XENOPHON

THE MEMORABLE THOUGHTS OF SOCRATES

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Introduction

This translation of Xenophon's "Memorabilia of Socrates" was first published in 1712, and is here printed from the revised edition of 1722. Its author was Edward Bysshe, who had produced in 1702 "The Art of English Poetry," a well-known work that was near its fifth edition when its author published his translation of the "Memorabilia." This was a translation that remained in good repute. There was another edition of it in 1758.

Bysshe translated the title of the book into "The Memorable Things of Socrates." I have changed "Things" into "Thoughts," for whether they be sayings or doings, the words and deeds of a wise man are alike expressions of his thought.

Xenophon is said to have been, when young, a pupil of Socrates. Two authorities have recorded that in the flight from the battle of Delium in the year b.c. 424, when Xenophon fell from his horse, Socrates picked him up and carried him on his back for a considerable distance. The time of Xenophon's death is not known, but he was alive sixty-seven years after the battle

of Delium.

When Cyrus the Younger was preparing war against his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon, King of Persia, Xenophon went with him. After the death of Cyrus on the plains of Cunaxa, the barbarian auxiliaries fled, and the Greeks were left to return as they could from the far region between the Tigris and Euphrates.

Xenophon had to take part in the conduct of the retreat, and tells the story of it in his "Anabasis," a history of the expedition of the younger Cyrus and of the retreat of the Greeks. His return into Greece was in the year of the death of Socrates, b.c. 399, but his association was now with the Spartans, with whom he fought, b.c. 394, at Coroneia. Afterwards he settled, and lived for about twenty years, at Scillus in Eleia with his wife and children.

At Scillus he wrote probably his "Anabasis" and some other of his books. At last he was driven out by the Eleans. In the battle of Mantineia the Spartans and Athenians fought as allies, and Xenophon's two sons were in the battle; he had sent them to Athens as fellow-combatants from Sparta. His banishment from Athens was repealed by change of times, but it does not appear that he returned to Athens. He is said to have lived, and perhaps died, at Corinth, after he had been driven from his home at Scillus.

Xenophon was a philosophic man of action. He could make his value felt in a council of war, take part in battle—one of his books is on the duties of a commander of cavalry—and show himself good sportsman in the hunting-field. He wrote

a book upon the horse; a treatise also upon dogs and hunting. He believed in God, thought earnestly about social and political duties, and preferred Spartan institutions to those of Athens. He wrote a life of his friend Agesilaus II., King of Sparta. He found exercise for his energetic mind in writing many books. In writing he was clear and to the point; his practical mind made his work interesting. His "Anabasis" is a true story as delightful as a fiction; his "Cyropædia" is a fiction full of truths. He wrote "Hellenica," that carried on the history of Greece from the point at which Thucydides closed his history until the battle of Mantineia. He wrote a dialogue between Hiero and Simonides upon the position of a king, and dealt with the administration of the little realm of a man's household in his "Œconomicus," a dialogue between Socrates and Critobulus, which includes the praise of agriculture. He wrote also, like Plato, a symposium, in which philosophers over their wine reason of love and friendship, and he paints the character of Socrates.

But his best memorial of his old guide, philosopher, and friend is this work, in which Xenophon brought together in simple and direct form the views of life that had been made clear to himself by the teaching of Socrates. Xenophon is throughout opposing a plain tale to the false accusations against Socrates. He does not idealise, but he feels strongly, and he shows clearly the worth of the wisdom that touches at every point the actual conduct of the lives of men.

H. M.

Book I

Chapter I. Socrates Not a Contemner of the Gods of His Country, nor an Introducer of New Ones

I have often wondered by what show of argument the accusers of Socrates could persuade the Athenians he had forfeited his life to the State. For though the crimes laid unto his charge were indeed great—"That he did not acknowledge the gods of the Republic; that he introduced new ones"—and, farther, "had debauched the youth;" yet none of these could, in the least, be proved against him.

For, as to the first, "That he did not worship the deities which the Republic adored," how could this be made out against him, since, instead of paying no homage to the gods of his country, he was frequently seen to assist in sacrificing to them, both in his own family and in the public temples?—perpetually worshipping them in the most public, solemn, and religious manner.

What, in my opinion, gave his accusers a specious pretext for alleging against him that he introduced new deities was this—that he had frequently declared in public he had received counsel from a *divine voice*, which he called his Demon. But this was no

proof at all of the matter. All that Socrates advanced about his demon was no more than what is daily advanced by those who believe in and practise divination; and if Socrates, because he said he received intelligence from his genius, must be accused of introducing new divinities, so also must they; for is it not certain that those who believe in divination, and practise that belief, do observe the flight of birds, consult the entrails of victims, and remark even unexpected words and accidental occurrences? But they do not, therefore, believe that either the birds whose flight they observe or the persons they meet accidentally know either their good or ill fortune—neither did Socrates—they only believe that the gods make use of these things to presage the future; and such, too, was the belief of Socrates. The vulgar, indeed, imagine it to be the very birds and things which present themselves to them that excite them to what is good for them, or make them avoid what may hurt them; but, as for Socrates, he freely owned that a demon was his monitor; and he frequently told his friends beforehand what they should do, or not do, according to the instructions he had received from his demon; and they who believed him, and followed his advice, always found advantage by it; as, on the contrary, they who neglected his admonitions, never failed to repent their incredulity. Now, it cannot be denied but that he ought to have taken care not to pass with his friends either for a liar or a visionary; and yet how could he avoid incurring that censure if the events had not justified the truth of the things he pretended were revealed to him? It is, therefore, manifest that he

would not have spoken of things to come if he had not believed he said true; but how could he believe he said true, unless he believed that the gods, who alone ought to be trusted for the knowledge of things to come, gave him notice of them? and, if he believed they did so, how can it be said that he acknowledged no gods?

He likewise advised his friends to do, in the best manner they could, the things that of necessity they were to do; but, as to those whose events were doubtful, he sent them to the oracles to know whether they should engage in them or not. And he thought that they who design to govern with success their families or whole cities had great need of receiving instructions by the help of divinations; for though he indeed held that every man may make choice of the condition of life in which he desires to live, and that, by his industry, he may render himself excellent in it, whether he apply himself to architecture or to agriculture, whether he throw himself into politics or economy, whether he engage himself in the public revenues or in the army, yet that in all these things the gods have reserved to themselves the most important events, into which men of themselves can in no wise penetrate. Thus he who makes a fine plantation of trees, knows not who shall gather the fruit; he who builds a house cannot tell who shall inhabit it; a general is not certain that he shall be successful in his command, nor a Minister of State in his ministry; he who marries a beautiful woman in hopes of being happy with her knows not but that even she herself may be the cause of all his uneasinesses; and he

who enters into a grand alliance is uncertain whether they with whom he allies himself will not at length be the cause of his ruin.

This made him frequently say that it is a great folly to imagine there is not a Divine Providence that presides over these things, and that they can in the least depend on human prudence. He likewise held it to be a weakness to importune the gods with questions which we may resolve ourselves; as if we should ask them whether it be better to take a coachman who knows how to drive than one who knows nothing of the matter? whether it be more eligible to take an experienced pilot than one that is ignorant? In a word, he counted it a kind of impiety to consult the oracles concerning what might be numbered or weighed, because we ought to learn the things which the gods have been pleased to capacitate us to know; but that we ought to have recourse to the oracles to be instructed in those that surpass our knowledge, because the gods are wont to discover them to such men as have rendered them propitious to themselves.

Socrates stayed seldom at home. In the morning he went to the places appointed for walking and public exercises. He never failed to be at the hall, or courts of justice, at the usual hour of assembling there, and the rest of the day he was at the places where the greatest companies generally met. There it was that he discoursed for the most part, and whoever would hear him easily might; and yet no man ever observed the least impiety either in his actions or his words. Nor did he amuse himself to reason of the secrets of nature, or to search into the manner of the creation

of what the sophists call the world, nor to dive into the cause of the motions of the celestial bodies. On the contrary, he exposed the folly of such as give themselves up to these contemplations; and he asked whether it was, after having acquired a perfect knowledge of human things, that they undertook to search into the divine, or if they thought themselves very wise in neglecting what concerned them to employ themselves in things above them? He was astonished likewise that they did not see it was impossible for men to comprehend anything of all those wonders, seeing they who have the reputation of being most knowing in them are of quite different opinions, and can agree no better than so many fools and madmen; for as some of these are not afraid of the most dangerous and frightful accidents, while others are in dread of what is not to be feared, so, too, among those philosophers, some are of opinion that there is no action but what may be done in public, nor word that may not freely be spoken before the whole world, while others, on the contrary, believe that we ought to avoid the conversation of men and keep in a perpetual solitude. Some have despised the temples and the altars, and have taught not to honour the gods, while others have been so superstitious as to worship wood, stones, and irrational creatures. And as to the knowledge of natural things, some have confessed but one only being; others have admitted an infinite number: some have believed that all things are in a perpetual motion; others that nothing moves: some have held the world to be full of continual generations and corruptions; others maintain

that nothing is engendered or destroyed. He said besides that he should be glad to know of those persons whether they were in hopes one day to put in practice what they learned, as men who know an art may practise it when they please either for their own advantage or for the service of their friends; or whether they did imagine that, after they found out the causes of all things that happen, they should be able to cause winds and rains, and to dispose the times and seasons as they had occasion for them; or whether they contented themselves with the bare knowledge without expecting any farther advantage.

This was what he said of those who delight in such studies. As for his part, he meditated chiefly on what is useful and proper for man, and took delight to argue of piety and impiety, of honesty and dishonesty, of justice and injustice, of wisdom and folly, of courage and cowardice, of the State, and of the qualifications of a Minister of State, of the Government, and of those who are fit to govern; in short, he enlarged on the like subjects, which it becomes men of condition to know, and of which none but slaves should be ignorant.

It is not strange, perhaps, that the judges of Socrates mistook his opinion in things concerning which he did not explain himself; but I am surprised that they did not reflect on what he had said and done in the face of the whole world; for when he was one of the Senate, and had taken the usual oath exactly to observe the laws, being in his turn vested with the dignity of Epistate, he bravely withstood the populace, who, against all

manner of reason, demanded that the nine captains, two of whom were Erasinides and Thrasilus, should be put to death, he would never give consent to this injustice, and was not daunted at the rage of the people, nor at the menaces of the men in power, choosing rather not to violate the oath he had taken than to yield to the violence of the multitude, and shelter himself from the vengeance of those who threatened him. To this purpose he said that the gods watch over men more attentively than the vulgar imagine; for they believe there are some things which the gods observe and others which they pass by unregarded; but he held that the gods observe all our actions and all our words, that they penetrate even into our most secret thoughts, that they are present at all our deliberations, and that they inspire us in all our affairs.

It is astonishing, therefore, to consider how the Athenians could suffer themselves to be persuaded that Socrates entertained any unworthy thoughts of the Deity; he who never let slip one single word against the respect due to the gods, nor was ever guilty of any action that savoured in the least of impiety; but who, on the contrary, has done and said things that could not proceed but from a mind truly pious, and that are sufficient to gain a man an eternal reputation of piety and virtue.

Chapter II. Socrates Not a Debaucher of Youth

What surprises me yet more is, that some would believe that Socrates was a debaucher of young men! Socrates the most sober and most chaste of all men, who cheerfully supported both cold and heat; whom no inconvenience, no hardships, no labours could startle, and who had learned to wish for so little, that though he had scarce anything, he had always enough. Then how could he teach impiety, injustice, gluttony, impurity, and luxury? And so far was he from doing so, that he reclaimed many persons from those vices, inspiring them with the love of virtue, and putting them in hopes of coming to preferment in the world, provided they would take a little care of themselves. Yet he never promised any man to teach him to be virtuous; but as he made a public profession of virtue, he created in the minds of those who frequented him the hopes of becoming virtuous by his example.

He neglected not his own body, and praised not those that neglected theirs. In like manner, he blamed the custom of some who eat too much, and afterwards use violent exercises; but he approved of eating till nature be satisfied, and of a moderate exercise after it, believing that method to be an advantage to health, and proper to unbend and divert the mind. In his clothes he was neither nice nor costly; and what I say of his clothes ought likewise to be understood of his whole way of living. Never

any of his friends became covetous in his conversation, and he reclaimed them from that sordid disposition, as well as from all others; for he would accept of no gratuity from any who desired to confer with him, and said that was the way to discover a noble and generous heart, and that they who take rewards betray a meanness of soul, and sell their own persons, because they impose on themselves a necessity of instructing those from whom they receive a salary. He wondered, likewise, why a man, who promises to teach virtue, should ask money; as if he believed not the greatest of all gain to consist in the acquisition of a good friend, or, as if he feared, that he who, by his means, should become virtuous, and be obliged to him for so great a benefit, would not be sufficiently grateful for it. Quite different from Socrates, who never boasted of any such thing, and who was most certain that all who heard him and received his maxims would love him for ever, and be capable of loving others also. After this, whosoever says that such a man debauched the youth, must at the same time say that the study of virtue is debauchery.

But the accuser says that Socrates taught to despise the constitution that was established in the Republic, because he affirmed it to be a folly to elect magistrates by lots; since if anyone had occasion for a pilot, a musician, or an architect, he would not trust to chance for any such person, though the faults that can be committed by men in such capacities are far from being of so great importance as those that are committed in the government of the Republic. He says, therefore, that such

arguments insensibly accustom the youth to despise the laws, and render them more audacious and more violent. But, in my opinion, such as study the art of prudence, and who believe they shall be able to render themselves capable of giving good advice and counsel to their fellow-citizens, seldom become men of violent tempers; because they know that violence is hateful and full of danger; while, on the contrary, to win by persuasion is full of love and safety. For they, whom we have compelled, brood a secret hatred against us, believing we have done them wrong; but those whom we have taken the trouble to persuade continue our friends, believing we have done them a kindness.

It is not, therefore, they who apply themselves to the study of prudence that become violent, but those brutish intractable tempers who have much power in their hands and but little judgment to manage it.—He farther said that when a man desires to carry anything by force, he must have many friends to assist him: as, on the contrary, he that can persuade has need of none but himself, and is not subject to shed blood; for who would rather choose to kill a man than to make use of his services, after having gained his friendship and goodwill by mildness?

The accuser adds, in proof of the ill tendency of the doctrine of Socrates, that Critias and Alcibiades, who were two of his most intimate friends, were very bad men, and did much mischief to their country. For Critias was the most insatiable and cruel of all the thirty tyrants; and Alcibiades the most dissolute, the most insolent, and the most audacious citizen that ever the Republic

had. As for me, I pretend not to justify them, and will only relate for what reason they frequented Socrates. They were men of an unbounded ambition, and who resolved, whatever it cost, to govern the State, and make themselves be talked of. They had heard that Socrates lived very content upon little or nothing, that he entirely commanded his passions, and that his reasonings were so persuasive that he drew all men to which side he pleased.

Reflecting on this, and being of the temper we mentioned, can it be thought that they desired the acquaintance of Socrates, because they were in love with his way of life, and with his temperance, or because they believed that by conversing with him they should render themselves capable of reasoning aright, and of well-managing the public affairs? For my part, I believe that if the gods had proposed to them to live always like him, or to die immediately, they would rather have chosen a sudden death. And it is easy to judge this from their actions; for as soon as they thought themselves more capable than their companions, they forsook Socrates, whom they had frequented, only for the purpose I mentioned, and threw themselves wholly into business.

It may, perhaps, be objected that he ought not to have discoursed to his friends of things relating to the government of the State, till after he had taught them to live virtuously. I have nothing to say to this; but I observe that all who profess teaching do generally two things: they work in presence of their scholars, to show them how they ought to do, and they instruct them likewise by word of mouth. Now, in either of these two

ways, no man ever taught to live well, like Socrates; for, in his whole life, he was an example of untainted probity; and in his discourses he spoke of virtue and of all the duties of man in a manner that made him admired of all his hearers. And I know too very well that Critias and Alcibiades lived very virtuously as long as they frequented him; not that they were afraid of him, but because they thought it most conducive to their designs to live so at that time.

Many who pretend to philosophy will here object, that a virtuous person is always virtuous, and that when a man has once come to be good and temperate, he will never afterwards become wicked nor dissolute; because habitudes that can be acquired, when once they are so, can never more be effaced from the mind. But I am not of this opinion; for as they who use no bodily exercises are awkward and unwieldy in the actions of the body, so they who exercise not their minds are incapable of the noble actions of the mind, and have not courage enough to undertake anything worthy of praise, nor command enough over themselves to abstain from things that are forbid. For this reason, parents, though they be well enough assured of the good natural disposition of their children, fail not to forbid them the conversation of the vicious, because it is the ruin of worthy dispositions, whereas the conversation of good men is a continual meditation of virtue. Thus a poet says,

"By those whom we frequent, we're ever led:

Example is a law by all obeyed.
Thus with the good, we are to good inclined,
But vicious company corrupts the mind."

And another in like manner:

"Virtue and vice in the same man are found,
And now they gain, and now they lose their ground."

And, in my opinion, they are in the right: for when I consider that they who have learned verses by heart forget them unless they repeat them often, so I believe that they who neglect the reasonings of philosophers, insensibly lose the remembrance of them; and when they have let these excellent notions slip out of their minds, they at the same time lose the idea of the things that supported in the soul the love of temperance; and, having forgot those things, what wonder is it if at length they forget temperance likewise?

I observe, besides, that men who abandon themselves to the debauches of wine or women find it more difficult to apply themselves to things that are profitable, and to abstain from what is hurtful. For many who live frugally before they fall in love become prodigal when that passion gets the mastery over them; insomuch that after having wasted their estates, they are reduced to gain their bread by methods they would have been ashamed of before. What hinders then, but that a man, who has been once temperate, should be so no longer, and that he who has led a

good life at one time should not do so at another? I should think, therefore, that the being of all virtues, and chiefly of temperance, depends on the practice of them: for lust, that dwells in the same body with the soul, incites it continually to despise this virtue, and to find out the shortest way to gratify the senses only.

Thus, whilst Alcibiades and Critias conversed with Socrates, they were able, with so great an assistance, to tame their inclinations; but after they had left him, Critias, being retired into Thessaly, ruined himself entirely in the company of some libertines; and Alcibiades, seeing himself courted by several women of quality, because of his beauty, and suffering himself to be corrupted by soothing flatterers, who made their court to him, in consideration of the credit he had in the city and with the allies; in a word, finding himself respected by all the Athenians, and that no man disputed the first rank with him, began to neglect himself, and acted like a great wrestler, who takes not the trouble to exercise himself, when he no longer finds an adversary who dares to contend with him.

If we would examine, therefore, all that has happened to them; if we consider how much the greatness of their birth, their interest, and their riches, had puffed up their minds; if we reflect on the ill company they fell into, and the many opportunities they had of debauching themselves, can we be surprised that, after they had been so long absent from Socrates, they arrived at length to that height of insolence to which they have been seen to arise? If they have been guilty of crimes, the accuser

will load Socrates with them, and not allow him to be worthy of praise, for having kept them within the bounds of their duty during their youth, when, in all appearance, they would have been the most disorderly and least governable. This, however, is not the way we judge of other things; for whoever pretended that a musician, a player on the lute, or any other person that teaches, after he has made a good scholar, ought to be blamed for his growing more ignorant under the care of another master? If a young man gets an acquaintance that brings him into debauchery, ought his father to lay the blame on the first friends of his son among whom he always lived virtuously? Is it not true, on the contrary, that the more he finds that this last friendship proves destructive to him, the more reason he will have to praise his former acquaintance. And are the fathers themselves, who are daily with their children, guilty of their faults, if they give them no ill example? Thus they ought to have judged of Socrates; if he led an ill life, it was reasonable to esteem him vicious; but if a good, was it just to accuse him of crimes of which he was innocent?

And yet he might have given his adversaries ground to accuse him, had he but approved, or seemed to approve those vices in others, from which he kept himself free: but Socrates abhorred vice, not only in himself, but in everyone besides. To prove which, I need only relate his conduct toward Critias, a man extremely addicted to debauchery. Socrates perceiving that this man had an unnatural passion for Euthydemus, and that the

violence of it would precipitate him so far a length as to make him transgress the bounds of nature, shocked at his behaviour, he exerted his utmost strength of reason and argument to dissuade him from so wild a desire. And while the impetuosity of Critias' passion seemed to scorn all check or control, and the modest rebuke of Socrates had been disregarded, the philosopher, out of an ardent zeal for virtue, broke out in such language, as at once declared his own strong inward sense of decency and order, and the monstrous shamefulness of Critias' passion. Which severe but just reprimand of Socrates, it is thought, was the foundation of that grudge which he ever after bore him; for during the tyranny of the Thirty, of which Critias was one, when, together with Charicles, he had the care of the civil government of the city, he failed not to remember this affront, and, in revenge of it, made a law to forbid teaching the art of reasoning in Athens: and having nothing to reproach Socrates with in particular, he laboured to render him odious by aspersing him with the usual calumnies that are thrown on all philosophers: for I have never heard Socrates say that he taught this art, nor seen any man who ever heard him say so; but Critias had taken offence, and gave sufficient proofs of it: for after the Thirty had caused to be put to death a great number of the citizens, and even of the most eminent, and had let loose the reins to all sorts of violence and rapine, Socrates said in a certain place that he wondered very much that a man who keeps a herd of cattle, and by his ill conduct loses every day some of them, and suffers the others to

fall away, would not own himself to be a very ill keeper of his herd; and that he should wonder yet more if a Minister of State, who lessens every day the number of his citizens, and makes the others more dissolute, was not ashamed of his ministry, and would not own himself to be an ill magistrate. This was reported to Critias and Charicles, who forthwith sent for Socrates, and showing him the law they had made, forbid him to discourse with the young men. Upon which Socrates asked them whether they would permit him to propose a question, that he might be informed of what he did not understand in this prohibition; and his request being granted, he spoke in this manner: "I am most ready to obey your laws; but that I may not transgress through ignorance, I desire to know of you, whether you condemn the art of reasoning, because you believe it consists in saying things well, or in saying them ill? If for the former reason, we must then, from henceforward, abstain from speaking as we ought; and if for the latter, it is plain that we ought to endeavour to speak well." At these words Charicles flew into a passion, and said to him: "Since you pretend to be ignorant of things that are so easily known, we forbid you to speak to the young men in any manner whatever." "It is enough," answered Socrates; "but that I may not be in a perpetual uncertainty, pray prescribe to me, till what age men are young." "Till they are capable of being members of the Senate," said Charicles: "in a word, speak to no man under thirty years of age." "How!" says Socrates, "if I would buy anything of a tradesman who is not thirty years

old am I forbid to ask him the price of it?" "I mean not so," answered Charicles: "but I am not surprised that you ask me this question, for it is your custom to ask many things that you know very well." Socrates added: "And if a young man ask me in the street where Charicles lodges, or whether I know where Critias is, must I make him no answer?" "I mean not so neither," answered Charicles. Here Critias, interrupting their discourse, said: "For the future, Socrates, you must have nothing to do with the city tradesmen, the shoemakers, masons, smiths, and other mechanics, whom you so often allege as examples of life; and who, I apprehend, are quite jaded with your discourses." "I must then likewise," replied Socrates, "omit the consequences I draw from those discourses; and have no more to do with justice, piety, and the other duties of a good man." "Yes, yes," said Charicles; "and I advise you to meddle no more with those that tend herds of oxen; otherwise take care you lose not your own." And these last words made it appear that Critias and Charicles had taken offence at the discourse which Socrates had held against their government, when he compared them to a man that suffers his herd to fall to ruin.

Thus we see how Critias frequented Socrates, and what opinion they had of each other. I add, moreover, that we cannot learn anything of a man whom we do not like: therefore if Critias and Alcibiades made no great improvement with Socrates, it proceeded from this, that they never liked him. For at the very time that they conversed with him, they always rather

courted the conversation of those who were employed in the public affairs, because they had no design but to govern.—The following conference of Alcibiades, in particular, which he had with Pericles, his governor—who was the chief man of the city, whilst he was yet under twenty years of age—concerning the nature of the laws, will confirm what I have now advanced.

"Pray," says Alcibiades, "explain to me what the law is: for, as I hear men praised who observe the laws, I imagine that this praise could not be given to those who know not what the law is." "It is easy to satisfy you," answered Pericles: "the law is only what the people in a general assembly ordain, declaring what ought to be done, and what ought not to be done." "And tell me," added Alcibiades, "do they ordain to do what is good, or what is ill?" "Most certainly what is good." Alcibiades pursued: "And how would you call what a small number of citizens should ordain, in states where the people is not the master, but all is ordered by the advice of a few persons, who possess the sovereignty?" "I would call whatever they ordain a law; for laws are nothing else but the ordinances of sovereigns." "If a tyrant then ordain anything, will that be a law?" "Yes, it will," said Pericles. "But what then is violence and injustice?" continued Alcibiades; "is it not when the strongest makes himself be obeyed by the weakest, not by consent, but by force only?" "In my opinion it is." "It follows then," says Alcibiades, "that ordinances made by a prince, without the consent of the citizens, will be absolutely unjust." "I believe so," said Pericles; "and cannot

allow that the ordinances of a prince, when they are made without the consent of the people, should bear the name of laws." "And what the chief citizens ordain, without procuring the consent of the greater number, is that likewise a violence?" "There is no question of it," answered Pericles; "and in general, every ordinance made without the consent of those who are to obey it, is a violence rather than a law." "And is what the populace decree, without the concurrence of the chiefs, to be counted a violence likewise, and not a law?" "No doubt it is," said Pericles: "but when I was of your age, I could resolve all these difficulties, because I made it my business to inquire into them, as you do now." "Would to God," cried Alcibiades, "I had been so happy as to have conversed with you then, when you understood these matters better." To this purpose was their dialogue.

Critias and Alcibiades, however, continued not long with Socrates, after they believed they had improved themselves, and gained some advantages over the other citizens, for besides that they thought not his conversation very agreeable, they were displeased that he took upon him to reprimand them for their faults; and thus they threw themselves immediately into the public affairs, having never had any other design but that.

The usual companions of Socrates were Crito, Chaerephon, Chaerecrates, Simmias, Cebes, Phædon, and some others; none of whom frequented him that they might learn to speak eloquently, either in the assemblies of the people, or in the courts of justice before the judges; but that they might become

better men, and know how to behave themselves towards their domestics, their relations, their friends, and their fellow-citizens.

All these persons led very innocent lives; and, whether we consider them in their youth or examine their behaviour in a more advanced age, we shall find that they never were guilty of any bad action, nay, that they never gave the least ground to suspect them of being so.

But the accuser says that Socrates encouraged children to despise their parents, making them believe that he was more capable to instruct them than they; and telling them that as the laws permit a man to chain his own father if he can convict him of lunacy, so, in like manner, it is but just that a man of excellent sense should throw another into chains who has not so much understanding. I cannot deny but that Socrates may have said something like this; but he meant it not in the sense in which the accuser would have it taken: and he fully discovered what his meaning by these words was, when he said that he who should pretend to chain others because of their ignorance, ought, for the same reason, to submit to be chained himself by men who know more than he. Hence it is that he argued so often of the difference between folly and ignorance; and then he plainly said that fools and madmen ought to be chained indeed, as well for their own interest as for that of their friends; but that they who are ignorant of things they should know, ought only to be instructed by those that understand them.

The accuser goes on, that Socrates did not only teach men to

despise their parents, but their other relations too; because he said that if a man be sick, or have a suit in law, it is not his relations, but the physicians, or the advocates who are of use to him. He further alleged that Socrates, speaking of friends, said it was to no purpose to bear goodwill to any man, if it be not in our power to serve him; and that the only friends whom we ought to value are they who know what is good for us, and can teach it to us: thus, says the accuser, Socrates, by persuading the youth that he was the wisest of all men, and the most capable to set others in the right road to wisdom, made them believe that all the rest of mankind were nothing in comparison with him. I remember, indeed, to have heard him sometimes talk after this manner of parents, relations, and friends; and he observed besides, if I mistake not, that when the soul, in which the understanding resides, is gone out of the body, we soon bury the corpse; and even though it be that of our nearest relation, we endeavour to put it out of our sight as soon as decently we can. Farther, though every man loves his own body to a great degree, we scruple not nevertheless to take from it all that is superfluous, for this reason we cut our hair and our nails, we take off our corns and our warts, and we put ourselves into the surgeons' hands, and endure caustics and incisions; and after they have made us suffer a great deal of pain, we think ourselves obliged to give them a reward: thus, too, we spit, because the spittle is of no use in the mouth, but on the contrary is troublesome. But Socrates meant not by these, or the like sayings, to conclude that a man ought to bury

his father alive, or that we ought to cut off our legs and arms; but he meant only to teach us that what is useless is contemptible, and to exhort every man to improve and render himself useful to others; to the end that if we desire to be esteemed by our father, our brother, or any other relation, we should not rely so much on our parentage and consanguinity, as not to endeavour to render ourselves always useful to those whose esteem we desire to obtain.

The accuser says further against Socrates, that he was so malicious as to choose out of the famous poets the passages that contained the worst instructions, and that he made use of them in a sly manner, to inculcate the vices of injustice and violence: as this verse of Hesiod,

> "Blame no employment, but blame idleness."

And he pretends that Socrates alleged this passage to prove that the poet meant to say that we ought not to count any employment unjust or dishonourable, if we can make any advantage of it. This, however, was far from the thoughts of Socrates; but, as he had always taught that employment and business are useful and honourable to men, and that idleness is an evil, he concluded that they who busy themselves about anything that is good are indeed employed; but that gamesters and debauched persons, and all who have no occupations, but such as are hurtful and wicked, are idle. Now, in this sense, is

it not true to say:—

> "Blame no employment, but blame idleness"?

The accuser likewise says that Socrates often repeated, out of Homer, a speech of Ulysses; and from thence he concludes that Socrates taught that the poet advised to beat the poor and abuse the common people. But it is plain Socrates could never have drawn such a wild and unnatural inference from those verses of the poet, because he would have argued against himself, since he was as poor as anyone besides. What he meant, therefore, was only this, that such as are neither men of counsel nor execution, who are neither fit to advise in the city nor to serve in the army, and are nevertheless proud and insolent, ought to be brought to reason, even though they be possessed of great riches. And this was the true meaning of Socrates, for he loved the men of low condition, and expressed a great civility for all sorts of persons; insomuch that whenever he was consulted, either by the Athenians or by foreigners, he would never take anything of any man for the instructions he gave them, but imparted his wisdom freely, and without reward, to all the world; while they, who became rich by his liberality, did not afterwards behave themselves so generously, but sold very dear to others what had cost them nothing; and, not being of so obliging a temper as he, would not impart their knowledge to any who had it not in their power to reward them. In short, Socrates has rendered

the city of Athens famous throughout the whole earth; and, as Lychas was said to be the honour of Sparta, because he treated, at his own expense, all the foreigners who came to the feasts of the Gymnopaedies, so it may, with much greater reason, be said of Socrates that he was the glory of Athens, he who all his life made a continual distribution of his goodness and virtues, and who, keeping open for all the world the treasures of an inestimable wealth, never sent any man out of his company but more virtuous, and more improved in the principles of honour, than formerly he was. Therefore, in my opinion, if he had been treated according to his merit, they should have decreed him public honours rather than have condemned him to an infamous death. For against whom have the laws ordained the punishment of death? Is it not for thieves, for robbers, for men guilty of sacrilege, for those who sell persons that are free? But where, in all the world, can we find a man more innocent of all those crimes than Socrates? Can it be said of him that he ever held correspondence with the enemy, that he ever fomented any sedition, that he ever was the cause of a rebellion, or any other the like mischiefs? Can any man lay to his charge that he ever detained his estate, or did him or it the least injury? Was he ever so much as suspected of any of these things? How then is it possible he should be guilty of the crimes of which he was accused; since, instead of not believing in the gods, as the accuser says, it is manifest he was a sincere adorer of them? Instead of corrupting the youth, as he further alleges against him, he made it

his chief care to deliver his friends from the power of every guilty passion, and to inspire them with an ardent love for virtue, the glory, the ornament, and felicity of families as well as of states?

And this being fact (and fact it is, for who can deny it?), is it not certain that the Republic was extremely obliged to him, and that she ought to have paid him the highest honours?

Chapter III. How Socrates Behaved Through the Whole of His Life

Having, therefore, observed myself that all who frequented him improved themselves very much in his conversation, because he instructed them no less by his example than by his discourses, I am resolved to set down, in this work, all that I can recollect both of his actions and words.

First, then, as to what relates to the service of the gods, he strictly conformed to the advice of the oracle, who never gives any other answer to those who inquire of him in what manner they ought to sacrifice to the gods, or what honours they ought to render to the dead, than that everyone should observe the customs of his own country. Thus in all the acts of religious worship Socrates took particular care to do nothing contrary to the custom of the Republic, and advised his friends to make that the rule of their devotion to the gods, alleging it to be an argument of superstition and vanity to dissent from the established worship.

When he prayed to the gods he besought them only to give him what is good, because they know better than we do what things are truly good for us; and he said that men who pray for silver, or for gold, or for the sovereign authority, made as foolish requests as if they prayed that they might play or fight, or desired any other thing whose event is uncertain, and that might be likely to turn to their disadvantage.

When he offered sacrifices he did not believe that his poverty rendered them despicable in the presence of the gods; and, while he offered according to his ability, he thought he gave as much as the rich, who load the altars with costly gifts, for he held that it would be an injustice in the gods to take more delight in costly sacrifices than in poorer ones, because it would then follow that the offerings of the wicked would for the most part be more acceptable to them than the gifts of the good; and that, if this were so, we ought not to desire to live one moment longer: he thought, therefore, that nothing was so acceptable to the Deity as the homage that is paid him by souls truly pious and innocent. To this purpose he often repeated these verses:—

> "Offer to heaven according to thy pow'r:
> Th' indulgent gracious gods require no more."

And not only in this, but in all the other occasions of life, he thought the best advice he could give his friends was to do all things according to their ability.

When he believed that the gods had admonished him to do anything, it was as impossible to make him take a contrary resolution as it would have been to have prevailed with him in a journey to change a guide that was clear-sighted for one that knew not the way, and was blind likewise. For this reason he pitied their folly, who, to avoid the derision of men, live not according to the admonitions and commands of the gods; and he

beheld with contempt all the subtilties of human prudence when he compared them with divine inspirations.

His way of living was such that whoever follows it may be assured, with the help of the gods, that he shall acquire a robust constitution and a health not to be easily impaired; and this, too, without any great expense, for he was content with so little that I believe there was not in all the world a man who could work at all but might have earned enough to have maintained him.

He generally ate as long as he found pleasure in eating, and when he sat down to table he desired no other sauce but a sound appetite. All sorts of drink were alike pleasing to him, because he never drank but when he was thirsty; and if sometimes he was invited to a feast, he easily avoided eating and drinking to excess, which many find very difficult to do in those occasions. But he advised those who had no government of themselves never to taste of things that tempt a man to eat when he is no longer hungry, and that excite him to drink when his thirst is already quenched, because it is this that spoils the stomach, causes the headache, and puts the soul into disorder. And he said, between jest and earnest, that he believed it was with such meats as those that Circe changed men into swine, and that Ulysses avoided that transformation by the counsel of Mercury, and because he had temperance enough to abstain from tasting them.

As to love, his advice was to avoid carefully the company of beautiful persons, saying it was very difficult to be near them and escape being taken in the snare; and, having been told that

Critobulus had given a kiss to the son of Alcibiades, who was a very handsome youth, he held this discourse to Xenophon, in the presence of Critobulus himself.

"Tell me, Xenophon, what opinion have you hitherto had of Critobulus? Have you placed him in the rank of the temperate and judicious; or with the debauched and imprudent?" "I have always looked upon him," answered Xenophon, "to be a very virtuous and prudent man." "Change your opinion," replied Socrates, "and believe him more rash than if he threw himself on the points of naked swords or leapt into the fire." "And what have you seen him do," said Xenophon, "that gives you reason to speak thus of him?" "Why, he had the rashness," answered Socrates, "to kiss the son of Alcibiades, who is so beautiful and charming." "And is this all?" said Xenophon; "for my part, I think I could also willingly expose myself to the same danger that he did." "Wretch, that you are!" replied Socrates. "Do you consider what happens to you after you have kissed a beautiful face? Do you not lose your liberty? Do you not become a slave? Do you not engage yourself in a vast expense to procure a sinful pleasure? Do you not find yourself in an incapacity of doing what is good, and that you subject yourself to the necessity of employing your whole time and person in the pursuit of what you would despise, if your reason were not corrupted?" "Good God!" cried Xenophon, "this is ascribing a wonderful power to a kiss forsooth." "And are you surprised at it?" answered Socrates. "Are there not some small animals whose bite is so

venomous that it causes insufferable pain, and even the loss of the senses?" "I know it very well," said Xenophon, "but these animals leave a poison behind them when they sting." "And do you think, you fool," added Socrates, "that kisses of love are not venomous, because you perceive not the poison? Know that a beautiful person is a more dangerous animal than scorpions, because these cannot wound unless they touch us; but beauty strikes at a distance: from what place soever we can but behold her, she darts her venom upon us, and overthrows our judgment.

And perhaps for this reason the Loves are represented with bows and arrows, because a beautiful face wounds us from afar.

I advise you, therefore, Xenophon, when you chance to see a beauty to fly from it, without looking behind you. And for you, Critobulus, I think it convenient that you should enjoin yourself a year's absence, which will not be too long a time to heal you of your wound."

As for such as have not strength enough to resist the power of love, he thought that they ought to consider and use it as an action to which the soul would never consent, were it not for the necessity of the body; and which, though it be necessary, ought, nevertheless, to give us no inquietude. As for himself, his continence was known to all men, and it was more easy for him to avoid courting the most celebrated beauties, than it is for others to get away from disagreeable objects.

Thus we see what was his way of life in eating, drinking, and in the affair of love. He believed, however, that he tasted of those

pleasures no less than they who give themselves much trouble to enjoy them; but that he had not, like them, so frequent occasions for sorrow and repentance.

Chapter IV. Socrates Proveth the Existence of a Deity

If there be any who believe what some have written by conjecture, that Socrates was indeed excellent in exciting men to virtue, but that he did not push them forward to make any great progress in it, let such reflect a little on what he said, not only when he endeavoured to refute those that boasted they knew all things, but likewise in his familiar conversations, and let them judge afterwards if he was incapable to advance his friends in the paths of virtue.

I will, in the first place, relate a conference which he had with Aristodemus, surnamed the Little, touching the Deity, for he had heard that he never sacrificed to the gods; that he never addressed himself to them in prayer; that he never consulted the oracles, and even laughed at those that practised these things, he took him to talk in this manner:—

"Tell me, Aristodemus, are there any persons whom you value on account of their merit?" He answered, "Yes, certainly." "Tell me their names," added Socrates. Aristodemus replied: "For epic poetry I admire Homer as the most excellent; for dithyrambics, Melanippides; Sophocles for tragedy; Polycletes for statuary; and Zeuxis for painting." "Which artists," said Socrates, "do you think to be most worthy of your esteem and admiration: they who make images without soul and motion,

or they who make animals that move of their own accord, and are endowed with understanding?" "No doubt the last," replied Aristodemus, "provided they make them not by chance, but with judgment and prudence." Socrates went on: "As there are some things which we cannot say why they were made, and others which are apparently good and useful, tell me, my friend, whether of the two you rather take to be the work of prudence than of hazard." "It is reasonable," said Aristodemus, "to believe that the things which are good and useful are the workmanship of reason and judgment." "Do not you think then," replied Socrates, "that the first Former of mankind designed their advantage when he gave them the several senses by which objects are apprehended; eyes for things visible, and ears for sounds? Of what advantage would agreeable scents have been to us if nostrils suited to their reception had not been given? And for the pleasures of the taste, how could we ever have enjoyed these, if the tongue had not been fitted to discern and relish them? Further, does it not appear to you wisely provided that since the eye is of a delicate make, it is guarded with the eyelid drawn back when the eye is used, and covering it in sleep? How well does the hair at the extremity of the eyelid keep out dust, and the eyebrow, by its prominency, prevent the sweat of the forehead from running into the eye to its hurt. How wisely is the ear formed to receive all sorts of sounds, and not to be filled with any to the exclusion of others.

Are not the fore teeth of all animals fitted to cut off proper portions of food, and their grinders to reduce it to a convenient

smallness? The mouth, by which we take in the food we like, is fitly placed just beneath the nose and eyes, the judges of its goodness; and what is offensive and disagreeable to our senses is, for that reason, placed at a proper distance from them. In short, these things being disposed in such order, and with so much care, can you hesitate one moment to determine whether it be an effect of providence or of chance?" "I doubt not of it in the least," replied Aristodemus, "and the more I fix my thoughts on the contemplation of these things the more I am persuaded that all this is the masterpiece of a great workman, who bears an extreme love to men." "What say you," continued Socrates, "to this, that he gives all animals a desire to engender and propagate their kind; that he inspires the mothers with tenderness and affection to bring up their young; and that, from the very hour of their birth, he infuses into them this great love of life and this mighty aversion to death?" "I say," replied Aristodemus, "that it is an effect of his great care for their preservation." "This is not all," said Socrates, "answer me yet farther; perhaps you would rather interrogate me. You are not, I persuade myself, ignorant that you are endowed with understanding; do you then think that there is not elsewhere an intelligent being? Particularly, if you consider that your body is only a little earth taken from that great mass which you behold. The moist that composes you is only a small drop of that immense heap of water that makes the sea; in a word, your body contains only a small part of all the elements, which are elsewhere in great quantity. There is nothing then

but your understanding alone, which, by a wonderful piece of good fortune, must have come to you from I know not whence, if there were none in another place; and can it then be said that all this universe and all these so vast and numerous bodies have been disposed in so much order, without the help of an intelligent Being, and by mere chance?" "I find it very difficult to understand it otherwise," answered Aristodemus, "because I see not the gods, who, you say, make and govern all things, as I see the artificers who do any piece of work amongst us." "Nor do you see your soul neither," answered Socrates, "which governs your body; but, because you do not see it, will you from thence infer you do nothing at all by its direction, but that everything you do is by mere chance?" Aristodemus now wavering said, "I do not despise the Deity, but I conceive such an idea of his magnificence and self-sufficiency, that I imagine him to have no need of me or my services." "You are quite wrong," said Socrates, "for by how much the gods, who are so magnificent, vouchsafe to regard you, by so much you are bound to praise and adore them." "It is needless for me to tell you," answered Aristodemus, "that, if I believed the gods interested themselves in human affairs, I should not neglect to worship them." "How!" replied Socrates, "you do not believe the gods take care of men, they who have not only given to man, in common with other animals, the senses of seeing, hearing, and taste, but have also given him to walk upright; a privilege which no other animal can boast of, and which is of mighty use to him to look forward, to

remote objects, to survey with facility those above him, and to defend himself from any harm? Besides, although the animals that walk have feet, which serve them for no other use than to walk, yet, herein, have the gods distinguished man, in that, besides feet, they have given him hands, the instruments of a thousand grand and useful actions, on which account he not only excels, but is happier than all animals besides. And, further, though all animals have tongues, yet none of them can speak, like man's; his tongue only can form words, by which he declares his thoughts, and communicates them to others. Not to mention smaller instances of their care, such as the concern they take of our pleasures, in confining men to no certain season for the enjoying them, as they have done other animals.

"But Providence taketh care, not only of our bodies, but of our souls: it hath pleased the great Author of all, not only to give man so many advantages for the body, but (which is the greatest gift of all, and the strongest proof of his care) he hath breathed into him an intelligent soul, and that, too, the most excellent of all, for which of the other animals has a soul that knows the being of the Deity, by whom so many great and marvellous works are done? Is there any species but man that serves and adores him? Which of the animals can, like him, protect himself from hunger and thirst, from heat and cold? Which, like him, can find remedies for diseases, can make use of his strength, and is as capable of learning, that so perfectly retains the things he has seen, he has heard, he has known? In a word, it is manifest that man is a

god in comparison with the other living species, considering the advantages he naturally has over them, both of body and soul.

For, if man had a body like to that of an ox the subtilty of his understanding would avail him nothing, because he would not be able to execute what he should project. On the other hand, if that animal had a body like ours, yet, being devoid of understanding, he would be no better than the rest of the brute species. Thus the gods have at once united in your person the most excellent structure of body and the greatest perfection of soul; and now can you still say, after all, that they take no care of you? What would you have them do to convince you of the contrary?" "I would have them," answered Aristodemus, "send on purpose to let me know expressly all that I ought to do or not to do, in like manner as you say they do give you notice." "What!" said Socrates, "when they pronounce any oracle to all the Athenians, do you think they do not address themselves to you too, when by prodigies they make known to the Greeks the things that are to happen, are they silent to you alone, and are you the only person they neglect? Do you think that the gods would have instilled this notion into men, that it is they who can make them happy or miserable, if it were not indeed in their power to do so? And do you believe that the human race would have been thus long abused without ever discovering the cheat? Do you not know that the most ancient and wisest republics and people have been also the most pious, and that man, at the age when his judgment is ripest, has then the greatest bent to the worship of the Deity?

"My dear Aristodemus, consider that your mind governs your body according to its pleasure: in like manner we ought to believe that there is a mind diffused throughout the whole universe that disposeth of all things according to its counsels. You must not imagine that your weak sight can reach to objects that are several leagues distant, and that the eye of God cannot, at one and the same time, see all things. You must not imagine that your mind can reflect on the affairs of Athens, of Egypt, and of Sicily, and that the providence of God cannot, at one and the same moment, consider all things. As, therefore, you may make trial of the gratitude of a man by doing him a kindness, and as you may discover his prudence by consulting him in difficult affairs, so, if you would be convinced how great is the power and goodness of God, apply yourself sincerely to piety and his worship; then, my dear Aristodemus, you shall soon be persuaded that the Deity sees all, hears all, is present everywhere, and, at the same time, regulates and superintends all the events of the universe."

By such discourses as these Socrates taught his friends never to commit any injustice or dishonourable action, not only in the presence of men, but even in secret, and when they are alone, since the Divinity hath always an eye over us, and none of our actions can be hid from him.

Chapter V. The Praise of Temperance

And if temperance be a virtue in man, as undoubtedly it is, let us see whether any improvement can be made by what he said of it. I will here give you one of his discourses on that subject:—

"If we were engaged in a war," said he, "and were to choose a general, would we make choice of a man given to wine or women, and who could not support fatigues and hardships? Could we believe that such a commander would be capable to defend us and to conquer our enemies? Or if we were lying on our deathbed, and were to appoint a guardian and tutor for our children, to take care to instruct our sons in the principles of virtue, to breed up our daughters in the paths of honour and to be faithful in the management of their fortunes, should we think a debauched person fit for that employment? Would we trust our flocks and our granaries in the hands of a drunkard? Would we rely upon him for the conduct of any enterprise; and, in short, if a present were made us of such a slave, should we not make it a difficulty to accept him? If, then, we have so great an aversion for debauchery in the person of the meanest servant, ought we not ourselves to be very careful not to fall into the same fault? Besides, a covetous man has the satisfaction of enriching himself, and, though he take away another's estate, he increases his own; but a debauched man is both troublesome to others and injurious to himself. We may say of him that he is hurtful to all the world, and yet more

hurtful to himself, if to ruin, not only his family, but his body and soul likewise, is to be hurtful. Who, then, can take delight in the company of him who has no other diversion than eating and drinking, and who is better pleased with the conversation of a prostitute than of his friends? Ought we not, then, to practise temperance above all things, seeing it is the foundation of all other virtues; for without it what can we learn that is good, what do that is worthy of praise? Is not the state of man who is plunged in voluptuousness a wretched condition both for the body and soul? Certainly, in my opinion, a free person ought to wish to have no such servants, and servants addicted to such brutal irregularities ought earnestly to entreat Heaven that they may fall into the hands of very indulgent masters, because their ruin will be otherwise almost unavoidable."

This is what Socrates was wont to say upon this subject. But if he appeared to be a lover of temperance in his discourses, he was yet a more exact observer of it in his actions, showing himself to be not only invincible to the pleasures of the senses, but even depriving himself of the satisfaction of getting an estate; for he held that a man who accepts of money from others makes himself a servant to all their humours, and becomes their slave in a manner no less scandalous than other slaveries.

Chapter VI. The Dispute of Socrates With Antiphon, the Sophist

To this end it will not be amiss to relate, for the honour of Socrates, what passed between him and the sophist Antiphon, who designed to seduce away his hearers, and to that end came to him when they were with him, and, in their presence, addressed himself to him in these words:—"I imagined, Socrates, that philosophers were happier than other men; but, in my opinion, your wisdom renders you more miserable, for you live at such a rate that no footman would live with a master that treated him in the same manner. You eat and drink poorly, you are clothed very meanly—the same suit serves you in summer and winter—you go barefoot, and for all this you take no money, though it is a pleasure to get it; for, after a man has acquired it, he lives more genteely and more at his ease. If, therefore, as in all other sorts of arts, apprentices endeavour to imitate their masters, should these who frequent your conversation become like you, it is certain that you will have taught them nothing but to make themselves miserable."

Socrates answered him in the following manner:—"You think, Antiphon, I live so poorly that I believe you would rather die than live like me. But what is it you find so strange and difficult in my way of living? You blame me for not taking money; is it because they who take money are obliged to do what

they promise, and that I, who take none, entertain myself only with whom I think fit? You despise my eating and drinking; is it because my diet is not so good nor so nourishing as yours, or because it is more scarce and dearer, or lastly, because your fare seems to you to be better? Know that a man who likes what he eats needs no other *ragoût*, and that he who finds one sort of drink pleasant wishes for no other. As to your objection of my clothes, you appear to me, Antiphon, to judge quite amiss of the matter; for, do you not know that we dress ourselves differently only because of the hot or cold weather, and if we wear shoes it is because we would walk the easier? But, tell me, did you ever observe that the cold hath hindered me from going abroad?

Have you ever seen me choose the cool and fresh shades in hot weather? And, though I go barefoot, do not you see that I go wherever I will? Do you not know that there are some persons of a very tender constitution, who, by constant exercise, surmount the weakness of their nature, and at length endure fatigues better than they who are naturally more robust, but have not taken pains to exercise and harden themselves like the others?

Thus, therefore, do not you believe that I, who have all my life accustomed myself to bear patiently all manner of fatigues, cannot now more easily submit to this than you, who have never thought of the matter? If I have no keen desire after dainties, if I sleep little, if I abandon not myself to any infamous amour, the reason is because I spend my time more delightfully in things whose pleasure ends not in the moment of enjoyment, and that

make me hope besides to receive an everlasting reward. Besides, you know very well, that when a man sees that his affairs go ill he is not generally very gay; and that, on the contrary, they who think to succeed in their designs, whether in agriculture, traffic, or any other undertaking, are very contented in their minds. Now, do you think that from anything whatsoever there can proceed a satisfaction equal to the inward consciousness of improving daily in virtue, and acquiring the acquaintance and friendship of the best of men? And if we were to serve our friends or our country, would not a man who lives like me be more capable of it than one that should follow that course of life which you take to be so charming? If it were necessary to carry arms, which of the two would be the best soldier, he who must always fare deliciously, or he who is satisfied with what he finds? If they were to undergo a siege who would hold out longest, he who cannot live without delicacies, or he who requires nothing but what may easily be had? One would think, Antiphon, that you believe happiness to consist in good eating and drinking, and in an expensive and splendid way of life. For my part, I am of opinion that to have need of nothing at all is a divine perfection, and that to have need but of little is to approach very near the Deity, and hence it follows that, as there is nothing more excellent than the Deity, whatever approaches nearest to it is likewise most near the supreme excellence."

Another time Antiphon addressed himself to Socrates: "I confess you are an honest, well-meaning man, Socrates; but it is

certain you know little or nothing, and one would imagine you own this to be true, for you get nothing by your teaching. And yet, I persuade myself, you would not part with your house, or any of the furniture of it, without some gratuity, because you believe them of some small value; nay, you would not part with them for less than they are worth: if, therefore, you thought your teaching worth anything you would be paid for it according to its value; in this, indeed, you show yourself honest, because you will not, out of avarice, cheat any man, but at the same time you discover, too, that you know but little, since all your knowledge is not worth the buying."

Socrates answered him in this manner:—"There is a great resemblance between beauty and the doctrine of philosophers; what is praiseworthy in the one is so in the other, and both of them are subject to the same vice: for, if a woman sells her beauty for money, we immediately call her a prostitute; but if she knows that a man of worth and condition is fallen in love with her, and if she makes him her friend, we say she is a prudent woman. It is just the same with the doctrine of philosophers; they that sell it are sophists, and like the public women, but if a philosopher observe a youth of excellent parts, and teacheth him what he knows, in order to obtain his friendship, we say of him, that he acts the part of a good and virtuous citizen. Thus as some delight in fine horses, others in dogs, and others in birds; for my part all my delight is to be with my virtuous friends. I teach them all the good I know, and recommend them to all whom I believe

capable to assist them in the way to perfection. We all draw together, out of the same fountain, the precious treasures which the ancient sages have left us; we run over their works, and if we find anything excellent we take notice of it and select it: in short, we believe we have made a great improvement when we begin to love one another." This was the answer he made, and when I heard him speak in this manner I thought him very happy, and that he effectually stirred up his hearers to the love of virtue.

Another time when Antiphon asked him why he did not concern himself with affairs of State, seeing he thought himself capable to make others good politicians? he returned this answer: —"Should I be more serviceable to the State if I took an employment whose function would be wholly bounded in my person, and take up all my time, than I am by instructing every one as I do, and in furnishing the Republic with a great number of citizens who are capable to serve her?"

Chapter VII. In What Manner Socrates Dissuaded Men From Self-Conceit and Ostentation

But let us now see whether by dissuading his friends from a vain ostentation he did not exhort them to the pursuit of virtue. He frequently said that there was no readier way to glory than to render oneself excellent, and not to affect to appear so. To prove this he alleged the following example:—"Let us suppose," said he, "that any one would be thought a good musician, without being so in reality; what course must he take? He must be careful to imitate the great masters in everything that is not of their art; he must, like them, have fine musical instruments; he must, like them, be followed by a great number of persons wherever he goes, who must be always talking in his praise. And yet he must not venture to sing in public: for then all men would immediately perceive not only his ignorance, but his presumption and folly likewise. And would it not be ridiculous in him to spend his estate to ruin his reputation? In like manner, if any one would appear a great general, or a good pilot, though he knew nothing of either, what would be the issue of it? If he cannot make others believe it, it troubles him, and if he can persuade them to think so he is yet more unhappy, because, if he be made choice of for the steering of ships, or to command an army, he will acquit

himself very ill of his office, and perhaps be the cause of the loss of his best friends. It is not less dangerous to appear to be rich, or brave, or strong, if we are not so indeed, for this opinion of us may procure us employments that are above our capacity, and if we fail to effect what was expected of us there is no remission for our faults. And if it be a great cheat to wheedle one of your neighbours out of any of his ready money or goods, and not restore them to him afterwards, it is a much greater impudence and cheat for a worthless fellow to persuade the world that he is capable to govern a Republic." By these and the like arguments he inspired a hatred of vanity and ostentation into the minds of those who frequented him.

Book II

Chapter I. A Conference of Socrates with Aristippus Concerning Pleasure and Temperance

In the same manner, likewise, he encouraged his hearers by the following arguments to support hunger and thirst, to resist the temptations of love, to fly from laziness, and inure themselves to all manner of fatigues. For, being told that one of them lived too luxuriously, he asked him this question: "If you were entrusted, Aristippus, with the education of two young men, one to be a prince and the other a private man, how would you educate them? Let us begin with their nourishment, as being the foundation of all." "It is true," said Aristippus, "that nourishment is the foundation of our life, for a man must soon die if he be not nourished." "You would accustom both of them," said Socrates, "to eat and drink at a certain hour?" "It is likely I should?"

"But which of the two," said Socrates, "would you teach to leave eating before he was satisfied, to go about some earnest business?" "Him, without doubt," answered Aristippus, "whom I intended to render capable to govern, to the end that under him the affairs of the Republic might not suffer by delay." "Which

of the two," continued Socrates, "would you teach to abstain from drinking when he was thirsty, to sleep but little, to go late to bed, to rise early, to watch whole nights, to live chastely, to get the better of his favourite inclinations, and not to avoid fatigues, but expose himself freely to them?" "The same still," replied Aristippus. "And if there be any art that teaches to overcome our enemies, to which of the two is it rather reasonable to teach it?" "To him to," said Aristippus, "for without that art all the rest would avail him nothing." "I believe," said Socrates, "that a man, who has been educated in this manner, would not suffer himself to be so easily surprised by his enemies as the most part of animals do. For some perish by their gluttony, as those whom we allure with a bait, or catch by offering them to drink, and who fall into the snares, notwithstanding their fears and distrust. Others perish through their lasciviousness, as quails and partridges, who suffer themselves to be decoyed by the counterfeit voice of their females, and blindly following the amorous warmth that transports them, fall miserably into the nets." "You say true," said Aristippus. "Well, then," pursued Socrates, "is it not scandalous for a man to be taken in the same snares with irrational animals? And does not this happen to adulterers, who skulk and hide themselves in the chambers and closets of married women, though they know they run a very great risk, and that the laws are very strict and rigorous against those crimes? They know themselves to be watched, and that, if they are taken, they shall not be let go with impunity. In a

word, they see punishment and infamy hanging over the heads of criminals like themselves. Besides, they are not ignorant, that there are a thousand honourable diversions to deliver them from those infamous passions, and yet they run hand over head into the midst of these dangers, and what is this but to be wretched and desperate to the highest degree?" "I think it so," answered Aristippus. "What say you to this," continued Socrates, "that the most necessary and most important affairs of life, as those of war and husbandry, are, with others of little less consequence, performed in the fields and in the open air, and that the greatest part of mankind accustom themselves so little to endure the inclemency of the seasons, to suffer heat and cold? Is not this a great neglect? and do you not think that a man who is to command others ought to inure himself to all these hardships?"

"I think he ought," answered Aristippus. "Therefore," replied Socrates, "if they who are patient and laborious, as we have said, are worthy to command, may we not say that they who can do nothing of all this, ought never to pretend to any office?"

Aristippus agreed to it, and Socrates went on.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.