if he were repeatedly asked these same questions in a variety of forms, you know he will have in the end as exact an understanding of them as anyone.

MEN. So it seems.

soc. Without anyone having taught him, and only through questions put to him, he will understand, recovering the knowledge out of himself ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. And is not this recovery of knowledge, in himself and by himself, recollection ?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And must he not have either once acquired or always had the knowledge he now has ?

MEN. Yes.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὲν αἰεὶ εἶχεν, αἰεὶ καὶ ἦν ἐπιστήμων· εἰ δὲ ἔλαβέ ποτε, οὐκ ἂν ἔν γε τῷ νῦν βίῳ
 Ε. εἰληφῶς εἶη. ἢ δεδίδαχέ τις τοῦτον γεωμετρεῖν; οὗτος γὰρ ποιήσει περὶ πάσης γεωμετρίας ταῦτα ταῦτα, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων ἀπάντων. ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις τοῦτον πάντα δεδίδαχε; δίκαιος γάρ που εἰ εἰδέναι, ἄλλως τε ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ σῆ οἰκίᾳ γέγονε καὶ τέθραπται.

ΜΕΝ. Ἄλλ' οἶδα ἔγωγε ὅτι οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐδίδαξεν.

ΣΩ. Ἐχει δὲ ταύτας τὰς δόξας, ἢ οὐχί;

ΜΕΝ. Ἀνάγκη, ὦ Σώκρατες, φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐν τῷ νῦν βίῳ λαβὼν, οὐκ ἤδη
 86 τοῦτο δηλόν, ὅτι ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ χρόνῳ εἶχε καὶ ἐμεμαθήκει;

ΜΕΝ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οὗτός γέ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος, ὅτ' οὐκ ἦν ἄνθρωπος;

ΜΕΝ. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Εἰ οὖν ὄν τ' ἂν¹ ἢ χρόνον καὶ ὄν ἂν μὴ ἢ ἄνθρωπος, ἐνέσονται αὐτῷ ἀληθεῖς δόξαι, αἱ ἐρωτή-
 σει ἐπεγερθεῖσαι ἐπιστήμαι γίνονται, ἅρ' οὖν τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον μεμαθηκυῖα ἔσται ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ; δηλόν γὰρ ὅτι τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος.

ΜΕΝ. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ αἰεὶ ἢ ἀλήθεια ἡμῖν τῶν ὄντων
 Β ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἀθάνατος ἂν ἢ ψυχὴ εἶη, ὥστε θαρροῦντα χρή, ὃ μὴ τυγχάνεις ἐπιστάμενος νῦν, τοῦτο δ' ἔστιν ὃ μὴ μεμνημένος, ἐπιχειρεῖν ζητεῖν καὶ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι;

¹ ὄν τ' ἂν Baiter: ὅταν, ὅτ' ἂν MSS.

MENO

soc. Now if he always had it, he was always in a state of knowing; and if he acquired it at some time, he could not have acquired it in this life. Or has someone taught him geometry? You see, he can do the same as this with all geometry and every branch of knowledge. Now, can anyone have taught him all this? You ought surely to know, especially as he was born and bred in your house.

MEN. Well, I know that no one has ever taught him.

soc. And has he these opinions, or has he not?

MEN. He must have them, Socrates, evidently.

soc. And if he did not acquire them in this present life, is it not obvious at once that he had them and learnt them during some other time?

MEN. Apparently.

soc. And this must have been the time when he was not a human being?

MEN. Yes.

soc. So if in both of these periods—when he was and was not a human being—he has had true opinions in him which have only to be awakened by questioning to become knowledge, his soul must have had this cognisance throughout all time? For clearly he has always either been or not been a human being.

MEN. Evidently.

soc. And if the truth of all things that are is always in our soul, then the soul must be immortal; so that you should take heart and, whatever you do not happen to know at present—that is, what you do not remember—you must endeavour to search out and recollect?

PLATO

MEN. Εὖ μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως.

ΣΩ. Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἐμοί, ὦ Μένων. καὶ τὰ μέν γε ἄλλα οὐκ ἂν πάνυ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λόγου δισχυρισαίμην· ὅτι δ' οἰόμενοι δεῖν ζητεῖν, ἃ μὴ τις οἶδε, βελτίους ἂν εἴμεν καὶ ἀνδρικώτεροι καὶ ἥττον ἄργοι ἢ εἰ οἰοίμεθα, ἃ μὴ ἐπιστάμεθα, μηδὲ δυνατὸν εἶναι
C εὐρεῖν μηδὲ δεῖν ζητεῖν, περὶ τούτου πάνυ ἂν διαμαχοίμην, εἰ οἴός τε εἶην, καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ.

MEN. Καὶ τοῦτο μέν γε δοκεῖς μοι εὖ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Βούλει οὖν, ἐπειδὴ ὁμονοοῦμεν, ὅτι ζητητέον περὶ οὗ μὴ τις οἶδεν, ἐπιχειρήσωμεν κοινῇ ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἔστιν ἀρετή;

MEN. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν. οὐ μέντοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλ' ἔγωγε ἐκείνο ἂν ἤδιστα, ὅπερ ἠρόμην τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ σκεψαίμην καὶ ἀκούσαιμι, πότερον ὡς διδακτῶ ὄντι αὐτῶ δεῖ ἐπιχειρεῖν, ἢ ὡς φύσει
D ἢ ὡς τίνι ποτὲ τρόπῳ παραγιγνομένης τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τῆς ἀρετῆς.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐγὼ ἦρχον, ὦ Μένων, μὴ μόνον ἐμαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ σοῦ, οὐκ ἂν ἐσκεψάμεθα πρότερον εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴτε οὐ διδακτὸν ἢ ἀρετή, πρὶν ὅ τι ἔστι πρῶτον ἐζητήσαμεν αὐτό· ἐπειδὴ δὲ σὺ σαυτοῦ μὲν οὐδ' ἐπιχειρεῖς ἄρχειν, ἵνα δὴ ἐλεύθερος ᾖς, ἐμοῦ δὲ ἐπιχειρεῖς τε ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεις, συγχωρήσομαί σοι· τί γὰρ χρὴ ποιεῖν;
E ἔοικεν οὖν σκεπτέον εἶναι, ποῖόν τί ἔστιν ὁ μῆψω

¹ Socrates characteristically pretends to be at the mercy of the wayward young man.

MENO

MEN. What you say commends itself to me, Socrates, I know not how.

soc. And so it does to me, Meno. Most of the points I have made in support of my argument are not such as I can confidently assert; but that the belief in the duty of inquiring after what we do not know will make us better and braver and less helpless than the notion that there is not even a possibility of discovering what we do not know, nor any duty of inquiring after it—this is a point for which I am determined to do battle, so far as I am able, both in word and deed.

MEN. There also I consider that you speak aright, Socrates.

soc. Then since we are of one mind as to the duty of inquiring into what one does not know, do you agree to our attempting a joint inquiry into the nature of virtue?

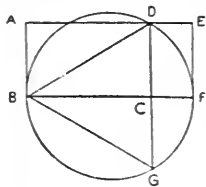
MEN. By all means. But still, Socrates, for my part I would like best of all to examine that question I asked at first, and hear your view as to whether in pursuing it we are to regard it as a thing to be taught, or as a gift of nature to mankind, or as arriving to them in some other way which I should be glad to know.

soc. Had I control over you, Meno, as over myself, we should not have begun considering whether virtue can or cannot be taught until we had first inquired into the main question of what it is. But as you do not so much as attempt to control yourself—you are so fond of your liberty—and both attempt and hold control over me,¹ I will yield to your request—what else am I to do? So it seems we are to consider what sort of thing it is of

ἴσμεν ὅ τι ἔστιν. εἰ μή τι οὖν ἀλλὰ σμικρόν γέ
 μοι τῆς ἀρχῆς χάλασον, καὶ συγχώρησον ἐξ ὑπο-
 θέσεως αὐτὸ σκοπεῖσθαι, εἴτε διδακτὸν ἔστιν εἴτε
 ὀπωσοῦν. λέγω δὲ τὸ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ὧδε, ὥσπερ
 οἱ γεωμέτραι πολλάκις σκοποῦνται, ἐπειδὴν τις
 ἔρηται αὐτούς, οἷον περὶ χωρίου, εἰ οἷόν τε ἐς
 87 τόνδε τὸν κύκλον τόδε τὸ χωρίον τρίγωνον ἐν-
 ταθῆναι, εἴποι ἄν τις ὅτι οὐπω οἶδα εἰ ἔστι τοῦτο
 τοιοῦτον, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ μὲν τινα ὑπόθεσιν προὔργου
 οἶμαι ἔχειν πρὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα τοιάνδε. εἰ μὲν
 ἔστι τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον τοιοῦτον, οἷον παρὰ τὴν
 δοθεῖσαν αὐτοῦ γραμμὴν παρατείναντα ἐλλείπειν
 τοιούτῳ χωρίῳ, οἷον ἂν αὐτὸ τὸ παρατεταμένον
 ᾗ, ἄλλο τι συμβαίνειν μοι δοκεῖ, καὶ ἄλλο αὖ, εἰ
 ἀδύνατόν ἐστι ταῦτα παθεῖν· ὑποθέμενος οὖν
 ἐθέλω εἰπεῖν σοι τὸ συμβαῖνον περὶ τῆς ἐντάσεως
 Β αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κύκλον, εἴτε ἀδύνατον εἴτε μή.
 οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς ἡμεῖς, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἴσμεν
 οὐθ' ὅ τί ἐστιν οὐθ' ὁποῖόν τι, ὑποθέμενοι αὐτὸ
 σκοπῶμεν εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴτε οὐ διδακτὸν ἔστιν,
 ὧδε λέγοντες· εἰ ποῖόν τί ἐστι τῶν περὶ τὴν
 ψυχὴν ὄντων ἀρετῆ, διδακτὸν ἂν εἴη ἢ οὐ διδακτὸν;
 πρῶτον μὲν εἰ ἔστιν ἀλλοῖον ἢ οἷον ἐπιστήμη,

MENO

which we do not yet know what it is! Well, the least you can do is to relax just a little of your authority, and allow the question—whether virtue comes by teaching or some other way—to be examined by means of hypothesis. I mean by hypothesis what the geometers often do in dealing with a question put to them; for example, whether a certain area is capable of being inscribed as a triangular space in a given circle: they reply—“I cannot yet tell whether it has that capability; but I think, if I may put it so, that I have a certain helpful hypothesis for the problem, and it is as follows: If this area¹ is such that when you apply it to the given line² of the circle you find it falls short³ by a space similar to that which you have just applied, then I take it you have one consequence, and if it is impossible for it to fall so, then some other. Accordingly I wish to put a hypothesis, before I state our conclusion as regards inscribing this figure in the circle by saying whether it is impossible or not.” In the same way with regard to our question about virtue, since we do not know either what it is or what kind of thing it may be, we had best make use of a hypothesis in considering whether it can be taught or not, as thus: what kind of thing must virtue be in the class of mental properties, so as to be teachable or not? In the first place, if it is something



¹ The problem seems to be that of inscribing in a circle a triangle (BDG) equal in area to a given rectangle (ABCD).

² *i.e.* the diameter (BF).

³ *i.e.* falls short of the rectangle on the diameter (ABFE).

PLATO

ἀρα διδακτὸν ἢ οὐ, ἢ ὃ νῦν δὴ ἐλέγομεν, ἀναμνηστὸν·
 διαφερέτω δὲ μηδὲν ἡμῖν ὁποτέρῳ ἂν τῷ ὀνόματι
 C χρώμεθα· ἀλλ' ἀρα διδακτὸν; ἢ τοῦτό γε παντὶ
 δῆλον, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο διδάσκεται ἀνθρώπος ἢ
 ἐπιστήμην;

MEN. Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Εἰ δέ γ' ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη τις ἢ ἀρετή, δῆλον
 ὅτι διδακτὸν ἂν εἴη.

MEN. Πῶς γὰρ οὐ;

ΣΩ. Τούτου μὲν ἄρα ταχὺ ἀπηλλάγμεθα, ὅτι
 τοιοῦδε μὲν ὄντος διδακτὸν, τοιοῦδε δ' οὐ.

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Τὸ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο, ὡς ἔοικε, δεῖ σκέψασθαι,
 πότερόν ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη ἢ ἀρετή ἢ ἄλλοῖον ἐπι-
 στήμης.

D MEN. Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ τοῦτο μετὰ τοῦτο σκεπτέον
 εἶναι.

ΣΩ. Τί δὲ δὴ; ἄλλο τι ἢ ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ φάμεν
 εἶναι τὴν ἀρετὴν, καὶ αὕτη ἢ ὑπόθεσις μένει ἡμῖν,
 ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι;

MEN. Πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὲν τί ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἄλλο
 χωριζόμενον ἐπιστήμης, τάχ' ἂν εἴη ἢ ἀρετὴ οὐκ
 ἐπιστήμη τις· εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἐστὶν ἀγαθόν, ὃ οὐκ
 ἐπιστήμη περιέχει, ἐπιστήμην ἂν τιν' αὐτὸ ὑπο-
 πτεύοντες εἶναι ὀρθῶς ὑποπτεύοιμεν.

MEN. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Καὶ μὴν ἀρετῇ γ' ἐσμὲν ἀγαθοί;

MEN. Ναί.

E ΣΩ. Εἰ δὲ ἀγαθοί, ὠφέλιμοι· πάντα γὰρ ἀγαθὰ
 ὠφέλιμα. οὐχί;

MEN. Ναί.

MENO

dissimilar or similar to knowledge, is it taught or not—or, as we were saying just now, remembered? Let us have no disputing about the choice of a name: is it taught? Or is not this fact plain to everyone—that the one and only thing taught to men is knowledge?

MEN. I agree to that.

soc. Then if virtue is a kind of knowledge, clearly it must be taught?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. So you see we have made short work of this question—if virtue belongs to one class of things it is teachable, and if to another, it is not.

MEN. To be sure.

soc. The next question, it would seem, that we have to consider is whether virtue is knowledge, or of another kind than knowledge.

MEN. I should say that is the next thing we have to consider.

soc. Well now, surely we call virtue a good thing, do we not, and our hypothesis stands, that it is good?

MEN. Certainly we do.

soc. Then if there is some good apart and separable from knowledge, it may be that virtue is not a kind of knowledge; but if there is nothing good that is not embraced by knowledge, our suspicion that virtue is a kind of knowledge would be well founded.

MEN. Quite so.

soc. Now it is by virtue that we are good?

MEN. Yes.

soc. And if good, profitable; for all good things are profitable, are they not?

MEN. Yes.

PLATO

ΣΩ. Καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ δὴ ὠφέλιμόν ἐστιν;

MEN. Ἀνάγκη ἐκ τῶν ὠμολογημένων.

ΣΩ. Σκεψώμεθα δὴ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀναλαμβάνοντες, ποιά ἐστὶν ἡ ἡμᾶς ὠφελεί. ὑγίεια, φαμέν, καὶ ἰσχύς καὶ κάλλος καὶ πλοῦτος δὴ ταῦτα λέγομεν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὠφέλιμα. οὐχί;

MEN. Ναί.

88 ΣΩ. Ταῦτά δὲ ταῦτά φαμεν ἐνίοτε καὶ βλάπτειν ἢ σὺ ἄλλως φῆς ἢ οὕτως;

MEN. Οὐκ, ἀλλ' οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Σκόπει δὴ, ὅταν τί ἐκάστου τούτων ἡγῆται, ὠφελεί ἡμᾶς, καὶ ὅταν τί, βλάπτει; ἄρ' οὐκ ὅταν μὲν ὀρθὴ χρῆσις, ὠφελεί, ὅταν δὲ μὴ, βλάπτει;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ἐπι τοίνυν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν σκεψώμεθα. σωφροσύνην τι καλεῖς καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ εὐμαθίαν καὶ μνήμην καὶ μεγαλοπρέπειαν καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα;

B MEN. Ἐγώ γε.

ΣΩ. Σκόπει δὴ, τούτων ἅττα σοι δοκεῖ μὴ ἐπιστήμη εἶναι ἀλλ' ἄλλο ἐπιστήμης, εἰ οὐχὶ τοτὲ μὲν βλάπτει, τοτὲ δὲ ὠφελεί; οἷον ἀνδρεία, εἰ μὴ ἔστι φρόνησις ἢ ἀνδρεία ἀλλ' οἷον θάρρος τι· οὐκ ὅταν μὲν ἄνευ νοῦ θαρρῆ ἄνθρωπος, βλάπτεται, ὅταν δὲ σὺν νῶ, ὠφελείται;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ σωφροσύνη ὡσαύτως καὶ εὐμαθία· μετὰ μὲν νοῦ καὶ μανθανόμενα καὶ κατάρτυόμενα ὠφέλιμα, ἄνευ δὲ νοῦ βλαβερά;

MENO

soc. So virtue is profitable ?

MEN. That must follow from what has been admitted.

soc. Then let us see, in particular instances, what sort of things they are that profit us. Health, let us say, and strength, and beauty, and wealth—these and their like we call profitable, do we not ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. But these same things, we admit, actually harm us at times ; or do you dispute that statement ?

MEN. No, I agree.

soc. Consider now, what is the guiding condition in each case that makes them at one time profitable, and at another harmful. Are they not profitable when the use of them is right, and harmful when it is not ?

MEN. To be sure.

soc. Then let us consider next the goods of the soul : by these you understand temperance, justice, courage, intelligence, memory, magnanimity, and so forth ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. Now tell me ; such of these as you think are not knowledge, but different from knowledge—do they not sometimes harm us, and sometimes profit us ? For example, courage, if it is courage apart from prudence, and only a sort of boldness : when a man is bold without sense, he is harmed ; but when he has sense at the same time, he is profited, is he not ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. And the same holds of temperance and intelligence : things learnt and co-ordinated with the aid of sense are profitable, but without sense they are harmful ?

C MEN. Πάνυ σφόδρα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν συλλήβδην πάντα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιχειρήματα καὶ καρτερήματα ἡγουμένης μὲν φρονήσεως εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν τελευτᾶ, ἀφροσύνης δ' εἰς τὸναντίον;

MEN. Ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. Εἰ ἄρα ἀρετὴ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τί ἐστι καὶ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῷ ὠφελίμω εἶναι, φρόνησιν αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι, ἐπειδήπερ πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὰ μὲν καθ' αὐτὰ οὔτε ὠφέλιμα οὔτε βλαβερά ἐστι, προσγενομένης δὲ φρονήσεως ἢ ἀφροσύνης

D βλαβερά τε καὶ ὠφέλιμα γίνονται. κατὰ δὲ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ὠφελιμὸν γε οὔσαν τὴν ἀρετὴν φρόνησιν δεῖ τιν' εἶναι.

MEN. Ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ τᾶλλα, ἃ νῦν δὴ ἐλέγομεν, πλοῦτον τε καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, τοτὲ μὲν ἀγαθὰ τοτὲ δὲ βλαβερά εἶναι, ἄρ' οὐχ ὥσπερ τῇ ἄλλῃ ψυχῇ ἢ φρόνησις ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐποίει,

E ἢ δὲ ἀφροσύνη βλαβερά, οὕτως αὖ καὶ τούτοις ἢ ψυχῇ ὀρθῶς μὲν χρωμένη καὶ ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα αὐτὰ ποιεῖ, μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ βλαβερά;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ὄρθῶς δέ γε ἢ ἔμφρων ἡγεῖται, ἡμαρτημένως δ' ἢ ἄφρων;

MEN. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν οὕτω δὴ κατὰ πάντων εἰπεῖν ἔστι, τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνηρτῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῆς εἰς
89 φρόνησιν, εἰ μέλλει ἀγαθὰ εἶναι· καὶ τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ φρόνησις ἂν εἴη τὸ ὠφελιμον· φαμὲν δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὠφελιμον εἶναι;

MENO

MEN. Most certainly.

soc. And in brief, all the undertakings and endurances of the soul, when guided by wisdom, end in happiness, but when folly guides, in the opposite ?

MEN. So it seems.

soc. Then if virtue is something that is in the soul, and must needs be profitable, it ought to be wisdom, seeing that all the properties of the soul are in themselves neither profitable nor harmful, but are made either one or the other by the addition of wisdom or folly ; and hence, by this argument, virtue being profitable must be a sort of wisdom.

MEN. I agree.

soc. Then as to the other things, wealth and the like, that we mentioned just now as being sometimes good and sometimes harmful—are not these also made profitable or harmful by the soul according as she uses and guides them rightly or wrongly : just as, in the case of the soul generally, we found that the guidance of wisdom makes profitable the properties of the soul, while that of folly makes them harmful ?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And the wise soul guides rightly, and the foolish erroneously ?

MEN. That is so.

soc. Then may we assert this as a universal rule, that in man all other things depend upon the soul, while the things of the soul herself depend upon wisdom, if they are to be good ; and so by this account the profitable will be wisdom, and virtue, we say, is profitable ?

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Φρόνησιν ἄρα φαιμέν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, ἥτοι σύμπασαν ἢ μέρος τι;

MEN. Δοκεῖ μοι καλῶς λέγεσθαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὰ λεγόμενα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, οὐκ ἂν εἶεν φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοί.

MEN. Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ.

B ΣΩ. Καὶ γὰρ ἂν που καὶ τόδ' ἦν· εἰ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἐγίγνοντο, ἧσάν που ἂν ἡμῖν οἱ ἐγίγνωσκον τῶν νέων τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τὰς φύσεις, οὓς ἡμεῖς ἂν παραλαβόντες ἐκείνων ἀποφηνάντων ἐφυλάττομεν ἐν ἀκροπόλει, κατασημνηάμενοι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ χρυσίον, ἵνα μηδεὶς αὐτοὺς διέφθειρεν, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἀφίκοιντο εἰς τὴν ἡλικίαν, χρήσιμοι γίνονται ταῖς πόλεσιν.

MEN. Εἰκός γέ τοι, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. Ἄρ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίνονται, ἄρα μαθήσει;

MEN. Δοκεῖ μοι ἤδη ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι· καὶ δῆλον, ὦ Σώκρατες, κατὰ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν, εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ἀρετή, ὅτι διδακτόν ἐστιν.

ΣΩ. Ἴσως νῆ Δία· ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦτο οὐ καλῶς ὠμολογήσαμεν;

MEN. Καὶ μὴν ἐδόκει γε ἄρτι καλῶς λέγεσθαι.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλὰ μὴ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἄρτι μόνον δέη αὐτὸ δοκεῖν καλῶς λέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα, εἰ μέλλει τι αὐτοῦ ὑγιὲς εἶναι.

D MEN. Τί οὖν δῆ; πρὸς τί βλέπων δυσχεραίνεις αὐτὸ καὶ ἀπιστεῖς μὴ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη ἢ ἡ ἀρετή;

MENO

MEN. Certainly.

soc. Hence we conclude that virtue is either wholly or partly wisdom?

MEN. It seems to me that your statement, Socrates, is excellent.

soc. Then if this is so, good men cannot be good by nature.

MEN. I think not.

soc. No, for then, I presume, we should have had this result: if good men were so by nature, we surely should have had men able to discern who of the young were good by nature, and on their pointing them out we should have taken them over and kept them safe in the citadel, having set our mark on them far rather than on our gold treasure, in order that none might have tampered with them, and that when they came to be of age, they might be useful to their country.

MEN. Yes, most likely, Socrates.

soc. So since it is not by nature that the good become good, is it by education?

MEN. We must now conclude, I think, that it is; and plainly, Socrates, on our hypothesis that virtue is knowledge, it must be taught.

soc. Yes, I daresay; but what if we were not right in agreeing to that?

MEN. Well, it seemed to be a correct statement a moment ago.

soc. Yes, but not only a moment ago must it seem correct, but now also and hereafter, if it is to be at all sound.

MEN. Why, what reason have you to make a difficulty about it, and feel a doubt as to virtue being knowledge?

PLATO

ΣΩ. Ἐγὼ σοι ἐρῶ, ὦ Μένων. τὸ μὲν γὰρ διδακτὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι, εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη ἐστίν, οὐκ ἀνατίθεμαι μὴ οὐ καλῶς λέγεσθαι· ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη, σκέψαι ἐάν σοι δοκῶ εἰκότως ἀπιστεῖν. τόδε γάρ μοι εἶπέ· εἰ ἔστι διδακτὸν ὅτι οὖν πρᾶγμα, μὴ μόνον ἀρετῆ, οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτοῦ καὶ διδασκάλους καὶ μαθητὰς εἶναι;

Ε ΜΕΝ. Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τούναντίον αὐ, οὐ μήτε διδάσκαλοι μήτε μαθηταὶ εἶεν, καλῶς ἂν αὐτὸ εἰκάζοντες εἰκάζοιμεν μὴ διδακτὸν εἶναι;

ΜΕΝ. Ἔστι ταῦτα· ἀλλ' ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλοι οὐ δοκοῦσί σοι εἶναι;

ΣΩ. Πολλάκις γοῦν ζητῶν, εἴ τινες εἶεν αὐτῆς διδάσκαλοι, πάντα ποιῶν οὐ δύναμαι εὔρεῖν. καίτοι μετὰ πολλῶν γε ζητῶ, καὶ τούτων μάλιστα, οὓς ἂν οἶμαι ἐμπειροτάτους εἶναι τοῦ πράγματος. καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν, ὦ Μένων, εἰς καλὸν ἡμῖν Ἄνυτος
 90 ὅδε παρεκαθέζετο, ὦ μεταδῶμεν τῆς ζητήσεως. εἰκότως δ' ἂν μεταδοῖμεν· Ἄνυτος γὰρ ὅδε πρῶτον μὲν ἐστὶ πατρὸς πλουσίου τε καὶ σοφοῦ Ἄνθεμίωνος, ὃς ἐγένετο πλούσιος οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου οὐδὲ δόντος τινός, ὥσπερ ὁ νῦν νεωστὶ εἰληφὼς τὰ Πολυκράτους χρήματα Ἰσμηνίας ὁ Θηβαῖος, ἀλλὰ τῇ αὐτοῦ σοφίᾳ κτησάμενος καὶ ἐπιμελείᾳ, ἔπειτα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα οὐχ ὑπερήφανος δοκῶν εἶναι
 Β πολίτης οὐδὲ ὀγκώδης τε καὶ ἐπαχθῆς, ἀλλὰ κόσμιος καὶ εὐσταλῆς ἀνὴρ· ἔπειτα τοῦτον εὐ ἔθρεψε καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν, ὡς δοκεῖ Ἀθηναίων τῷ

¹ A democratic leader at Thebes who assisted Anytus and the other exiled Athenian democrats in 403 B.C., shortly

MENO

soc. I will tell you, Meno. I do not withdraw as incorrect the statement that it is taught, if it is knowledge ; but as to its being knowledge, consider if you think I have grounds for misgiving. For tell me now : if anything at all, not merely virtue, is teachable, must there not be teachers and learners of it ?

MEN. I think so.

soc. Then also conversely, if a thing had neither teachers nor learners, we should be right in surmising that it could not be taught ?

MEN. That is so : but do you think there are no teachers of virtue ?

soc. I must say I have often inquired whether there were any, but for all my pains I cannot find one. And yet many have shared the search with me, and particularly those persons whom I regard as best qualified for the task. But look, Meno : here, at the very moment when he was wanted, we have Anytus sitting down beside us, to take his share in our quest. And we may well ask his assistance ; for our friend Anytus, in the first place, is the son of a wise and wealthy father, Anthemion, who became rich not by a fluke or a gift—like that man the other day, Ismenias¹ the Theban, who has come into the fortune of a Polycrates²—but as the product of his own skill and industry³ ; and secondly, he has the name of being in general a well-conducted, mannerly person, not insolent towards his fellow-citizens or arrogant and annoying ; and further, he gave his son a good upbringing and education, as the Athenian people think, for they choose him before their return to Athens and the supposed time of this dialogue (about 402 B.C.). Cf. *Rep.* i. 336 A.

² Tyrant of Samos about 530 B.C. Cf. Herodot. iii. 39 foll.

³ As a tanner.

PLATO

πλήθει· αἰροῦνται γοῦν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰς μεγίστας ἀρχάς. δίκαιον δὴ μετὰ τοιούτων ζητεῖν ἀρετῆς περὶ διδασκάλους, εἴτ' εἰσὶν εἶτε μὴ, καὶ οἷτινες. σὺ οὖν ἡμῖν, ὦ Ἄνυτε, συζήτησον, ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ σαυτοῦ ξένῳ Μένωνι τῷδε, περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, τίνες ἂν εἶεν διδάσκαλοι. ὧδε δὲ σκέψαι·

C παρὰ τίνας ἂν αὐτὸν πέμποιμεν διδασκάλους; ἄρ' οὐ παρὰ τοὺς ἰατρούς;

AN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΝ. Τί δ' εἰ σκυτοτόμον ἀγαθὸν βουλοίμεθα γενέσθαι, ἄρ' οὐ παρὰ τοὺς σκυτοτόμους;

AN. Ναί.

ΣΝ. Καὶ τᾶλλα οὕτως;

AN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΝ. Ὡδε δὴ μοι πάλιν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν εἶπέ. παρὰ τοὺς ἰατρούς, φαμέν, πέμποντες τόνδε καλῶς ἂν ἐπέμπομεν, βουλόμενοι ἰατρὸν γενέσθαι·

D ἄρ' ὅταν τοῦτο λέγωμεν, τόδε λέγομεν, ὅτι παρὰ τούτους πέμποντες αὐτὸν σωφρονοῦμεν ἂν, τοὺς ἀντιποιοιμένους τε τῆς τέχνης μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς μὴ, καὶ τοὺς μισθὸν πραττομένους ἐπ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ, ἀποφῆναντας αὐτοὺς διδασκάλους τοῦ βουλομένου ἰέναι τε καὶ μαθάνειν; ἄρ' οὐ πρὸς ταῦτα βλέψαντες καλῶς ἂν πέμποιμεν;

AN. Ναί.

ΣΝ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ αὐλήσεως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα; πολλῇ ἄνοιά ἐστι βουλομένους

E αὐλητὴν τινα ποιῆσαι παρὰ μὲν τοὺς ὑπισχνουμένους διδάξειν τὴν τέχνην καὶ μισθὸν πραττομένους μὴ ἐθέλειν πέμπειν, ἄλλοις δὲ τισι πράγματα παρέχειν, ζητοῦντα μαθάνειν παρὰ τούτων, οἱ

MENO

for the highest offices. This is the sort of man to whom one may look for help in the inquiry as to whether there are teachers of virtue or not, and who they may be. So please, Anytus, join with me and your family-friend Meno in our inquiry about this matter—who can be the teachers. Consider it thus: if we wanted Meno here to be a good doctor, to whom should we send him for instruction? Would it not be to the doctors?

AN. Certainly.

soc. And if we wanted him to become a good cobbler, should we not send him to the cobblers?

AN. Yes.

soc. And in the same way with every other trade?

AN. Certainly.

soc. Now let me ask you something more about these same instances. We should be right, we say, in sending him to the doctors if we wanted him to be a doctor. When we say this, do we mean that we should be wise in sending him to those who profess the art rather than those who do not, and to those who charge a fee for the particular thing they do, as avowed teachers of anyone who wishes to come and learn of them? If these were our reasons, should we not be right in sending him?

AN. Yes.

soc. And the same would hold in the case of flute-playing, and so on with the rest? What folly, when we wanted to make someone a flute-player, to refuse to send him to the professed teachers of the art, who charge a regular fee, and to bother with requests for instruction other people who neither set up to

μήτε προσποιούνται διδάσκαλοι εἶναι μήτ' ἔστιν αὐτῶν μαθητῆς μηδεὶς τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος, ὃ ἡμεῖς ἀξιούμεν μανθάνειν παρ' αὐτῶν ὃν ἂν πέμπωμεν. οὐ πολλή σοι δοκεῖ ἀλογία εἶναι;

AN. Naὶ μὰ Δία ἔμοιγε, καὶ ἀμαθία γε πρὸς.

91 ΣΩ. Καλῶς λέγεις. νῦν τοίνυν ἔξεστί σε μετ' ἐμοῦ κοινῇ βουλευέσθαι περὶ τοῦ ξένου τουτουῖ Μένωνος. οὗτος γάρ, ὧ Ἄνυτε, πάλαι λέγει πρὸς με, ὅτι ἐπιθυμεῖ ταύτης τῆς σοφίας καὶ ἀρετῆς, ἧ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὰς τε οἰκίας καὶ τὰς πόλεις καλῶς διοικοῦσι, καὶ τοὺς γονέας τοὺς αὐτῶν θεραπεύουσι, καὶ πολίτας καὶ ξένους ὑποδέξασθαι τε καὶ ἀποπέμψαι ἐπίστανται ἀξίως B ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ. ταύτην οὖν τὴν ἀρετὴν <μαθησόμενον>¹ σκόπει παρὰ τίνας ἂν πέμποντες αὐτὸν ὀρθῶς πέμπομεν. ἦ δῆλον δὴ κατὰ τὸν ἄρτι λόγον, ὅτι παρὰ τούτους τοὺς ὑπισχνουμένους ἀρετῆς διδασκάλους εἶναι καὶ ἀποφῆναντας αὐτοὺς κοινούς τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλομένῳ μανθάνειν, μισθὸν τούτου ταξαμένους τε καὶ πραττομένους;

AN. Καὶ τίνας λέγεις τούτους, ὧ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. Οἶσθα δήπου καὶ σύ, ὅτι οὗτοί εἰσιν οὓς οἱ ἄνθρωποι καλοῦσι σοφιστάς.

C AN. Ἡράκλεις, εὐφήμει, ὧ Σώκρατες. μηδένα τῶν γ' ἐμῶν² μήτε οἰκείων μήτε φίλων, μήτε ἀστὸν μήτε ξένον, τοιαύτη μανία λάβοι, ὥστε παρὰ τούτους ἐλθόντα λωβηθῆναι, ἐπεὶ οὗτοί γε φανερά ἐστι λώβη τε καὶ διαφθορὰ τῶν συγγιγνομένων.

ΣΩ. Πῶς λέγεις, ὧ Ἄνυτε; οὗτοι ἄρα μόνοι

¹ μαθησόμενον intercidesse coni. Cobet.

² γ' ἐμῶν Burnet: γεμῶν, συγγενῶν MSS.

MENO

be teachers nor have a single pupil in that sort of study which we expect him, when sent, to pursue ! Do you not consider this would be grossly unreasonable ?

AN. Yes, on my word, I do, and stupid to boot.

soc. Quite right. And now there is an opportunity of your joining me in a consultation on my friend Meno here. He has been declaring to me ever so long, Anytus, that he desires to have that wisdom and virtue whereby men keep their house or their city in good order, and honour their parents, and know when to welcome and when to speed citizens and strangers as befits a good man. Now tell me, to whom ought we properly to send him for lessons in this virtue ? Or is it clear enough, from our argument just now, that he should go to these men who profess to be teachers of virtue and advertise themselves as the common teachers of the Greeks, and are ready to instruct anyone who chooses in return for fees charged on a fixed scale ?

AN. To whom are you referring, Socrates ?

soc. Surely you know as well as anyone ; they are the men whom people call sophists.

AN. For heaven's sake hold your tongue, Socrates ! May no kinsman or friend of mine, whether of this city or another, be seized with such madness as to let himself be infected with the company of those men ; for they are a manifest plague and corruption to those who frequent them.¹

soc. What is this, Anytus ? Of all the people

¹ Anytus' vehemence expresses the hostility of the ordinary practical democrat, after the restoration of 403 B.C., towards any novel movement in the state.

- τῶν ἀντιποιοιμένων τι ἐπίστασθαι εὐεργετεῖν τοσοῦτον τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρουσιν, ὅσον οὐ μόνον οὐκ ὠφελούσιν, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄλλοι, ὃ τι ἂν τις αὐτοῖς
- D παραδῶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον διαφθείρουσι; καὶ τούτων φανερώς χρήματα ἀξιούσι πράττεσθαι; ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔχω ὅπως σοι πιστεύσω· οἶδα γὰρ ἄνδρα ἓνα Πρωταγόραν πλείω χρήματα κτησάμενον ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς σοφίας ἢ Φειδίαν τε, ὃς οὕτω περιφανῶς καλὰ ἔργα εἰργάζετο, καὶ ἄλλους δέκα τῶν ἀνδριαντοποιῶν· καίτοι τέρας λέγεις, εἰ οἱ μὲν τὰ ὑποδήματα ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ἐξακούμενοι οὐκ ἂν δύναιντο
- E λαθεῖν τριάκονθ' ἡμέρας μοχθηρότερα ἀποδιδόντες ἢ παρέλαβον τὰ ἱμάτιά τε καὶ ὑποδήματα, ἀλλ' εἰ τοιαῦτα ποιοῖεν, ταχὺ ἂν τῷ λιμῷ ἀποθάνοιεν, Πρωταγόρας δὲ ἄρα ὅλην τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐλάνθανε διαφθείρων τοὺς συγγιγνομένους καὶ μοχθηροτέρους ἀποπέμπων ἢ παρελάμβανε πλέον ἢ τετταράκοντα ἔτη· οἶμαι γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀποθανεῖν ἐγγὺς καὶ ἐβδομήκοντα ἔτη γεγονότα, τετταράκοντα δὲ ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ ὄντα· καὶ ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἔτι εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν ταυτηνὴν εὐδοκιμῶν οὐδὲν πέπαυται· καὶ οὐ μόνον Πρωταγόρας,
- 92 ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλοι πάμπολλοι, οἱ μὲν πρότερον γεγονότες ἐκείνου, οἱ δὲ καὶ νῦν ἔτι ὄντες. πότερον δὴ οὖν φῶμεν κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον εἰδότας αὐτοὺς ἐξαπατᾶν καὶ λωβᾶσθαι τοὺς νέους, ἢ λεληθῆναι καὶ ἑαυτούς; καὶ οὕτω μαίνεσθαι ἀξιῶσομεν τούτους, οὓς ἔνιοί φασι σοφωτάτους ἀνθρώπων εἶναι;

ΑΝ. Πολλοῦ γε δέουσι μαίνεσθαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον οἱ τούτοις διδόντες ἀργύριον

MENO

who set up to understand how to do us good, do you mean to single out these as conveying not merely no benefit, such as the rest can give, but actually corruption to anyone placed in their hands? And is it for doing this that they openly claim the payment of fees? For my part I cannot bring myself to believe you; for I know of one man, Protagoras, who amassed more money by his craft than Pheidias—so famous for the noble works he produced—or any ten other sculptors. And yet how surprising that menders of old shoes and furbishers of clothes should not be able to go undetected thirty days if they should return the clothes or shoes in worse condition than they received them, and that such doings on their part would quickly starve them to death, while for more than forty years all Greece failed to notice that Protagoras was corrupting his classes and sending his pupils away in a worse state than when he took charge of them! For I believe he died about seventy years old, forty of which he spent in the practice of his art; and he retains undiminished to this day the high reputation he has enjoyed all that time—and not only Protagoras, but a multitude of others too: some who lived before him, and others still living. Now are we to take it, according to you, that they wittingly deceived and corrupted the youth, or that they were themselves unconscious of it? Are we to conclude those who are frequently termed the wisest of mankind to have been so demented as that?

AN. Demented! Not they, Socrates: far rather the young men who pay them money, and still

PLATO

τῶν νέων· τούτων δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ τούτοις ἐπι-
 B τρέποντες, οἱ προσήκοντες· πολὺ δὲ μάλιστα πάντων
 αἱ πόλεις, ἐῷσαι αὐτοὺς εἰσαφικνεῖσθαι καὶ οὐκ
 ἐξελαύνουσαι, εἴτε τις ξένος ἐπιχειρεῖ τοιοῦτόν
 τι ποιεῖν εἴτε ἄστος.

ΣΗ. Πότερον δέ, ὦ Ἄνυτε, ἠδίκηκέ τις σε
 τῶν σοφιστῶν, ἢ τί οὕτως αὐτοῖς χαλεπὸς εἶ;

ΑΝ. Οὐδὲ μὰ Δία ἔγωγε συγγέγονα πώποτε
 αὐτῶν οὐδενί, οὐδ' ἂν ἄλλον ἐάσαιμι τῶν ἐμῶν
 οὐδένα.

ΣΗ. Ἄπειρος ἄρ' εἶ παντάπασιν τῶν ἀνδρῶν;

C ΑΝ. Καὶ εἶην γε.

ΣΗ. Πῶς οὖν ἂν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, εἰδείης περὶ
 τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, εἴτε τι ἀγαθὸν ἔχει ἐν
 ἑαυτῷ εἴτε φλαῦρον, οὐ παντάπασιν ἄπειρος
 εἶης;

ΑΝ. Ῥαδίως· τούτους γοῦν οἶδα οἱ εἶσω,
 εἴτ' οὖν ἄπειρος αὐτῶν εἰμὶ εἴτε μή.

ΣΗ. Μάντις εἶ ἴσως, ὦ Ἄνυτε· ἐπεὶ ὅπως γε
 ἄλλως οἶσθα τούτων πέρι, ἐξ ὧν αὐτὸς λέγεις
 θαυμάζοιμ' ἂν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ τούτους ἐπιζητοῦμεν
 D τίνες εἰσὶ, παρ' οὓς ἂν Μένων ἀφικόμενος μοχθηρὸς
 γένοιτο· οὗτοι μὲν γάρ, εἰ σὺ βούλει, ἔστων οἱ
 σοφισταί· ἀλλὰ δὴ ἐκείνους εἰπέ ἡμῖν, καὶ τὸν
 πατρικὸν τόνδε ἑταῖρον εὐεργέτησον, φράσας αὐτῷ,
 παρὰ τίνας ἀφικόμενος ἐν τοσαύτῃ πόλει τὴν
 ἀρετὴν ἣν νυνδὴ ἐγὼ διῆλθον γένοιτ' ἂν ἄξιος
 λόγου.

ΑΝ. Τί δὲ αὐτῷ οὐ σὺ ἔφρασας;

ΣΗ. Ἄλλ' οὓς μὲν ἐγὼ ὦμην διδασκάλους
 τούτων εἶναι, εἶπον, ἀλλὰ τυγχάνω οὐδὲν λέγων,
 E ὡς σὺ φῆς· καὶ ἴσως τί λέγεις. ἀλλὰ σὺ δὴ ἐν

MENO

more the relations who let the young men have their way ; and most of all the cities that allow them to enter, and do not expel them, whether such attempt be made by stranger or citizen.

soc. Tell me, Anytus, has any of the sophists wronged you ? What makes you so hard on them.?

AN. No, heaven knows I have never in my life had dealings with any of them, nor would I let any of my people have to do with them either.

soc. Then you have absolutely no experience of those persons ?

AN. And trust I never may.

soc. How then, my good sir, can you tell whether a thing has any good or evil in it, if you are quite without experience of it ?

AN. Easily : the fact is, I know what these people are, whether I have experience of them or not.

soc. You are a wizard, perhaps, Anytus ; for I really cannot see, from what you say yourself, how else you can know anything about them. But we are not inquiring now who the teachers are whose lessons would make Meno wicked ; let us grant, if you will, that they are the sophists : I only ask you to tell us, and do Meno a service as a friend of your family by letting him know, to whom in all this great city he should apply in order to become eminent in the virtue which I described just now.

AN. Why not tell him yourself ?

soc. I did mention to him the men whom I supposed to be teachers of these things ; but I find, from what you say, that I am quite off the track, and I daresay you are on it. Now you take

τῷ μέρει αὐτῷ εἶπέ παρα τίνας ἔλθη Ἀθηναίων· εἶπέ ὄνομα ὄτου βούλει.

AN. Τί δὲ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπον ὄνομα δεῖ ἀκοῦσαι; ὅτῳ γὰρ ἂν ἐντύχη Ἀθηναίων τῶν καλῶν κάγαθῶν, οὐδεὶς ἔστιν ὃς οὐ βελτίω αὐτὸν ποιήσει ἢ οἱ σοφισταί, ἐάνπερ ἐθέλη πείθεσθαι.

93 ΣΩ. Πότερον δὲ οὗτοι οἱ καλοὶ κάγαθοὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου ἐγένοντο τοιοῦτοι, παρ' οὐδενὸς μαθόντες ὅμως μέντοι ἄλλους διδάσκειν οἰοί τε ὄντες ταῦτα, ἃ αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἔμαθον;

AN. Καὶ τούτους ἔγωγε ἀξιῶ παρα τῶν προτέρων μαθεῖν, ὄντων καλῶν κάγαθῶν· ἢ οὐ δοκοῦσί σοι πολλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ γεγονέναι ἐν τῇδε τῇ πόλει ἄνδρες;

ΣΩ. Ἐμοιγε, ὦ Ἄνυτε, καὶ εἶναι δοκοῦσιν ἐνθάδε ἀγαθοὶ τὰ πολιτικά, καὶ γεγονέναι ἔτι οὐχ ἦττον ἢ εἶναι· ἀλλὰ μῶν καὶ διδάσκαλοι ἀγαθοὶ γεγόνασι τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρετῆς; τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν τυγχάνει ὢν· οὐκ εἰ B εἰσὶν ἀγαθοὶ ἢ μὴ ἄνδρες ἐνθάδε, οὐδ' εἰ γεγόνασιν ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν, ἀλλ' εἰ διδακτόν ἐστιν ἀρετὴ πάλαι σκοποῦμεν. τοῦτο δὲ σκοποῦντες τόδε σκοποῦμεν, ἄρα οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες καὶ τῶν νῦν καὶ τῶν προτέρων ταύτην τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἣν αὐτοὶ ἀγαθοὶ ἦσαν, ἠπίσταντο καὶ ἄλλῳ παραδοῦναι, ἢ οὐ παραδοτὸν τοῦτο ἀνθρώπῳ οὐδὲ παραληπτὸν ἄλλῳ παρ' ἄλλου. τοῦτ' ἐστιν ὃ πάλαι ζητοῦμεν ἐγὼ τε καὶ Μένων. ὧδε οὖν σκόπει ἐκ τοῦ σαυτοῦ λόγου· C Θεμιστοκλέα οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἂν φαίης ἄνδρα γεγονέναι;

AN. Ἐγωγε, πάντων γε μάλιστα.

MENO

your turn, and tell him to whom of the Athenians he is to go. Give us a name—anyone you please.

AN. Why mention a particular one? Any Athenian gentleman he comes across, without exception, will do him more good, if he will do as he is bid, than the sophists.

soc. And did those gentlemen grow spontaneously into what they are, and without learning from anybody are they able, nevertheless, to teach others what they did not learn themselves?

AN. I expect they must have learnt in their turn from the older generation, who were gentlemen: or does it not seem to you that we have had many good men in this city?

soc. Yes, I agree, Anytus; we have also many who are good at politics, and have had them in the past as well as now. But I want to know whether they have proved good teachers besides of their own virtue: that is the question with which our discussion is actually concerned; not whether there are, or formerly have been, good men here amongst us or not, but whether virtue is teachable; this has been our problem all the time. And our inquiry into this problem resolves itself into the question: Did the good men of our own and of former times know how to transmit to another man the virtue in respect of which they were good, or is it something not to be transmitted or taken over from one human being to another? That is the question I and Meno have been discussing all this time. Well, just consider it in your own way of speaking: would you not say that Themistocles was a good man?

AN. I would, particularly so.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ διδάσκαλον ἀγαθόν, εἴπερ τις ἄλλος τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλος ἦν, κακῆϊνον εἶναι;

ΑΝ. Οἶμαι ἔγωγε, εἴπερ ἐβούλετό γε.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλ', οἶει, οὐκ ἂν ἐβουλήθη ἄλλους τέ τινας καλοὺς καγαθοὺς γενέσθαι, μάλιστα δέ που τὸν υἱὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ; ἢ οἶει αὐτὸν φθονεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξεπίτηδες οὐ παραδιδόναι τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἢ ἦν αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ἦν; ἢ οὐκ ἀκήκοας, ὅτι Θεμιστοκλῆς Κλεόφαντον τὸν υἱὸν ἰππέα μὲν ἐδιδάξατο ἀγαθόν; ἐπέμενε γοῦν ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων ὀρθὸς ἐστηκώς, καὶ ἠκόντιζεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων ὀρθός, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ θαυμαστὰ εἰργάζετο, ἃ ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸν ἐπαιδεύσατο καὶ ἐποίησε σοφόν, ὅσα διδασκάλων ἀγαθῶν εἶχετο· ἢ ταῦτα οὐκ ἀκήκοας τῶν πρεσβυτέρων;

ΑΝ. Ἀκήκοα.

ΣΩ. Οὐκ ἂν ἄρα τὴν γε φύσιν τοῦ υἱέος αὐτοῦ ἠτιάσατ' ἂν τις εἶναι κακῆϊν.

Ε ΑΝ. Ἴσως οὐκ ἂν.

ΣΩ. Τί δὲ τόδε; ὡς Κλεόφαντος ὁ Θεμιστοκλέους ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ σοφὸς ἐγένετο ἅπερ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ, ἤδη του ἀκήκοας ἢ νεωτέρου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου;

ΑΝ. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἄρ' οὖν ταῦτα μὲν οἰόμεθα βούλεσθαι αὐτὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ υἱὸν παιδεῦσαι, ἦν δὲ αὐτὸς σοφίαν ἦν σοφός, οὐδὲν τῶν γειτόνων βελτίω ποιῆσαι, εἴπερ ἦν γε διδακτὸν ἢ ἀρετή;

ΑΝ. Ἴσως μὰ Δί' οὐ.

ΣΩ. Οὗτος μὲν δὴ σοι τοιοῦτος διδάσκαλος

MENO

soc. And if any man ever was a teacher of his own virtue, he especially was a good teacher of his ?

AN. In my opinion, yes, assuming that he wished to be so.

soc. But can you suppose he would not have wished that other people should become good, honourable men—above all, I presume, his own son ? Or do you think he was jealous of him, and deliberately refused to impart the virtue of his own goodness to him ? Have you never heard how Themistocles had his son Cleophantus taught to be a good horseman ? Why, he could keep his balance standing upright on horseback, and hurl the javelin while so standing, and perform many other wonderful feats in which his father had had him trained, so as to make him skilled in all that could be learnt from good masters. Surely you must have heard all this from your elders ?

AN. I have.

soc. Then there could be no complaints of badness in his son's nature ?

AN. I daresay not.

soc. But I ask you—did you ever hear anybody, old or young, say that Cleophantus, son of Themistocles, had the same goodness and accomplishments as his father ?

AN. Certainly not.

soc. And can we believe that his father chose to train his own son in those feats, and yet made him no better than his neighbours in his own particular accomplishments—if virtue, as alleged, was to be taught ?

AN. On my word, I think not.

soc. Well, there you have a fine teacher of virtue

PLATO

ἀρετῆς, ὃν καὶ σὺ ὁμολογεῖς ἐν τοῖς ἄριστον τῶν
94 προτέρων εἶναι· ἄλλον δὲ δὴ σκεψώμεθα, Ἄρι-
στείδην τὸν Λυσιμάχου· ἢ τοῦτον οὐχ ὁμολογεῖς
ἀγαθὸν γεγονέναι;

AN. "Ἐγωγε, πάντως δήπου.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν καὶ οὗτος τὸν υἱὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ
Λυσίμαχον, ὅσα μὲν διδασκάλων εἶχετο, κάλλιστα
Ἀθηναίων ἐπαίδευσεν, ἄνδρα δὲ βελτίω δοκεῖ
σοι ὄτουοῦν πεποικέναι; τούτῳ γάρ που καὶ
συγγέγονας καὶ ὄρας οἶός ἐστιν. εἰ δὲ βούλει,
B Περικλέα, οὕτω μεγαλοπρεπῶς σοφὸν ἄνδρα,
οἶσθ' ὅτι δύο υἱεῖς ἔθρεψε, Πάραλον καὶ Ξάνθ-
ιππον;

AN. "Ἐγωγε.

ΣΩ. Τούτους μέντοι, ὡς οἶσθα καὶ σὺ, ἰππέας
μὲν ἐδίδαξεν οὐδενὸς χείρους Ἀθηναίων, καὶ
μουσικὴν καὶ ἀγωνίαν καὶ τᾶλλα ἐπαίδευσεν, ὅσα
τέχνης ἔχεται, οὐδενὸς χείρους· ἀγαθοὺς δὲ ἄρα
ἄνδρας οὐκ ἐβούλετο ποιῆσαι; δοκῶ μὲν, ἐβούλετο,
ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐκ ἢ διδακτόν. ἵνα δὲ μὴ ὀλίγους
οἷη καὶ τοὺς φαυλοτάτους Ἀθηναίων ἀδυνάτους
C γεγονέναι τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἐνθυμήθητι ὅτι Θουκυ-
δίδης αὖ δύο υἱεῖς ἔθρεψε, Μελησίαν καὶ Στέφανον,
καὶ τούτους ἐπαίδευσεν τά τε ἄλλα εὖ καὶ ἐπάλαισαν
κάλλιστα Ἀθηναίων· τὸν μὲν γὰρ Ξανθία ἔδωκε,
τὸν δὲ Εὐδώρω· οὗτοι δὲ που ἐδόκουν τῶν τότε
κάλλιστα παλαίειν· ἢ οὐ μέμνησαι;

AN. "Ἐγωγε, ἀκοῆ.

¹ Thucydides (son of Melesias, and no relation of the historian) was an aristocrat of high principle and con-

MENO

who, you admit, was one of the best men of past times. Let us take another, Aristeides, son of Lysimachus : do you not admit that he was a good man ?

AN. I do, absolutely, of course.

soc. Well, did he not train his son Lysimachus better than any other Athenian in all that masters could teach him ? And in the result, do you consider he has turned out better than anyone else ? You have been in his company, I know, and you see what he is like. Or take another example—the splendidly accomplished Pericles : he, as you are aware, brought up two sons, Paralus and Xanthippus.

AN. Yes.

soc. And, you know as well as I, he taught them to be the foremost horsemen of Athens, and trained them to excel in music and gymnastics and all else that comes under the head of the arts ; and with all that, had he no desire to make them good men ? He wished to, I imagine, but presumably it is not a thing one can be taught. And that you may not suppose it was only a few of the meanest sort of Athenians who failed in this matter, let me remind you that Thucydides¹ also brought up two sons, Melesias and Stephanus, and that besides giving them a good general education he made them the best wrestlers in Athens : one he placed with Xanthias, and the other with Eudorus—masters who, I should think, had the name of being the best exponents of the art. You remember them, do you not ?

AN. Yes, by hearsay.

servative views who opposed the plans of Pericles for enriching and adorning Athens.

PLATO

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν δῆλον ὅτι οὗτος οὐκ ἂν ποτε,
 οὗ μὲν ἔδει δαπανώμενον διδάσκειν, ταῦτα μὲν
 D ἔδίδαξε τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς αὐτοῦ, οὗ δὲ οὐδὲν
 ἔδει ἀναλώσαντα ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας ποιῆσαι, ταῦτα
 δὲ οὐκ ἔδίδαξεν, εἰ διδακτὸν ἦν; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως
 ὁ Θουκυδίδης φαῦλος ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἦσαν αὐτῷ
 πλείστοι φίλοι Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν συμμάχων;
 καὶ οἰκίας μεγάλης ἦν καὶ ἐδύνατο μέγα ἐν τῇ
 πόλει καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἑλλησιν, ὥστε εἶπερ
 ἦν τοῦτο διδακτὸν, ἐξευρεῖν ἂν ὅστις ἔμελλεν
 αὐτοῦ τοὺς υἱεῖς ἀγαθοὺς ποιήσειν, ἢ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων
 E τις ἢ τῶν ξένων, εἰ αὐτὸς μὴ ἐσχόλαζε διὰ τὴν
 τῆς πόλεως ἐπιμέλειαν. ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ ἑταῖρε
 Ἄνυτε, μὴ οὐκ ἦ διδακτὸν ἀρετῆ.

ΑΝ. ὦ Σώκρατες, ῥαδίως μοι δοκεῖς κακῶς
 λέγειν ἀνθρώπους. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἂν σοι συμ-
 βουλεύσαιμι, εἰ ἐθέλεις ἐμοὶ πείθεσθαι, εὐλα-
 βεῖσθαι· ὡς ἴσως μὲν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει ῥᾶόν¹
 ἐστι κακῶς ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπους ἢ εὖ, ἐν τῇδε δὲ
 95 καὶ πάνυ· οἶμαι δὲ σὲ καὶ αὐτὸν εἰδέναι.

ΣΩ. ὦ Μένων, Ἄνυτος μὲν μοι δοκεῖ χα-
 λεπαίνειν· καὶ οὐδὲν θαυμάζω· οἶεται γάρ με
 πρῶτον μὲν κακηγορεῖν τούτους τοὺς ἄνδρας,
 ἔπειτα ἡγεῖται καὶ αὐτὸς εἶναι εἰς τούτων. ἀλλ'
 οὗτος μὲν ἐάν ποτε γνῶ, οἷόν ἐστι τὸ κακῶς
 λέγειν, παύσεται χαλεπαίνων, νῦν δὲ ἀγνοεῖ· σὺ
 δέ μοι εἶπέ, οὐ καὶ παρ' ὑμῖν εἰσι καλοὶ καγαθοὶ
 ἄνδρες;

¹ ῥᾶόν Buttmann: ῥᾶδίων mss.

¹ Anytus goes away. His parting words show that (in Plato's view) he regarded Socrates as an enemy of the restored democracy which, he hints, has popular juries only too ready to condemn such an awkward critic.

MENO

soc. Well, is it not obvious that this father would never have spent his money on having his children taught all those things, and then have omitted to teach them at no expense the others that would have made them good men, if virtue was to be taught? Will you say that perhaps Thucydides was one of the meaner sort, and had no great number of friends among the Athenians and allies? He, who was of a great house and had much influence in our city and all over Greece, so that if virtue were to be taught he would have found out the man who was likely to make his sons good, whether one of our own people or a foreigner, were he himself too busy owing to the cares of state! Ah no, my dear Anytus, it looks as though virtue were not a teachable thing.

AN. Socrates, I consider you are too apt to speak ill of people. I, for one, if you will take my advice, would warn you to be careful: in most cities it is probably easier to do people harm than good, and particularly in this one; I think you know that yourself.¹

soc. Meno, I think Anytus is angry, and I am not at all surprised: for he conceives, in the first place, that I am speaking ill of these gentlemen; and in the second place, he considers he is one of them himself. Yet, should the day come when he knows what "speaking ill" means, his anger will cease; at present he does not know.² Now you must answer me: are there not good and honourable men among your people also?

² This is probably not a reference to a prosecution of Anytus himself, but a suggestion that what he needs is a Socratic discussion on "speaking ill," for "ill" may mean "maliciously," "untruthfully," "ignorantly," etc.

PLATO

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

B ζη. Τί οὖν; ἐθέλουσιν οὗτοι παρέχειν αὐτοὺς διδασκάλους τοῖς νέοις, καὶ ὁμολογεῖν διδάσκαλοί τε εἶναι καὶ διδακτὸν ἀρετῆν;

MEN. Οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν ἂν αὐτῶν ἀκούσαις ὡς διδακτὸν, τοτὲ δὲ ὡς οὐ.

ζη. Φῶμεν οὖν τούτους διδασκάλους εἶναι τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, οἷς μηδὲ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὁμολογεῖται;

MEN. Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

C ζη. Τί δε δή; οἱ σοφισταὶ σοι οὗτοι, οἵπερ μόνον ἐπαγγέλλονται, δοκοῦσι διδάσκαλοι εἶναι ἀρετῆς;

MEN. Καὶ Γοργίου μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες, ταῦτα ἄγαμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ποτε αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ἀκούσαις ὑπισχνουμένου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καταγελαῖ, ὅταν ἀκούσῃ ὑπισχνουμένων· ἀλλὰ λέγειν οἶεται δεῖν ποιεῖν δεινούς.

ζη. Οὐδ' ἄρα σοὶ δοκοῦσιν οἱ σοφισταὶ διδάσκαλοι εἶναι;

MEN. Οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες. καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ πέπονθα· τοτὲ μὲν μοι δοκοῦσι, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ.

D ζη. Οἶσθα δὲ ὅτι οὐ μόνον σοί τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς πολιτικοῖς τοῦτο δοκεῖ τοτὲ μὲν εἶναι διδακτὸν, τοτὲ δ' οὐ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Θεόγγιν τὸν ποιητὴν οἶσθ' ὅτι ταῦτα ταῦτα λέγει;

MEN. Ἐν ποίοις ἔπεσιν;

ζη. Ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις, οὗ λέγει—

καὶ παρὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν ἕζε, καὶ ἄνδανε τοῖς, ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις.

MENO

MEN. Certainly.

soc. Well then, are they willing to put themselves forward as teachers of the young, and avow that they are teachers and that virtue is to be taught?

MEN. No, no, Socrates, I assure you: sometimes you may hear them refer to it as teachable, but sometimes as not.

soc. Then are we to call those persons teachers of this thing, when they do not even agree on that great question?

MEN. I should say not, Socrates.

soc. Well, and what of the sophists? Do you consider these, its only professors, to be teachers of virtue?

MEN. That is a point, Socrates, for which I admire Gorgias: you will never hear him promising this, and he ridicules the others when he hears them promise it. Skill in speaking is what he takes it to be their business to produce.

soc. Then you do not think the sophists are teachers of virtue?

MEN. I cannot say, Socrates. I am in the same plight as the rest of the world: sometimes I think that they are, sometimes that they are not.

soc. And are you aware that not only you and other political folk are in two minds as to whether virtue is to be taught, but Theognis the poet also says, you remember, the very same thing?

MEN. In which part of his poems?

soc. In those elegiac lines where he says—

“Eat and drink with these men: sit with them, and be pleasing unto them, who wield great power: for from the

PLATO

Ε ἔσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἅπ' ἐσθλὰ διδάξαι· ἦν δὲ
κακοῖσιν

συμμίσγησ, ἀπολείς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα νόον.

οἶσθ' ὅτι ἐν τούτοις μὲν ὡς διδακτοῦ οὔσης τῆς
ἀρετῆς λέγει;

MEN. Φαίνεται γε.

ΣΩ. Ἐν ἄλλοις δέ γε ὀλίγον μεταβάς,

εἰ δ' ἦν ποιητόν, φησί, καὶ ἔνθετον ἀνδρὶ νόημα,
λέγει πως ὅτι

πολλοὺς ἂν μισθοὺς καὶ μεγάλους ἔφερον

οἱ δυνάμενοι τοῦτο ποιεῖν, καὶ

οὐ ποτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς ἔγεντο κακός,

96 πειθόμενος μῦθοισι σαόφροσιν. ἀλλὰ διδάσκων
οὐ ποτε ποιήσεις τὸν κακὸν ἀνδρ' ἀγαθόν.

ἐννοεῖς ὅτι αὐτὸς αὐτῷ πάλιν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν
τάναντία λέγει;

MEN. Φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. Ἐχεις οὖν εἰπεῖν ἄλλου ὄτουοῦν πράγματος,
οὗ οἱ μὲν φάσκοντες διδάσκαλοι εἶναι οὐχ ὅπως
ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι ὁμολογοῦνται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτοὶ

Β ἐπίστασθαι, ἀλλὰ πονηροὶ εἶναι περὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο
τὸ πρᾶγμα οὗ φασὶ διδάσκαλοι εἶναι, οἱ δὲ ὁμολο-
γούμενοι αὐτοὶ καλοὶ καγαθοὶ τοτὲ μὲν φασιν
αὐτὸ διδακτὸν εἶναι, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ; τοὺς οὖν οὕτω
τεταραγμένους περὶ ὄτουοῦν φαίης ἂν σὺ κυρίως
διδασκάλους εἶναι;

MEN. Μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ μήτε οἱ σοφισταὶ μήτε οἱ αὐτοὶ

¹ Bergk, 33-36.

² Bergk, 434-438.

MENO

good wilt thou win thee lessons in the good; but mingle with the bad, and thou wilt lose even the sense that thou hast." ¹

Do you observe how in these words he implies that virtue is to be taught?

MEN. He does, evidently.

soc. But in some other lines he shifts his ground a little, saying—

“Could understanding be created and put into a man” (I think it runs thus) “many high rewards would they obtain” (that is, the men who were able to do such a thing): and again—

“Never would a bad son have sprung from a good father, for he would have followed the precepts of wisdom: but not by teaching wilt thou ever make the bad man good.” ²

You notice how in the second passage he contradicts himself on the same point?

MEN. Apparently.

soc. Well, can you name any other subject in which the professing teachers are not only refused recognition as teachers of others, but regarded as not even understanding it themselves, and indeed as inferior in the very quality of which they claim to be teachers; while those who are themselves recognized as men of worth and honour say at one time that it is teachable, and at another that it is not? When people are so confused about this or that matter, can you say they are teachers in any proper sense of the word?

MEN. No, indeed, I cannot.

soc. Well, if neither the sophists nor the men

PLATO

καλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ ὄντες διδάσκαλοί εἰσι τοῦ πράγματος, δῆλον ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλοι γε;

MEN. Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ.

C ΣΩ. Εἰ δέ γε μὴ διδάσκαλοι, οὐδὲ μαθηταί;

MEN. Δοκεῖ μοι ἔχειν ὡς λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Ὁμολογήκαμεν δέ γε, πράγματος οὐ μήτε διδάσκαλοι μήτε μαθηταὶ εἶεν, τοῦτο μὴδὲ διδασκᾶν εἶναι;

MEN. Ὁμολογήκαμεν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἀρετῆς οὐδαμοῦ φαίνονται διδάσκαλοι;

MEN. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Εἰ δέ γε μὴ διδάσκαλοι, οὐδὲ μαθηταί;

MEN. Φαίνεται οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Ἀρετὴ ἄρα οὐκ ἂν εἴη διδασκᾶν;

D MEN. Οὐκ ἔοικεν, εἶπερ ὀρθῶς ἡμεῖς ἐσκέμμεθα. ὥστε καὶ θαυμάζω δῆ, ὦ Σώκρατες, πότερον ποτε οὐδ' εἰσὶν ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες, ἢ τίς ἂν εἴη τρόπος τῆς γενέσεως τῶν ἀγαθῶν γιγνομένων.

ΣΩ. Κινδυνεύομεν, ὦ Μένων, ἐγὼ τε καὶ σὺ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι ἄνδρες, καὶ σέ τε Γοργίας οὐχ ἱκανῶς πεπαιδευκέναι καὶ ἐμὲ Πρόδικος. παντὸς μᾶλλον οὖν προσεκτέον τὸν νοῦν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ζητητέον ὅστις ἡμᾶς ἐνὶ γέ τῳ τρόπῳ βελτίους

E ποιήσει· λέγω δὲ ταῦτα ἀποβλέψας πρὸς τὴν ἄρτι ζήτησιν, ὡς ἡμᾶς ἔλαθε καταγελάστως, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἐπιστήμης ἡγουμένης ὀρθῶς τε καὶ εὖ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πράττεται τὰ πράγματα, ἢ¹ ἴσως καὶ διαφεύγει ἡμᾶς τὸ γινῶναι, τίνα ποτὲ τρόπον γίνονται οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες.

MEN. Πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;

¹ η Madvig: ἢ mss.

MENO

who are themselves good and honourable are teachers of the subject, clearly no others can be ?

MEN. I agree.

soc. And if there are no teachers, there can be no disciples either ?

MEN. I think that statement is true.

soc. And we have admitted that a thing of which there are neither teachers nor disciples cannot be taught ?

MEN. We have.

soc. So nowhere are any teachers of virtue to be found ?

MEN. That is so.

soc. And if no teachers, then no disciples ?

MEN. So it appears.

soc. Hence virtue cannot be taught ?

MEN. It seems likely, if our investigation is correct. And that makes me wonder, I must say, Socrates, whether perhaps there are no good men at all, or by what possible sort of process good people can come to exist ?

soc. I fear, Meno, you and I are but poor creatures, and Gorgias has been as faulty an educator of you as Prodicus of me. So our first duty is to look to ourselves, and try to find somebody who will have some means or other of making us better. I say this with special reference to our recent inquiry, in which I see that we absurdly failed to note that it is not only through the guidance of knowledge that human conduct is right and good ; and it is probably owing to this that we fail to perceive by what means good men can be produced.

MEN. To what are you alluding, Socrates ?

PLATO

ΣΩ. Ὡδε· ὅτι μὲν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀνδρας δεῖ
ὠφελίμους εἶναι, ὀρθῶς ὠμολογήκαμεν τοῦτό
97 γε, ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ἔχοι· ἦ γάρ;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Καὶ ὅτι γε ὠφελίμοι ἔσονται, ἂν ὀρθῶς
ἡμῖν ἡγῶνται τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ τοῦτό που
καλῶς ὠμολογοῦμεν;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὀρθῶς ἡγεῖσθαι, εἰ
μὴ φρόνιμος ἦ, τοῦτο ὁμοιοί ἐσμεν οὐκ ὀρθῶς
ὠμολογηκόσιν.

MEN. Πῶς δὴ [ὀρθῶς] λέγεις;

ΣΩ. Ἐγὼ ἐρῶ. εἴ τις εἰδὼς τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν
εἰς Λάρισαν ἢ ὅποι βούλει ἄλλοσε βαδίζοι καὶ
ἄλλοις ἡγοῖτο, ἄλλο τι ὀρθῶς ἂν καὶ εὖ ἡγοῖτο;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

B ΣΩ. Τί δ' εἴ τις ὀρθῶς μὲν δοξάζων, ἥτις
ἐστὶν ἡ ὁδός, ἐληλυθὼς δὲ μὴ μῆδ' ἐπιστάμενος,
οὐ καὶ οὗτος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἡγοῖτο;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Καὶ ἕως γ' ἂν που ὀρθὴν δόξαν ἔχη περὶ
ῶν ὁ ἕτερος ἐπιστήμην, οὐδὲν χείρων ἡγεμῶν
ἔσται, οἰόμενος μὲν ἀληθῆ, φρονῶν δὲ μὴ, τοῦ
τοῦτο φρονοῦντος.

MEN. Οὐδὲν γάρ.

C ΣΩ. Δόξα ἄρα ἀληθῆς πρὸς ὀρθότητα πράξεως
οὐδὲν χείρων ἡγεμῶν φρονήσεως· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν
ὁ νυνδὴ παρελείπομεν ἐν τῇ περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς
σκέψει, ὁποῖόν τι εἶη, λέγοντες ὅτι φρόνησις
μόνον ἡγεῖται τοῦ ὀρθῶς πράττειν· τὸ δὲ ἄρα
καὶ δόξα ἦν ἀληθῆς.

MENO

soc. I mean that good men must be useful : we were right, were we not, in admitting that this must needs be so ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. And in thinking that they will be useful if they give us right guidance in conduct : here also, I suppose, our admission was correct ?

MEN. Yes.

soc. But our assertion that it is impossible to give right guidance unless one has knowledge looks very like a mistake.

MEN. What do you mean by that ?

soc. I will tell you. If a man knew the way to Larisa, or any other place you please, and walked there and led others, would he not give right and good guidance ?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. Well, and a person who had a right opinion as to which was the way, but had never been there and did not really know, might give right guidance, might he not ?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And so long, I presume, as he has right opinion about that which the other man really knows, he will be just as good a guide—if he thinks the truth instead of knowing it—as the man who has the knowledge.

MEN. Just as good.

soc. Hence true opinion is as good a guide to rightness of action as knowledge ; and this is a point we omitted just now in our consideration of the nature of virtue, when we stated that knowledge is the only guide of right action ; whereas we find there is also true opinion.

PLATO

MEN. Ἐοικέ γε.

ΣΩ. Οὐδὲν ἄρα ἦττον ὠφέλιμόν ἐστιν ὀρθὴ δόξα ἐπιστήμης.

MEN. Τοσοῦτω γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἔχων ἀεὶ ἂν ἐπιτυχάνοι, ὁ δὲ τὴν ὀρθὴν δόξαν τοτὲ μὲν ἂν τυγχάνοι, τοτὲ δ' οὔ.

ΣΩ. Πῶς λέγεις; ὁ ἀεὶ ἔχων ὀρθὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἀεὶ τυγχάνοι, ἕωςπερ ὀρθὰ δοξάζοι;

MEN. Ἀνάγκη μοι φαίνεται ὥστε θαυμάζω, D ὦ Σώκρατες, τούτου οὕτως ἔχοντος, ὅτι δὴ ποτε πολὺ τιμιωτέρα ἢ ἐπιστήμη τῆς ὀρθῆς δόξης, καὶ δι' ὅ τι τὸ μὲν ἕτερον, τὸ δὲ ἕτερόν ἐστιν αὐτῶν.

ΣΩ. Οἶσθα οὖν δι' ὅ τι θαυμάζεις, ἢ ἐγὼ σοι εἶπω;

MEN. Πάνυ γ' εἶπέ.

ΣΩ. Ὅτι τοῖς Δαιδάλου ἀγάλμασιν οὐ προσέσκηκας τὸν νοῦν ἴσως δὲ οὐδ' ἐστι παρ' ὑμῖν.

MEN. Πρὸς τί δὲ δὴ τοῦτο λέγεις;

ΣΩ. Ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα, εἴαν μὲν μὴ δεδεμένα ᾗ, ἀποδιδράσκει καὶ δραπετεύει, εἴαν δὲ δεδεμένα, παραμένει.

E MEN. Τί οὖν δὴ;

ΣΩ. Τῶν ἐκείνου ποιημάτων λελυμένον μὲν ἐκτῆσθαι οὐ πολλῆς τινὸς ἀξίον ἐστι τιμῆς, ὥσπερ δραπέτην ἄνθρωπον· οὐ γὰρ παραμένει· δεδεμένον δὲ πολλοῦ ἀξίον· πάνυ γὰρ καλὰ τὰ ἔργα ἐστί. πρὸς τί οὖν δὴ λέγω ταῦτα; πρὸς τὰς δόξας τὰς ἀληθεῖς. καὶ γὰρ αἱ δόξαι αἱ ἀληθεῖς,

¹ Cf. *Euthyphro* 11. Socrates pretends to believe the old legend according to which Daedalus, the first sculptor, con-
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MENO

MEN. So it seems.

soc. Then right opinion is just as useful as knowledge.

MEN. With this difference, Socrates, that he who has knowledge will always hit on the right way, whereas he who has right opinion will sometimes do so, but sometimes not.

soc. How do you mean? Will not he who always has right opinion be always right, so long as he opines rightly?

MEN. It appears to me that he must; and therefore I wonder, Socrates, this being the case, that knowledge should ever be more prized than right opinion, and why they should be two distinct and separate things.

soc. Well, do you know why it is that you wonder, or shall I tell you?

MEN. Please tell me.

soc. It is because you have not observed with attention the images of Daedalus.¹ But perhaps there are none in your country.

MEN. What is the point of your remark?

soc. That if they are not fastened up they play truant and run away; but, if fastened, they stay where they are.

MEN. Well, what of that?

soc. To possess one of his works which is let loose does not count for much in value; it will not stay with you any more than a runaway slave: but when fastened up it is worth a great deal, for his productions are very fine things. And to what am I referring in all this? To true opinions.

trived a wonderful mechanism in his statues by which they could move.

PLATO

98 ὅσον μὲν ἂν χρόνον παραμένωσι, καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ πάντα τὰγαθὰ ἐργάζονται· πολὺν δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ἐθέλουσι παραμένειν, ἀλλὰ δραπετεύουσιν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὥστε οὐ πολλοῦ ἄξιαί εἰσιν, ἕως ἂν τις αὐτὰς δῆσῃ αἰτίας λογισμῶ. τοῦτο δ' ἐστίν, Μένων ἑταῖρε, ἀνάμνησις, ὡς ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν ἡμῖν ὠμολόγηται. ἐπειδὴν δὲ δεθῶσι, πρῶτον μὲν ἐπιστήμαι γίνονται, ἔπειτα μόνιμοι· καὶ διὰ ταῦτα δὴ τιμιώτερον ἐπιστήμη ὀρθῆς δόξης ἐστί, καὶ διαφέρει δεσμῶ ἐπιστήμη ὀρθῆς δόξης.

MEN. Νῆ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔοικε τοιούτῳ τινί.

B ΣΩ. Καὶ μὴν καὶ ἐγὼ ὡς οὐκ εἰδὼς λέγω, ἀλλ' εἰκάζων· ὅτι δέ ἐστί τι ἄλλοῖον ὀρθῆ δόξα καὶ ἐπιστήμη, οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκῶ τοῦτο εἰκάζειν, ἀλλ' εἴπερ τι ἄλλο φαίην ἂν εἰδέναι, ὀλίγα δ' ἂν φαίην, ἐν δ' οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἐκείνων θείην ἂν ὦν οἶδα.

MEN. Καὶ ὀρθῶς γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Τί δέ; τόδε οὐκ ὀρθῶς, ὅτι ἀληθῆς δόξα ἡγουμένη τὸ ἔργον ἐκάστης τῆς πράξεως οὐδὲν χεῖρον ἀπεργάζεται ἢ ἐπιστήμη;

MEN. Καὶ τοῦτο δοκεῖς μοι ἀληθῆ λέγειν.

C ΣΩ. Οὐδὲν ἄρα ὀρθῆ δόξα ἐπιστήμης χεῖρον οὐδὲ ἥττον ὠφελίμη ἔσται εἰς τὰς πράξεις, οὐδὲ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἔχων ὀρθὴν δόξαν ἢ ὁ ἐπιστήμην.

MEN. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Καὶ μὴν ὁ γε ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ ὠφέλιμος ἡμῖν ὠμολόγηται εἶναι.

MENO

For these, so long as they stay with us, are a fine possession, and effect all that is good ; but they do not care to stay for long, and run away out of the human soul, and thus are of no great value until one makes them fast with causal reasoning. And this process, friend Meno, is recollection, as in our previous talk we have agreed. But when once they are fastened, in the first place they turn into knowledge, and in the second, are abiding. And this is why knowledge is more prized than right opinion : the one transcends the other by its trammels.

MEN. Upon my word, Socrates, it seems to be very much as you say.

SOC. And indeed I too speak as one who does not know but only conjectures : yet that there is a difference between right opinion and knowledge is not at all a conjecture with me but something I would particularly assert that I knew : there are not many things of which I would say that, but this one, at any rate, I will include among those that I know.

MEN. Yes, and you are right, Socrates, in so saying.

SOC. Well, then, am I not right also in saying that true opinion leading the way renders the effect of each action as good as knowledge does ?

MEN. There again, Socrates, I think you speak the truth.

SOC. So that right opinion will be no whit inferior to knowledge in worth or usefulness as regards our actions, nor will the man who has right opinion be inferior to him who has knowledge.

MEN. That is so.

SOC. And you know that the good man has been admitted by us to be useful.

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν οὐ μόνον δι' ἐπιστήμην ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες ἂν εἶεν καὶ ὠφέλιμοι ταῖς πόλεσιν, εἴπερ εἶεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ὀρθὴν δόξαν, τούτοις δὲ οὐδέτερον φύσει ἐστὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οὔτε ἐπιστήμη οὔτε δόξα ἀληθῆς, ὄντ'¹ ἐπίκτητα—ἢ δοκεῖ σοι φύσει ὁποτεροῦν αὐτοῖν εἶναι;

MEN. Οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει, οὐδὲ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ φύσει εἶεν ἄν.

MEN. Οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. Ἐπειδὴ δέ γε οὐ φύσει, ἐσκοποῦμεν τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο, εἰ διδακτὸν ἐστίν.

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν διδακτὸν ἔδοξεν εἶναι, εἰ φρόνησις ἢ ἀρετή;

MEN. Ναί.

ΣΩ. Κἂν εἴ γε διδακτὸν εἴη, φρόνησις ἂν εἶναι;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Καὶ εἰ μὲν γε διδάσκαλοι εἶεν, διδακτὸν ἂν εἶναι, μὴ ὄντων δὲ οὐ διδακτὸν;

MEN. Οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλὰ μὴν ὠμολογήκαμεν μὴ εἶναι αὐτοῦ διδασκάλους;

MEN. Ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. Ὁμολογήκαμεν ἄρα μήτε διδακτὸν αὐτὸ μήτε φρόνησιν εἶναι;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ἄλλὰ μὴν ἀγαθὸν γε αὐτὸ ὁμολογοῦμεν εἶναι;

MEN. Ναί.

¹ ὄντ' Apelt: οὔτ' mss.

MENO

MEN. Yes.

soc. Since then it is not only because of knowledge that men will be good and useful to their country, where such men are to be found, but also on account of right opinion; and since neither of these two things—knowledge and true opinion—is a natural property of mankind, being acquired—or do you think that either of them is natural?

MEN. Not I.

soc. Then if they are not natural, good people cannot be good by nature either.

MEN. Of course not.

soc. And since they are not an effect of nature, we next considered whether virtue can be taught.

MEN. Yes.

soc. And we thought it teachable if virtue is wisdom?

MEN. Yes.

soc. And if teachable, it must be wisdom?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And if there were teachers, it could be taught, but if there were none, it could not?

MEN. Quite so.

soc. But surely we acknowledged that it had no teachers?

MEN. That is true.

soc. Then we acknowledged it neither was taught nor was wisdom?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. But yet we admitted it was a good?

MEN. Yes.

ΣΩ. Ὁφέλιμον δὲ καὶ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἡγούμενον;

ΜΕΝ. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ὁρθῶς δέ γε ἡγεῖσθαι δύο ὄντα ταῦτα
99 μόνα, δόξαν τε ἀληθῆ καὶ ἐπιστήμην, ἃ ἔχων
ἄνθρωπος ὀρθῶς ἡγείται. τὰ γὰρ ἀπὸ τύχης
γιγνόμενα οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνη ἡγεμονία γίγνεται. ὦν δὲ
ἄνθρωπος ἡγεμών ἐστίν ἐπὶ τὸ ὀρθόν, δύο ταῦτα,
δόξα ἀληθῆς καὶ ἐπιστήμη.

ΜΕΝ. Δοκεῖ μοι οὕτως.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ οὐ διδακτὸν ἐστίν, οὐδ'
ἐπιστήμη δὴ ἔτι γίγνεται ἢ ἀρετῆ;

ΜΕΝ. Οὐ φαίνεται.

B ΣΩ. Δυοῖν ἄρα ὄντων ἀγαθοῖν καὶ ὠφελίμων τὸ
μὲν ἕτερον ἀπολέλυται, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἐν πο-
λιτικῇ πράξει ἐπιστήμη ἡγεμών.

ΜΕΝ. Οὐ μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. Οὐκ ἄρα σοφία τινὶ οὐδὲ σοφοὶ ὄντες οἱ
τοιούτοι ἄνδρες ἡγούντο ταῖς πόλεσιν, οἱ ἀμφὶ
Θεμιστοκλέα τε καὶ οὖς ἄρτι Ἄνυτος ὅδε ἔλεγε·
διὸ καὶ οὐχ οἰοί τε ἄλλους ποιεῖν τοιούτους οἰοί
αὐτοὶ εἶσιν, ἅτε οὐ δι' ἐπιστήμην ὄντες τοιούτοι.

ΜΕΝ. Ἐοικεν οὕτως ἔχειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὡς
λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ ἐπιστήμη, εὐδοξία δὴ τὸ
C λοιπὸν γίγνεται ἢ οἱ πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες χρώμενοι
τὰς πόλεις ὀρθοῦσιν, οὐδὲν διαφερόντως ἔχοντες
πρὸς τὸ φρονεῖν ἢ οἱ χρησμῶδοί τε καὶ οἱ θεο-
μάνταις· καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι λέγουσι μὲν ἀληθῆ καὶ
πολλά, ἴσασι δὲ οὐδὲν ὦν λέγουσιν.

MENO

soc. And that which guides rightly is useful and good ?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And that there are only two things—true opinion and knowledge—that guide rightly and a man guides rightly if he have these ; for things that come about by chance do not occur through human guidance ; but where a man is a guide to what is right we find these two things—true opinion and knowledge.

MEN. I agree.

soc. Well now, since virtue is not taught, we no longer take it to be knowledge ?

MEN. Apparently not.

soc. So of two good and useful things one has been rejected: knowledge cannot be our guide in political conduct.

MEN. I think not.

soc. Therefore it was not by any wisdom, nor because they were wise, that the sort of men we spoke of controlled their states—Themistocles and the rest of them, to whom our friend Anytus was referring a moment ago. For this reason it was that they were unable to make others like unto themselves—because their qualities were not an effect of knowledge.

MEN. The case is probably as you say, Socrates.

soc. And if not by knowledge, as the only alternative it must have been by good opinion. This is the means which statesmen employ for their direction of states, and they have nothing more to do with wisdom than soothsayers and diviners ; for these people utter many a true thing when inspired, but have no knowledge of anything they say.

PLATO

MEN. Κινδυνεύει οὕτως ἔχειν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν, ὦ Μένων, ἄξιον τούτους θείους καλεῖν τοὺς ἄνδρας, οἵτινες νοῦν μὴ ἔχοντες πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα κατορθοῦσιν ὧν πράττουσι καὶ λέγουσιν;

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Ὅρθῶς ἄρ' ἂν καλοῖμεν θείους τε, οὓς
 D νυνδὴ ἐλέγομέν χρησμωδοὺς καὶ μάντις καὶ τοὺς ποιητικούς ἅπαντας· καὶ τοὺς πολιτικούς οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτων φαῖμεν ἂν θείους τε εἶναι καὶ ἐνθουσιάζειν, ἐπίπνου ὄντας καὶ κατέχομένους ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν κατορθῶσι λέγοντες πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα πράγματα, μηδὲν εἰδότες ὧν λέγουσιν.

MEN. Πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. Καὶ αἶ γε γυναῖκες δήπου, ὦ Μένων, τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας θείους καλοῦσι· καὶ οἱ Λάκωνες ὅταν τινὰ ἐγκωμιάζωσιν ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα, θεῖος ἀνὴρ, φασίν, οὗτος.

E MEN. Καὶ φαίνονται γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὀρθῶς λέγειν. καίτοι ἴσως Ἄνυτος ὅδε σοι ἄχθεται λέγοντι.

ΣΩ. Οὐδὲν μέλει ἔμοιγε. τούτῳ μὲν, ὦ Μένων, καὶ αὐθις διαλεξόμεθα· εἰ δὲ νῦν ἡμεῖς ἐν παντὶ τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ καλῶς ἐζητήσαμέν τε καὶ ἐλέγομεν, ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη οὔτε φύσει οὔτε διδακτόν, ἀλλὰ θεία μοίρα παραγινομένη ἄνευ νοῦ, οἷς
 100 ἂν παραγίγηται, εἰ μὴ τις εἴη τοιοῦτος τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀνδρῶν, οἷος καὶ ἄλλον ποιῆσαι πολιτικόν. εἰ δὲ εἴη, σχεδὸν ἂν τι οὗτος λέγοιτο τοιοῦτος ἐν τοῖς ζῶσιν, οἷον ἔφη Ὅμηρος ἐν τοῖς τεθνεῶσι τὸν Τειρεσίαν εἶναι, λέγων περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οἷος πέπνυται τῶν ἐν Ἄιδου, αἱ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀΐσσοσι. ταῦτόν ἂν καὶ ἐνθάδε ὁ τοιοῦτος

MENO

MEN. I daresay that is so.

soc. And may we, Meno, rightly call those men divine who, having no understanding, yet succeed in many a great deed and word?

MEN. Certainly.

soc. Then we shall be right in calling those divine of whom we spoke just now as soothsayers and prophets and all of the poetic turn; and especially we can say of the statesmen that they are divine and enraptured, as being inspired and possessed of God when they succeed in speaking many great things, while knowing nought of what they say.

MEN. Certainly.

soc. And the women too, I presume, Meno, call good men divine; and the Spartans, when they eulogize a good man, say—"He is a divine person."

MEN. And to all appearance, Socrates, they are right; though perhaps our friend Anytus may be annoyed at your statement.

soc. For my part, I care not. As for him, Meno, we will converse with him some other time. At the moment, if through all this discussion our queries and statements have been correct, virtue is found to be neither natural nor taught, but is imparted to us by a divine dispensation without understanding in those who receive it, unless there should be somebody among the statesmen capable of making a statesman of another. And if there should be any such, he might fairly be said to be among the living what Homer says Teiresias was among the dead—"He alone has comprehension; the rest are fitting shades."¹ In the same way he on earth, in

¹ *Od.* x. 494.

PLATO

ὡσπερ παρὰ σκιάς ἀληθὲς ἂν πρᾶγμα εἶη πρὸς ἀρετήν.

B MEN. Κάλλιστα δοκεῖς μοι λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες.
ΣΩ. Ἐκ μὲν τοίνυν τούτου τοῦ λογισμοῦ, ὦ Μένων, θεία μοίρα ἡμῖν φαίνεται παραγιγνομένη ἢ ἀρετὴ οἷς παραγίγνεται· τὸ δὲ σαφὲς περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰσόμεθα τότε, ὅταν πρὶν ὧτινι τρόπῳ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παραγίγνεται ἀρετὴ, πρότερον ἐπιχειρήσωμεν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἔστιν ἀρετὴ. νῦν δ' ἐμοὶ μὲν ὦρα ποιῖναι, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα ἅπερ αὐτὸς πέπεισαι πεῖθε καὶ τὸν ξένον τόνδε Ἄνυτον, ἵνα πραότερος ᾗ· ὡς ἂν πείσης τοῦτον, ἔστιν ὃ τι καὶ Ἀθηναίους ὀνήσεις.

MENO

respect of virtue, will be a real substance among shadows.

MEN. I think you put it excellently, Socrates.

SOC. Then the result of our reasoning, Meno, is found to be that virtue comes to us by a divine dispensation, when it does come. But the certainty of this we shall only know when, before asking in what way virtue comes to mankind, we set about inquiring what virtue is, in and by itself. It is time now for me to go my way, but do you persuade our friend Anytus of that whereof you are now yourself persuaded, so as to put him in a gentler mood; for if you can persuade him, you will do a good turn to the people of Athens also.

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