THE MENO:

A

DIALOGUE

CONCERNING

VIRTUE.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE MENO[1].

THIS Dialogue has been always juſtly entitled "Concerning Virtue." For the true ſubject of it is the nature and origin of virtue. The queſtion, indeed, propoſed to Socrates by Meno in the very outſet of the Dialogue, is this other, "How virtue is acquired." But Socrates immediately waves the queſtion, and draws the converſation to an inquiry "what virtue is," as of neceſſity previous to the inquiry, "whence it comes." However, from the reſult of the reaſoning, we ſhall perceive both theſe queſtions anſwerable together: we ſhall be convinced, that none can know the nature and eſſence of virtue, without knowing the fountain whence it is derived; and that whoever knows what this is, cannot fail of knowing at the ſame time what that is in which virtue conſiſts. For, if we attend cloſely to the ſteps or gradual advances made in theſe inquiries, through the courſe of this Dialogue, we ſhall diſcover that virtue conſiſts in that kind of knowledge and that kind of power, taken together, the capacity of both which is in the human, as ſhe partakes of a divine intellect, whoſe eſſence is its own object, and whoſe energy is the contemplation of itſelf, and the government of the univerſe. That kind of knowledge, therefore, which belongs to virtue is the knowledge of true good; and that kind of power in the ſoul, through which, joined to that knowledge, a man is virtuous, is the power of the

[1] The whole of this Introduction is extracted from the Argument of Mr. Sydenham to this Dialogue; excepting a few paſſages, which, from his not being ſufficiently ſkilled in the more profound parts of Plato's philoſophy, it was neceſſary to alter.—T.

intellect

intellect over the inferior part of the ſoul, the imagination and the paſſions. The gradual advances made toward this diſcovery form the conduct of this divine Dialogue. And the firſt ſtep is to ſhow, that virtue, though it ſeems to be a very complex idea, and made up of many virtues, different in their natures, and reſpectively belonging to different perſons, is but one ſimple idea, though called by different names, as the particular ſubjects on which it operates, or the particular objects which it has in view, differ one from another. In the next ſtep, we find that this idea includes power and government, to which account immediately are ſubjoined, by way of explanation, theſe reſtrictions, power well and wiſely exerciſed, and government well and juſtly adminiſtered. Here then we diſcover that the Well, the Wiſely, and the Juſtly, are eſſential to the idea of virtue. Next, we march in ſome obſcurity: for here we ſee only by help of a metaphor, ſeemingly introduced, but in the way of a ſimilitude, to illuſtrate a point ſufficiently made clear already, that is, the wholeneſs or rather oneneſs of the idea of virtue. The metaphor is taken from outward figure, the definition of which being given, that it is bound, the bound of ſolid bodies, ſuggeſts to every diſciple or ſtudious reader of Plato, that virtue itſelf is bound, that virtue intellectual is the bound of things within the mind, and that virtue practical is the bound of human actions and human manners[1]. We then move a ſtep further, in the ſame manner, by the light only of metaphor. The metaphor here is taken from the corpuſcular philoſophy, then newly brought into vogue by Protagoras, who had learnt it from Democritus, and by Gorgias, who who had learnt it from Empedocles. And Socrates here proſecutes the ſubject of inquiry in this dialogue, under a pretence of giving a definition of colour, according to the doctrine of this philoſophy which Meno had imbibed. Colour, he ſays, is owing to effluvia from the ſurfaces of bodies entering the pores of the organs of ſight; theſe being exactly fitted for the reception of ſuch effluvia: by which means thoſe effluvia, being commenſurate

[1] Our explication of this part of the Dialogue may perhaps appear fanciful to readers unacquainted with Plato. To obviate this appearance, we are to obſerve, that, as Pythygoras uſed to illuſtrate things mental by mathematical numbers, ſo Plato frequently illuſtrates them from the principles of geometry, and frequently alſo through ſenſible images, or things corporeal. And perhaps theſe two ways of illuſtration are the eaſieſt and the plaineſt ways, through which we can at firſt be led to conceive things purely abſtract, the objects of intellect.—S.

with

with theſe pores, become the objects of ſight. Thus the philoſopher plays with the prejudices of Meno, a diſciple of the ſophiſts, and therefore not a proper ſubject for his inſtruction; and introduces, with a profeſſed view of only gratifying him, a point which ſeems very foreign to the ſubject, and not at all neceſſary to illuſtrate his meaning. But to his own friends and followers, who were acquainted with his doctrine, and were then near him, he thus ænigmatically inſinuates that virtue and vice are as it were the colours of human actions; that by the light of mind we are able to diſtinguiſh them; that the ſcience of virtue is as natural to the human underſtanding, as the perception of outward objects is to the eye of ſenſe; that the mental eye is exactly adequate to its objects; and that all truth in general, and moral truth in particular, the preſent ſubject, is commenſurate with the mind. The next advance we make diſcovers to us that virtue conſiſts in a love and deſire of true good, and true beauty, neceſſarily conſequent to the knowledge of what is truly good and truly beautiful: it being impoſſible to forbear loving what appears beautiful, or deſiring what appears good. And having already found that the idea of virtue includes power and government, we find that the whole idea of virtue is the power of preſerving or of recovering true good and beauty, known to be ſuch, and loved and deſired becauſe known. The next ſtep brings us to the end of our journey in this inquiry concerning virtue; by ſhowing us that the knowledge of all truth, and conſequently of true good and beauty, is connatural to the ſoul of man: and is ſo, becauſe her origin is divine, and her eſſence immortal. Now, the demiurgic intellect, the ſource of her being, is immortal and divine, and truth eternally there reſides, the ſtable and invariable object of intellect. Plato, therefore, in proving to us, as he does in this part of the Dialogue by an inconteſtable inſtance, that the ſoul of man naturally aſſents to and embraces truth, when fairly preſented to her, and exhibited in a clear light, proves to us at the ſame time, that ſhe participates of this eternal intellect and truth.

Thus much concerning the firſt part, about one-half the Dialogue. In the latter half the inquiry into the nature of virtue is reſumed, but in a different way. For Meno, having here urged the conſideration of his firſt queſtion, "how virtue is acquired," Socrates, in pretending to yield at length to this inquiry, brings us round by another road to the end, which he

himſelf had all along in view, the teaching "what virtue is." And here it is ſuggeſted, through a geometrical enigma, in the firſt place, that not every ſoul is capable of virtue; that a certain prediſpoſition is requiſite; that the parts of the ſoul muſt be well proportioned to each other, in their natural frame, in order that the whole man may, through virtue, be made totus teres atque rotundus. In the next place, we find, that virtue conſiſts not in any particular virtuous habit or habits of the ſoul, whether intellectual or moral, but in the prudential uſe and exerciſe of them; whence it follows, that virtue is not acquired by mere practice or habit. Thirdly, we find that virtue conſiſts not merely in a good diſpoſition, without being well cultivated, and conſequently comes not by nature. Fourthly, that it conſiſts not in any particular ſcience or ſciences, and therefore is not acquired by learning, and is not to be taught in the ordinary method of inſtruction or diſcipline. Preparatory to this part of the inquiry, a new character is introduced into the Dialogue, Anytus, (a great enemy to the ſophiſts, and deſirous of being thought a politician,) as a neceſſary perſon to ſhow, that neither the profeſſed men of wiſdom, the ſophiſts, nor the allowed men of virtue, the preſervers of the Athenian ſtate through their good government, were fit maſters or teachers in the ſcience of virtue. At length, by the help of all theſe negatives, we find in what it poſitively doth conſiſt, that is, in true wiſdom, not only derived originally from the divine mind by participation, but alſo inſpired immediately by it through continual communication; preſuppoſing, however, as a neceſſary foundation, or fit ſubject for the reception of this wiſdom, a ſoul well diſpoſed by nature, cultivated by right diſcipline, and ſtrengthened by conſtant care and attention. But as the two firſt requiſites, a good natural diſpoſition, and right inſtitution, depend on the divine Providence; and as the laſt, the conſtant practice of virtue, depends on the divine aſſiſtance; all theſe co-operating cauſes of virtue are, in the concluſion of this Dialogue, ſummed up by Plato in one word, θεια μοιρα, the divine portion or allotment to men juſtly ſtyled divine. Thus much may ſuffice at preſent for unfolding the ſubject, and delineating the parts of this Dialogue. What is here wanting in clearneſs, or in fulneſs, we ſhall endeavour in the notes to illuſtrate and to amplify. The end and deſign of the Dialogue is to excite men, well-diſpoſed by nature, and prepared by the rudiments of good education, to the aſſiduous culture and improvement of their minds by thinking

ing and reaſoning. This deſign appears, firſt, from the uncommon warmth and zeal with which Socrates is repreſented in the latter half of the Dialogue, preſſing an inquiry after loſt knowledge, and an endeavour to diſcover latent truths. The ſame deſign appears further from the long time taken up in recounting many ſad inſtances of a neglect of virtuous ſtudies in the youths of higheſt rank in Athens; the enumeration of which, being ſo prolix, can have no other view than to deter us from the ſame neglect. But the tendency of the Dialogue beſt appears from that effect, which the grand doctrine of it, as before explained, naturally muſt have on every docile and candid mind. For, if the human partakes of a divine intellect, and of all therefore which is of its eſſence; if truth has thus deſcended from Heaven into the ſouls of men, and Divinity himſelf be there, ready to communicate more and more the heart-felt knowledge of things divine and eternal to every ſoul which retires within itſelf; who would not wiſh thither to retire, and there, in that ſacred ſilence, the ſilence of the paſſions, in that ſacred ſolitude, the abſence of all the objects of imagination, that flight of the alone to the alone, φυγη μονου προς μονον[1], to enjoy the preſence and converſe of the divinely ſolitary principle of things? Agreeably to this deſign of Plato, and alſo on account of the audience, which was compoſed partly of ſtrangers, and partly of the friends and followers of Socrates, (as uſual in that place where the converſation was held,) the inquiſitive turn is given to this Dialogue, partly exciting and partly aſſiſting, by means of leading queſtions, every where propoſed by Socrates, and of hints thrown in here and there of his profound meaning. Meno is repreſented but as an humble diſciple of the ſophiſts, and preſumes not to diſpute or to argue like his maſters. And Anytus appears as an enemy to all philoſophical diſputation. There is not ſo much as the ſhadow of a ſkirmiſh throughout the Dialogue. Yet the diviſion of Plato's Dialogues, made by Thraſyllus, and followed by Albinus, led them to number it amongſt thoſe of the Peiraſtic kind, as not knowing where elſe to place it with leſs impropriety. The outward form of it is purely dramatic; and the character of Anytus, as here exhibited, affords a juſt ſpecimen of the part he ſoon afterwards acted in the accuſation of Socrates, and the bringing him to a public trial as a malefactor.

[1] Thus Plotinus, in the cloſe of his laſt Ennead, very finely and juſtly expreſſes our ſenſe.—S.

THE MENO:

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE,

MENO [1], SOCRATES,

A Servant Boy of Meno's, ANYTUS [2].

SCENE.—The LYCÆUM [3].

[1] This is the ſame Meno mentioned by Xenophon, in his expedition of Cyrus the Younger, as one of the generals of the Grecian allied army in that expedition. Plutarch, in his Life of Phocion, relates, that Meno commanded all the cavalry. Certain it is from Xenophon, that he had the command of the forces ſent from Theſſaly. Near the end of the ſecond book of that incomparable hiſtory above mentioned, the elegant and faithful writer of it, having before given us an inſtance of Meno's baſeneſs, preſents us with a portrait of him drawn at full length, the features of which are odious. But at the time of his converſation with Socrates, recited in this Dialogue, he was ſo young, that his mind and true character could not as yet have appeared openly, or have been known in the world. He firſt made a figure in the expedition with Xenophon, whilſt he was ſtill in the flower of his youth; but he was ſoon taken priſoner, and brought to Artaxerxes, by whoſe orders he was put to a lingering and ignominious death, not as an enemy but as a malefactor. Some ſlight ſtrokes, however, appear even in this Dialogue, giving us a ſketch of his turn of mind; as will be obſerved in their proper places.

[2] Enough has been ſaid of this fellow, in the Introduction to this Dialogue, to prepare the reader for his appearance in the figure he there makes.

[3] The following circumſtances, conſidered together, evince the ſcene to be laid in the Lycæum. Firſt, it was the place ordinarily frequented every day by Socrates, with his diſciples and followers. Next, it was the place of reſort for all ſtrangers, eſpecially the young and noble, ſuch as Meno was, to ſee the Athenian youth exerciſe themſelves, and to hear the ſophiſts, if any happened to be at Athens, diſpute and harangue. See note on the ſcene of the Greater Hippias. Laſtly, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that Socrates ſhould meet with Anytus, his enemy, at any other than a public place, free to all men.—S.

MENO.

CAN [1] you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue [2] is to be taught; or whether it is acquired, not through teaching, but through exercise and habit;

[1] The reader will observe this to be a very abrupt way of beginning a conversation, especially with a stranger, known only by his name and character. What makes it the more remarkable is, that a young person, but just arrived at the age of manhood, should thus accost an old man in his seventieth year, venerable from his known wisdom and a long life of virtue. Some may think that Plato intended here to paint the insolent familiarity of young men of large fortune and bad education, in their manner of addressing their inferiors in point of wealth. Such a thought has, perhaps, some foundation in truth. But Plato's principal purpose, in beginning the Dialogue with an impertinent question from the mouth of Meno, is, as appears plainly from the reply of Socrates, to exhibit to us the arrogant pretensions of the sophists, and particularly of Gorgias, in taking upon themselves to answer every philosophical question proposed to them. Meno had in his own country been used to this behaviour of theirs; and Socrates had, long before this, acquired a distinguished character for his superior skill in philosophical disputations. Meno, therefore, who knew no difference between Socrates and the sophists, attacks him directly, without the ceremony of a preface, with a question, point blank, on one of the most knotty subjects of inquiry in all philosophy. For he presumed that Socrates was sitting in the Lycæum, like one of the sophists, ready to answer all such questions. The only other dramatic Dialogue of Plato which begins thus abruptly is the Minos. There is the same kind of propriety in both. The only difference is this, that in the Minos, a Dialogue between Socrates and a sophist, Socrates is the questioner; and in the Meno, he is the person questioned.—S.

[2] Many years before the time of this Dialogue, Socrates had held a disputation with Protagoras on this very point, whether virtue could be taught; a disputation, recited by Plato in a Dialogue called after the name of that great sophist. The question was then debated before a numerous audience of sophists and their followers, as well as of the friends and disciples of Socrates himself. The disputants, however, came to no agreement on the matter in dispute. The result of their conversation was only this, that Protagoras, the prince of sophists, was so generous as to bestow his commendations on the great philosopher, and was graciously pleased to say, that "he should wonder if Socrates in time did not become considerable in fame for wisdom." The commendations of a sophist, no less renowned for his philosophical knowledge, than venerable on account of his experienced age, (for he was then about 75 years old,) increased the reputation of Socrates amongst the tribe of sophists; and it is probable that these men spread the fame of that disputation throughout all Greece. It seems, therefore, as if Meno, an admirer of the sophists, and bred up under one of their disciples, was desirous of hearing Socrates himself speak on that celebrated subject of former debate. Accordingly, meeting with Socrates in a convenient place, he attacks him at once with a question on that very point. We may observe, however, that Meno here states the question in a more ample manner than that in which it had been considered in the debate between Socrates and Protagoras: for he particularly mentions all the other ways, beside that of teaching, in which it ever was supposed that virtue was attainable. So that this Dialogue, The Meno, though not so entertaining as The Protagoras, is more comprehensive and affords a wider field for speculation.—S.

or whether it comes neither by exercise, nor yet by teaching, but is by nature with those who are possessed of it; or comes it to them by some other way?

Soc. You Thessalians, Meno, have been of old eminent among the Grecians [1]. You have been long admired for your superior skill in horsemanship [2], and famed for the great wealth you are possessed of [3]. But I think you have now acquired no less fame for wisdom [4]. And amongst others of you, the fellow-citizens of your friend Aristippus [5] of Larissa have distinguished themselves not a little in this respect. Now this is entirely the work of Gorgias. For in his travels, when he came to their city, he drew the chiefs of the Aleuadian family [6] (one of whom is your friend Aristippus), and indeed all of highest quality in the other states of

[1] The Thessalians were the most antient inhabitants of Greece; and from time to time sending out colonies from their own country, Thessaly, spread themselves by degrees over all the rest of Greece; as we are told by the old geographers.—S.

[2] The people who lived in Thessaly had the reputation of being the best horsemen, and in war the best cavalry, in the world. See Suidas in voce Ἱππεις λευκοθωρακες. This was owing to their breeding of excellent horses, which were every where valued as the best, both for service and for beauty; as may be seen in the Ζευξις and the Ερωτες of Lucian, and in a note to The Greater Hippias. And this valuable breed of horses was favoured by the soil of their country, which was partly mountainous, and partly well watered by fine rivers running through the midst of spacious and open plains.—S.

[3] In the time of Plato these people were grown very rich; but were thought to have acquired their riches chiefly by very unjust means, by fraud, by theft, and by kidnapping and selling free men as slaves: for which crimes they were infamous throughout the rest of Greece. See Xenophon. Memorabil. lib. i. cap. 2. § 24.—S.

[4] Meaning the pretended wisdom taught by the sophists.—S.

[5] This Aristippus was a man of the highest rank and power in the city of Larissa. We here find him to have been sophisticated by Gorgias: and it may justly be inferred, from the mention of him in this manner, that he himself had sophisticated Meno. But it appears in the highest degree improbable that he should be the same person with an Aristippus mentioned by Aristotle in the beginning of the third Book of his Metaphysicks: for this latter was a sophist by profession; and the profession of a sophist was no more becoming to men of high birth and quality, than that of an itinerant quack-doctor or strolling stage-player is now-a-days amongst us. See Plato in Protag.—S.

[6] This was the noblest family in Larissa. They were descended from Aleuas, one of the kings of Thessaly, of the race of Hercules; and were at this time the oligarchic tyrants of their country. Meno is here complimented in the seemingly honourable mention thus made of his friend, whom we presume to have been also his immediate instructor. For at the time supposed in this Dialogue, Gorgias was upwards of ninety years of age, and Meno a very young man.—S.

Thessaly,

Theſſaly, to be the admirers of his wiſdom[1]. From him you Theſſalians learned the habit of anſwering to any queſtion whatever with an undaunted and a noble confidence, ſuch indeed as becomes thoſe who have a thorough knowledge of the ſubject propoſed to them. For he [2] in the ſame manner offered himſelf to be freely interrogated by any one of the Grecians, whom it ſhould pleaſe to aſk him, concerning any point which the party queſtioning might chooſe: and to no queſtion of any perſon did he ever refuſe an anſwer. But we in this place, my friend Meno, are in a condition quite the contrary. Amongſt us there is a dearth, as it were, of wiſdom; which ſeems to have forſaken our country, and to have fled to yours. So that if you ſhould take it into your head to propoſe to any one here the queſtion you have propoſed to me, there is not a man of us who would not laugh and ſay, "Friend ſtranger, you muſt think me wonderfully wiſe, to know whether virtue is a thing which can be taught, or by what other means it is

[1] The great reputation of Gorgias appears to have had its firſt riſe in Theſſaly. For thus Philoſtratus, in the Proem to his Lives of the Sophiſts,—ηρξε της αρχαιοτερας [ſc. σοφιστικης] Γοργιας ὁ Λεοντινος εν Θετταλοις. Indeed Theſſaly was the moſt proper of all places for Gorgias to diſplay his art in, and by that means to acquire reputation. For his art was the art of deluding through ſophiſtical oratory and ſophiſtical argumentation; and theſe are the fitteſt and moſt ſucceſsful engines that can be employed for the purpoſe of deceiving. If therefore the people of Theſſaly were ſuch as they are repreſented, Gorgias could not fail of meeting there with a multitude of followers and admirers. In fact, theſe people became ſo great proficients in the art of deceiving, and ſo famous for the practice of it, that every ingenious or dextrous ſtroke of deceit was proverbially called Θετταλον σοφισμα, a Theſſalian ſophiſm. In Athenæus, p. 308, Myrtilus, the ſophiſt of Theſſaly, is called Θετταλον παλαισμα, a cunning and crafty wreſtler in diſputation; or, as Euſtathius explains the term, Θετταλος ελεγκτικος, ſubtle in refuting any argument. The ſame Myrtilus is called jocoſely by the ſame author, p. 11, himſelf Θετταλον σοφισμα, a Theſſalian cheat (in his way of arguing).

[2] Plato, in his Dialogue named Gorgias, uſhers in this great father and prince of ſophiſts by relating, that he had juſt now, at a private houſe, challenged any of the company to interrogate him on whatever point they pleaſed, and had undertaken to anſwer all ſorts of queſtions. This ap ears to have been uſual with him. For Philoſtratus reports, that when he came to Athens he had the confidence to preſent himſelf in the midſt of the theatre, and to ſay to the whole aſſembly Προβαλλετε, "propoſe," meaning, any argument for him to diſſert on: agreeably to which is the account given of him by Cicero in the beginning of his ſecond Book de Finibus, that he was the firſt that ever dared *in conventu poſcere quæſtionem*, in public to demand the queſtion, *id eſt*, ſays Tully, *jubere dicere quid de re quis velit audire*, to bid any man declare what ſubject he choſe to hear a diſcourſe upon.—S.

attained:

attained: when I am ſo far from knowing whether it can be taught or not, that I have not the good fortune to know ſo much as what virtue is." Now this, Meno, is exactly my own caſe. I am in the ſame poverty of knowledge as to this affair, and confeſs myſelf to be totally ignorant concerning the eſſence of virtue. How then ſhould I be able to ſay what qualities are to be attributed to that which is utterly unknown to me? Or do you think it poſſible for a man, wholly ignorant who Meno is, to know whether Meno is a man of honour, a man of fortune, a man of a generous ſpirit, or whether he is the reverſe of all theſe characters? Do you think it poſſible?

MENO. I do not. But in good earneſt, Socrates, do you really not know what virtue is? and do you give me leave to carry home ſuch a character of you, and to make this report of you in my country?

SOC. Not only that, my friend, but this further—that I never met any where with a man whom I thought maſter of ſuch a piece of knowledge.

MENO. Did you never then meet with Gorgias, during his ſtay in this city?

SOC. I did.

MENO. And did you think that he knew nothing of the matter?

SOC. I do not perfectly remember, Meno, and therefore am not able to ſay directly what I then thought of him. But perhaps not only was he himſelf knowing in the nature of virtue, but what he uſed to ſay on that ſubject you alſo know. Do you then remind me what account he gave of virtue; or, if you are unwilling ſo to do, give me an account of it yourſelf; for I ſuppoſe you agree with him in opinion.

MENO. I do.

SOC. Let us leave him, therefore, out of the queſtion, eſpecially conſidering that he is abſent. But what you yourſelf think virtue to be, tell me, Meno, and freely communicate your knowledge of it, that I may be happy in being convicted of having uttered what is ſo happily an untruth, when I ſaid that I never any where met with a man who knew what virtue was; when, at the ſame time, both yourſelf and Gorgias ſhall appear to have been ſo well acquainted with the nature of it.

MENO. Whatever you may imagine, Socrates, it is by no means difficult to tell what you deſire to know. In the firſt place, to inſtance in the virtue

virtue of a man, nothing is eaſier to tell than that a man's virtue conſiſts in his ability to manage affairs of ſtate, and, in managing them, to be of ſervice to the public and to its friends, to diſtreſs its enemies, and to guard, at the ſame time, with vigilance and circumſpection, againſt any harm that might ariſe from thoſe enemies in their turn. Then, if you would know what is the virtue of a woman, it is eaſy enough to run over the particulars: it is to manage well the affairs of her family, carefully to keep ſafe all that is in the houſe, and to hearken with due obſervance to her huſband. Another kind of virtue belongs to a child, different too in a girl from what it is in a boy: ſo is it likewiſe of the aged. And if you chooſe to proceed further, the virtue of a free man is one thing, that of a ſlave is another thing. Many more virtues are there, of all ſorts; ſo that one cannot be at a loſs to tell, concerning virtue, what it is. For in every action, and in every age of life, with reference to every kind of buſineſs, ſome peculiar virtue belongs to each perſon: and in vice alſo, I ſuppoſe, Socrates, there is the ſame reſpective difference, and the ſame variety.

Soc. I think myſelf much favoured by Fortune, Meno; for, when I was only in queſt of one virtue, I have found, it ſeems, a whole ſwarm of virtues hiving in your mind. But, to purſue this ſimilitude, taken from bees:—Suppoſing, Meno, I had aſked you what was the nature of a bee, and you had told me that bees were many and various, what would you have anſwered me if I had demanded of you further, whether you called them many and various, and differing one from another, in reſpect of their being bees; or whether you thought they differed not in this reſpect, but with regard to ſomething elſe, as beauty, or ſize, or other thing of like kind, accidental? What anſwer would you have made to ſuch a queſtion?

Meno. I ſhould have anſwered thus; that ſo far as they were bees, and in this reſpect, they differed not at all one from another.

Soc. Suppoſe, then, that I had afterwards ſaid, Tell me, therefore, Meno, concerning this very nature of bees, in reſpect of which they do not differ, but all agree and are alike; what ſay you that it is? Should you have had any anſwer to have given me to this queſtion?

Meno. I ſhould.

Soc. Juſt ſo is it with the virtues. Many indeed are they, and of various kinds: but they all agree in one and the ſame idea; through their agree-

ment in which they are, all of them alike, virtues. This idea the man, who is aſked the queſtion which I have aſked of you, ought to have in his eye when he anſwers it; and, copying from this idea, to draw a deſcription of virtue. Do you not apprehend the meaning of what I ſay?

MENO. Tolerably well, I think I do. But I am not in the poſſeſſion of it ſo fully as I could wiſh.

SOC. Take it thus then.——Do you think after this manner concerning virtue only, that the virtue of a man is one thing, the virtue of a woman another thing, and ſo of other reſpective virtues, that they are all different? or have you the ſame way of thinking as to the health, ſize, and ſtrength of the body? Do you think the health of a man to be one thing, the health of a woman to be a thing different? or is the ſame idea of health every where, wherever health is, whether it be in a man, or in whatever ſubject it be found?

MENO. The health of a man and the health of a woman, I think, are equally and alike health, one and the ſame thing.

SOC. Do you not think after the ſame manner with regard to ſize and ſtrength; that a woman, if ſhe be ſtrong, is ſtrong according to the ſame idea, and with the ſame ſtrength, which gives a ſtrong man the denomination of ſtrong? By the ſame ſtrength I mean this, that whether ſtrength be in a man, or in a woman, conſidering it as ſtrength, there is no difference; or do you think that there is any difference between ſtrength and ſtrength?

MENO. I think there is not any.

SOC. And will any difference, think you then, be found in virtue, with reſpect to its being virtue, whether it be in a child or in an aged perſon, in a woman or in a man?

MENO. This caſe of virtue, Socrates, ſeems ſomehow to be not exactly parallel with thoſe other inſtances.

SOC. Why? Did you not tell me that the virtue of a man conſiſted in his well-managing of civil affairs, and that of a woman in the well-managing of her houſehold?

MENO. I did.

SOC. I aſk you, then, whether it is poſſible to manage any affairs well, whether civil or domeſtic, or any other affairs whatever, without a prudent and a juſt management?

MENO.

MENO. By no means.

Soc. If then the management be juſt and prudent, muſt not the managers manage with juſtice and with prudence?

MENO. They muſt.

Soc. Both of them, therefore, have occaſion for the ſame things, to qualify them for being good managers, both the woman and the man, namely, juſtice and prudence.

MENO. It appears they have.

Soc. And how is it in the caſe of a child, or that of an old man? Can theſe ever be good, if they are diſſolute and diſhoneſt?

MENO. By no means.

Soc. But only by their being ſober and honeſt?

MENO. Certainly.

Soc. All perſons, therefore, who are good, are good in the ſame way; for they are good by being poſſeſſed of the ſame qualities.

MENO. It ſeems ſo.

Soc. Now if virtue were not the ſame thing in them all, they would not be good in the ſame way.

MENO. They would not.

Soc. Seeing, therefore, that virtue is the ſame thing in all of them, endeavour to recollect and tell me, what was the account given of it by Gorgias, which was the ſame, it ſeems, with the account you would give of it yourſelf?

MENO. What elſe is it than to be able to govern men? If you are in ſearch of that, which is one and the ſame thing in all perſons who have virtue.

Soc. It is the very thing I am in ſearch of. But is this then the virtue of a child, Meno? And is it the virtue of a ſlave, to be able to govern his maſter? Do you think him to be any longer a ſlave, when he can govern?

MENO. I think he is then by no means a ſlave indeed, Socrates.

Soc. Neither is it proper, my friend, that he ſhould be ſo. Conſider this alſo further. You ſay it is virtue to be able to govern. Should we not immediately ſubjoin the word *juſtly*, and ſay, to govern juſtly? For you would not ſay, that to govern unjuſtly is virtue.

MENO. I think we ſhould. For juſtice, Socrates, is virtue.

Soc. Virtue is it, Meno, or ſome certain virtue?

MENO. How mean you by this diſtinction?

Soc. I mean no otherwiſe than as every thing elſe whatever is diſtinguiſhed: to inſtance, if you pleaſe, in roundneſs. Of this I ſhould ſay that it is ſome certain figure, and not thus ſimply and abſolutely that it is figure. And for this reaſon ſhould I expreſs myſelf in that manner, becauſe there are other figures beſide the round.

MENO. You would thus ſpeak rightly. And indeed, to ſay the truth, I myſelf not only call juſtice a virtue, but ſay that other virtues there are beſide.

Soc. Say, what theſe other virtues are. As I would recount to you, were you to bid me, other figures beſide the round; do you recount to me, in like manner, other virtues beſide juſtice.

MENO. Well then; courage I think to be a virtue, and temperance another, and wiſdom, and magnanimity, and a great many more.

Soc. Again, Meno, we have met with the ſame accident as before; we have again found many virtues, while in ſearch of one only; though then indeed in a different way from that in which we have now alighted on them: but the one virtue, which is the ſame through all theſe, we are not able to find.

MENO. For I am not able as yet, Socrates, to apprehend ſuch virtue as you are inquiring after, that one in all, as in other things I am able.

Soc. Probably ſo; but I will do the beſt I can to help us onward in our inquiry. Already you apprehend, in ſome meaſure, that thus it is in every thing. For ſhould any perſon have aſked you what was figure, the thing I juſt now mentioned, and you had ſaid it was roundneſs; were he then to aſk you, according to the ſame diſtinction which I made concerning juſtice, whether roundneſs was figure, or ſome certain figure; you would anſwer, it was ſome certain figure.

MENO. Without all doubt.

Soc. And would you not anſwer thus for this reaſon, becauſe there are other figures beſide the round?

MENO. For that very reaſon.

Soc. And were he to aſk you further, of what ſort thoſe other figures were, you would tell him?

MENO.

MENO. I ſhould.

Soc. Again; queſtioned in the ſame manner concerning colour, what it is? had you anſwered, It is whiteneſs; ſhould the queſtioner immediately proceed to this further queſtion, whether whiteneſs is colour, or ſome certain colour? you would ſay, Some certain colour; becauſe there happen to be other colours.

MENO. I ſhould.

Soc. And if he were to bid you enumerate thoſe other colours, you would ſpeak of colours, which happen to be colours no leſs than the white.

MENO. Certainly.

Soc. If then he were to proſecute the argument, as I do, he would ſay, We are always getting into multitude [1]; deal not with me in this manner: but ſince to all this multitude you give one common name; ſince you tell me there is none of them which is not figure; and that, notwithſtanding, they are contrary ſome to others [2]; what is this which comprehends the round as well as the the ſtraight, this thing to which you give the name of figure, and tell me that the round is figure not more than is the ſtraight? or do you not ſay this?

MENO. I do.

Soc. I aſk you, then, whether when you ſay this, you mean it in reſpect

[1] For the ſenſes are always drawing us into multitude; which, conſidered as multitude, belongs only to ſenſible and outward things. But as ſoon as any multitude, or many, are conſidered together, and comprehended in one idea, they become the object of mind, and are then one and many; ſenſe and imagination being now accompanied by mind. To this conſideration of things, this comprehenſion of many in one, Socrates here endeavours to lead Meno in the ſame way in which he elſewhere leads Theætetus, that is, by means of mathematical objects, to which his mind was familiarized; this being a ſtep the eaſieſt to him, and perhaps naturally the firſt toward the attainment of univerſal ideas, things purely mental. For the opening of the mind is in the firſt place to numbers; thence ſhe proceeds to figures as the bounds of body, and is at firſt ſight delighted with figures mathematical. If afterwards ſhe is taught the mathematical ſciences, then in proportion as her powers open more and become enlarged, ſhe eaſily attains to view many in one; to view, for inſtance, the properties of all triangles contained in the triangle itſelf. And in the circle, the ſquare, the pentagon, and all other figures, ſhe has the ſame comprehenſive view. With theſe mathematical figures Meno was well acquainted; and upon this foundation did Socrates propoſe to him to conſider the nature of figure in general, or that one thing in which all figures agree and are the ſame.—S.

[2] As rectilinear figures are contrary to circles; the whole periphery of theſe latter being a curve line.—S.

of roundneſs, and that the round is not more round than is the ſtraight? or with regard to ſtraightneſs, and that the ſtraight is not more ſtraight than is the round?

MENO. I mean not thus, Socrates.

Soc. But it is with a view to figure, that you aſſert the round not more to be figure than is the ſtraight, nor the ſtraight more than is the round.

MENO. True.

Soc. Try then if you can tell me, what that thing is which is called by this general name of figure. Now ſuppoſe, that to an inquirer in this way concerning figure, or concerning colour, you were to ſay, I do not comprehend what it is you would have, man; nor do I know what it is you mean: he perhaps would wonder; and would ſay, Do you not comprehend that I am inquiring, what is the ſame in all theſe? Would you have nothing to ſay neither after this, Meno, were you to be aſked, what that was in the round, in the ſtraight, and in the other things you call figures, in all of them the ſame? Endeavour to find out and tell me what it is; that you may the better afterwards conſider of, and anſwer to, the like kind of queſtion concerning virtue.

MENO. Not ſo, Socrates; but do you yourſelf rather ſay what figure is.

Soc. Would you have me oblige you in this point?

MENO. By all means.

Soc. Shall you then be willing to tell me what virtue is?

MENO. I ſhall.

Soc. Let us then do our beſt; for the cauſe deſerves it.

MENO. Without all doubt.

Soc. Come then; let us try if we can tell you what figure is. See if you can accept the following account of figure. Let us ſay, figure [1] is that which of all things is the only one that always accompanies colour. Are you ſatisfied with this account? or do you inquire any further? For my part, I ſhould be well contented if you would give me but as good an account of virtue [2].

MENO.

[1] In this firſt definition of figure, Socrates conſiders it only as it belongs to body; that is, not mathematical figure, but corporeal; figure which always accompanies colour, becauſe it is always ſeen by the ſame outward light, which exhibits to us the different colours of all bodies, and without which they have indeed no colour at all.—S.

[2] Socrates was very ſenſible, that his definition had not explained the nature of the thing, and that he had only deſcribed it by that which Porphyry terms συμβεβηκος αχωριστον, an inſepar-

able

MENO. But, Socrates, this is weak and ſilly.

Soc. How ſo?

MENO. According to your account, that is figure which always accompanies colour.

Soc. Well.

MENO. But ſhould any perſon now reply, that he knew not what colour was, and was equally at a loſs concerning colour and concerning figure, what could you think of the anſwer that you had given to his queſtion?

Soc. I?—that I had anſwered with truth. And if my queſtioner happened to be one of your wiſe men, your diſputers and contenders, I would tell him [1], that I had ſpoken; and that, if I had not ſpoken rightly, it was his buſineſs to take up the argument, and to refute what I had ſaid. But if two parties, ſuch as you and I here, as friends, and in a friendly way, were inclined to have diſcourſe together, their anſwers to each other's queſtions ought to be made in a milder manner, and to be more rational. Now it is perhaps more rational, that an anſwer ſhould not only be agreeable to truth, but beſides, ſhould be conceived in terms confeſſedly underſtood by the party queſtioning. Accordingly, I ſhall now attempt to make you ſuch a kind of anſwer. For tell me; do you not call ſome certain thing by the name of end, ſpeaking of ſuch a thing as bound or extreme? For by all theſe words I mean the ſame thing. Prodicus, indeed, might poſſibly diſpute it with us: but you would uſe theſe expreſſions indifferently, that ſuch or ſuch a thing is bounded, or, that it has an end. This is all I mean; nothing of ſubtle diſquiſition, or nice diſtinction.

able accident of it, that is, a circumſtance which, though accidental, or not of neceſſity attending on its eſſence, yet in fact always did attend on it, namely, the accompaniment of colour. And he here profeſſes, that he would be ſatisfied with ſuch a deſcription of virtue denoting any circumſtance which always attended on her: as if we deſcribed virtue thus; Virtue is that which always accompanies wiſdom.—S.

[1] Socrates, in converſing with the ſophiſts, never uſed λογον διδασκαλικον, the inſtructive method of delivering his doctrine: becauſe, fancying themſelves ſufficiently knowing and wiſe already, they were not diſpoſed to learn. Nor did he ever take the truly dialectical way with them; or make uſe of λογον διαλεκτικον: becauſe they were not concerned about truth in any argument; and becauſe alſo they either had not, or would not, acknowledge any firſt principles to argue from. But he diſputed with them always in their own way, δια λογων ερωτικων; confuting them from their own conceſſions, and reducing to abſurdities the anſwers which they gave to his queſtions.—S.

MENO.

MENO. Well; there is ſomething which I call end: and I think I underſtand what you mean.

Soc. And is there not ſomething which you call ſuperficies? another, which you call ſolid? ſuch as thoſe, I mean, which are the ſubjects of geometry.

MENO. I call certain things by the names you mention.

Soc. Now then, from theſe premiſes which you admit, you may underſtand what I mean by figure in general. In every figure, that which bounds the ſolid, I call figure. And to expreſs this in one ſhort propoſition, I ſhould ſay that figure is the bound of ſolid.

MENO. And what ſay you colour is?

Soc. You uſe me ill now, Meno. You put an old man to the taſk of anſwering, yet are unwilling yourſelf to take the trouble only of recollecting and telling me what Gorgias ſaid that virtue was.

MENO. But I will; after you have told me what colour is.

Soc. A man with his eyes hoodwinked might perceive from your way of converſing, Meno, that you are handſome, and ſtill have your admirers.

MENO. How ſo?

Soc. Becauſe you do nothing but command in converſation, as fine ladies do, that are uſed to have their wills in all things; for they tyrannize ſo long as their beauty laſts. At the ſame time too, perhaps, you have diſcovered me, how eaſy I am to be ſubdued by beauty, and how apt to ſtoop to it. I ſhall do therefore as you would have me, and ſhall anſwer to your queſtion.

MENO. By all means do, and gratify my requeſt.

Soc. Do you chooſe that I ſhould make my anſwer in the ſtyle of Gorgias[1], that by this means you may apprehend it the more eaſily?

MENO.

[1] Gorgias, as appears from what follows, accounted for all the ſenſible qualities of things, that is, for every thing perceived through any of the five outward ſenſes, by corpuſcular, or little inviſible bodies, continually ἀποῤῥέοντα, flowing forth, or emitted, from all larger, viſible, and apparently figured bodies, and ſtriking the ſenſe of all ſenſible animals within their reach. With regard to one kind of the ſenſible qualities of bodies, namely, odours, whether the fragrant or the fœtid, the ſame account is given of them by moſt of the modern philoſophers. For they are generally held to be the effluvia of bodies odoriferous, ſtriking and affecting either agreeably or

MENO. I ſhould be glad that you would do ſo, moſt undoubtedly.

Soc. Do you not hold, you and Gorgias, that certain effluvia flow forth from bodies, agreeably to the doctrine of Empedocles [1]?

MENO. We hold that doctrine ſtrongly [2].

Soc.

diſagreeably the olfactory nerves, where the particular ſenſe of ſmell is ſuppoſed to be ſeated. We ſhall preſently obſerve, in what manner the antient Corpuſcularians, whoſe ſyſtem was more uniform and ſimple than that of the moderns, extended the power of theſe effluvia to all the reſt of the outward ſenſes.—S.

[1] Empedocles was a Pythagorean philoſopher of Agrigentum in Sicily; and wrote a poem in three books, concerning Nature, on the principles of Pythagoras. For this great founder of the Italic ſect, though he applied himſelf chiefly to the ſtudy of mind, the governing principle in nature, as the only way to underſtand nature rightly, yet philoſophized alſo on the outward and corporeal part of the univerſe: the elements of which, conſiſtently with his notions of mind, he held not to be irregular and infinite, as the Atomic and Atheiſtic philoſophers imagined: but to be formed by rule in number, and in meaſure, as being the work of mind. Plato, in his Timæus, hath introduced the Pythagorean, from whom that dialogue takes its name, telling us the meaſures and proportions of theſe elements. It ſufficeth at preſent to ſay of them, that they are the four generally conſidered ever ſince as the elements of nature, fire, air, water, and earth. On this foundation Empedocles built his poem, explaining all the appearances of outward nature from the combination and motion of theſe four elements. His poetry was deemed by the antients, in point of verſification, equal to that of Homer. And he ſeems to have been a celebrated poet, before he commenced philoſopher. For though it does not appear that in this poem he divulged any of the Pythagorean ſecrets, yet his brothers of that ſect, who were all ſtrictly united together in fellowſhip, did, on the publication of his poem, as fearful of the precedent (and no writings had till then been ever publiſhed by any Pythagorean), expel him from their ſociety; at the ſame time making a law, that from thenceforth no poet ſhould ever be admitted amongſt them as a member of their body.—S.

[2] Empedocles differed from the Atomic philoſophers of old in this, that he held all natural bodies, and even their minuteſt parts, ſo long as they remained parts of thoſe bodies, to be compoſed of the four elements. Now as air and fire, two of thoſe four, are active elements perpetually in motion; and as all compound bodies are more or leſs porous; he ſuppoſed a continual efflux of igneous and aërial particles from thoſe bodies into whoſe compoſition they had entered, through ſuch meaſures or pores, whether ſtraight or winding, as were fitted for their paſſage and their exit. To ſupply the place of theſe departed particles, and to maintain the ſame ſtate in the compoſition of the bodies they had quitted, he ſuppoſed a continual influx of freſh air and fire from without, uniting themſelves to their congenial elements within, and thus becoming ingredients in the frame of the compounded or mixt bodies into which they had entered. Theſe freſh ſtreams he held to be almoſt pure and elementary air and fire, as pure however as the circumambience. But the particles, ſtreaming forth from thoſe bodies, he ſuppoſed to be impure, and to be mixed or combined with aqueous particles, and alſo with earthy ones of various kinds, according to the nature

Soc. And do you not hold certain pores [1], into which and through which those effluvia paſs?

Meno. Certainly.

Soc. And that ſome of thoſe effluvia [2] are adapted to ſome of theſe pores, but are either leſs or greater than other pores?

Meno.

nature of the body from which they iſſued. For the union of the four elements in compound bodies he held to be ſo intimate, and the particles of different elements to adhere ſo cloſely one to another, that none paſs out pure as they entered; but that every particle of the ſubtler and lighter elements, in departing, carries along with it ſome particles of the groſſer and heavier, earth and water. Now this is obvious to ſight in moiſt bodies, vehemently heated by fire from without acting on them; that is, in bodies into which ſo great a number of igneous particles have entered as tend to operate the diſſolution of thoſe bodies. For we here ſee the aqueous particles, pregnant with air and fire, iſſuing forth and aſcending in the form of ſteams and vapours. And that earthy particles are combined with them, we may reaſonably conclude from the different colours of theſe ſteams or vapours. For the ſteam, which ariſes from pure water heated, hath always the ſame uniform colour. The difference therefore of colour in ſteams or vapours muſt be derived from the different kinds of earthy particles, or, as the chemiſts love to expreſs themſelves, the different ſalts, in thoſe liquors and thoſe moiſt bodies, from which the diverſe coloured ſteams or vapours ariſe. The like appearances may be obſerved in the perſpiration of animal bodies, when they ſuffer a higher degree than uſual of inteſtine heat; that is, when the igneous particles within are put into vehement commotion, and ſet looſe through violent exerciſe of the body: the perſpired moiſture we may then ſee, by retaining it on linen, to be tinged with the colour of thoſe ſalts, which are conſtantly ſeparated from the blood by the kidneys and thrown off in urine. It may perhaps not be impertinent to take notice here by the way, that Empedocles, and the reſt of the antient Elementarian phyſiologers, attributed this difference of earth or earthy ſalts, from whence they ſuppoſed all bodies to derive the difference of their colours, to different mixtures of the four elements conſtituting thoſe very minute earthy particles; the mere earthy part of which is the *caput mortuum* of the chemiſts, if this be indeed elementary pure earth. From hence the Corpuſcularians, by parity of reaſon, drew this concluſion; that as, in all appearance, bodies derived their different colours from the different kinds of earth which made the groſſer part of their compoſition, the colours which reached our eyes, and which we ſaw, were the fineſt earthy particles of thoſe bodies, combined with particles of elementary fire, the eſſence of light uncoloured of itſelf, continually ſtreaming forth in effluvia too minute for the eye to diſcern their figures, and viſible only in the colour.—S.

[1] Meaning here the pores of other bodies, ſurrounding thoſe which emit the effluvia, and either cloſe to them in contact, or at leaſt near to them enough to be reached by thoſe effluvia, before their combination is quite broken, and they are reſolved into their pure elements.—S.

[2] The Elementarian phyſiologers held, that the effluvia of all compound bodies were of different figures and dimenſions, according to the natures and different proportions of their compoſing elements. And conſequently to this they muſt have held, that the pores of theſe bodies were

MENO. Things are ſo framed.

Soc. And do you not admit of ſomething which you call ſight?

MENO. I do.

Soc. Theſe premiſes being granted, "Now let your mind accompany my words [1]," as Pindar ſays. Colour then is the flowing off from figures, commenſurate with the ſight, and by that ſenſe perceived [2].

MENO.

were large enough for the paſſage and emiſſion of their own effluvia, as well as for the admiſſion and reception of other particles from without to ſupply their places. But this was not ſufficient to account for the different kinds of ſenſation, ariſing in the ſeveral ſenſes of ſentient animals, from the operation and effect of the effluvia of other bodies tranſmitted to them. They ſuppoſed, therefore, that the pores of the organs of ſenſe were exactly adequate, in figure and dimenſion, to theſe foreign effluvia; not all of thoſe pores adequate to all of theſe effluvia indiſcriminately; for this is impoſſible, unleſs the ſouls of any animals had the power of adapting the pores of their organs of ſenſation, occaſionally, to the reception of all kinds of effluvia: and in this caſe, all ſuch animals would be like Milton's angels, all eye, all ear: and would feel, at pleaſure, the other various kinds of ſenſation in all parts of their bodies indifferently. But the hypotheſis of thoſe phyſiologers we are ſpeaking of was this, that the organs of each ſenſe had their pores reſpectively fitted to admit thoſe effluvia which were the objects of that ſenſe, and none other; the eye, for inſtance, thoſe effluvia which gave colour; the ear, thoſe which made ſound; and that the organs of the other ſenſes were framed in like manner. The heterogeneous effluvia, therefore, which could not enter, as being either too large for the pores, or elſe figured differently, paſſed by; and the too minute paſſed in and through, without affecting the ſenſe.—S.

[1] Socrates here cites a verſe from Pindar, to uſher in his definition with ſolemnity, as if it was to be ſomething very fine. But this ſolemnity is merely burleſque: for it is in mimickry of the ſophiſts, who valued at a high rate their doctrines of this kind, and taught them to their diſciples as wonderful diſcoveries and pieces of profound wiſdom.—S.

[2] Ariſtotle tell us, in his treatiſe περι αισθησεως και αισθητων, that Empedocles held the eye, that is, the ſight of the eye, to be fire; meaning pure elementary fire collected in the pupil of the eye; as appears from Timæus in Plato's dialogue of his name; and that he ſuppoſed viſion to be performed by the emiſſion of light from the eye, as from a lantern. In proof of which he cites a paſſage out of the fine poem of Empedocles, mentioned in a preceding note. We preſume it may be agreeable to many of our learned readers, if we here preſent them with that beautiful paſſage at full length; and the more ſo, becauſe Stephens has ſtrangely omitted it, with many other choice fragments of the philoſophic Greek poets, in that ſlender collection of his which he entitles Poeſis Philoſophica. The verſes are theſe:

Ὡς δ' ὁτε τις, προοδον νοεων, ὡπλισσατο λυχνοι,
Χειμεριην δια νυκτα, πυρος σελας αιθομενοιο,
Ἀψας παντοιων ανεμων λαμπτηρας αμοργους, [f. απειργους]
Οἱ τ' ανεμων μεν πνευμα διασχιδνασιν αεντων·

MENO. In this anſwer, Socrates, I think you have anſwered as well as poſſible.

Soc.

Φως δ' εξω διαθρωσκον, οσον τανυωτερον ηεν,
Λαμπεσκεν κατα βηλον ατειρεσιν ακτινεσσιν.
Ως δε τοτ', [f. ποτ'] εν μηνιγξιν εργνενον, ωγυγιον πυρ
Λεπτησιν οθονησιν εχευατο κυκλοπα κουρην·
Αι δ' υδατος μεν βενθος απεστεγον αμφιναοντος·
Πυρ δ' εξω διαθρωσκον, [f. διεθρωσκεν] οσον τανυωτερον ηεν.

We are unable to do juſtice to theſe elegant lines in a literal tranſlation. Inſtead of it, therefore, we hope our Engliſh readers will not refuſe to accept of the following paraphraſe:

As when the trav'ler, in dark winter's night,
Intent on journey, kindles up a light,
The moon-like ſplendour of an oil-fed flame;
He ſets it in ſome lantern's horny frame.
Calm and ſerene there ſits the tender form,
Screen'd from rough winds, and from the wintry ſtorm.
In vain rude airs aſſault the gentle fire:
Their forces break, diſperſe, and they retire.
Fences ſecure, though thin, the fair encloſe;
And her bright head ſhe lifts amid her foes.
Through the ſtraight pores of the tranſparent horn
She ſhoots her radiance, mild as early morn.
Forth fly the rays; their ſhining path extends;
Till, loſt in the wide air, their leſs'ning luſtre ends.
So when the fire, freſh lighted from on high,
Sits in the circling pupil of an eye;
O'er it, tranſparent veils of fabric fine
Spread the thin membrane, and defend the ſhrine;
The ſubtle flame encloſing, like a mound,
Safe from the flood of humours flowing round.
Forth fly the rays, and their bright paths extend;
Till, in the wide air loſt, their luſtres end.

After citing theſe verſes, Ariſtotle is pleaſed to ſay, οτε μεν ουν ουτως οραν φησιν· οτε δε ταις απορροιαις ταις απο των ορωμενων. "Sometimes he [meaning Empedocles] accounts for viſion in this manner; at other times, by the effluvia which proceed from the object." Now, in truth, theſe two ſeemingly different accounts are not only very conſiſtent, the one with the other, but neither of them is ſufficient, without the other, to explain how the objects of ſight are ſeen, according to the mind of Empedocles. We ſay this on ſuppoſition that he agreed with Timæus, a philoſopher of the ſame ſect, who, if Plato repreſents him rightly, accounted for viſion in the ſame way. He ſuppoſes, that part of the pure element of fire is ſeated in the eye; that the rays

iſſuing

Soc. It may be that you think ſo, becauſe you are accuſtomed to a language of this kind; and becauſe at the ſame time you perceive yourſelf, as I imagine, able from thence to account in the ſame way for ſound [1], and ſmell, and many other things of like kind.

MENO. It really is ſo.

Soc. The anſwer, Meno, was theatrical and pompous; and ſo it pleaſed you more than that which I gave you concerning figure.

MENO. Indeed it did.

Soc. And yet I perſuade myſelf, O ſon of Alexidemus, that not this, but that other, was the better anſwer. I think too, that you yourſelf would be of the ſame opinion, if you are not, as you ſaid you were yeſter-

iſſuing from it are, in the darkneſs of night, extinguiſhed by the air, which is then void of that element; but that as ſoon as the air, from the return of day, is filled with light, whoſe eſſence is the ſame pure element of fire, the rays of light, iſſuing from the eye, unite themſelves to their kindred element without; and being in motion themſelves, put into the ſame motion thoſe particles of outward light with which they are united: that rays of light are in this manner extended from the eye to all bodies within a certain diſtance, wherever the eye directs the motion of her own rays; that theſe rays of light, thus extended to the ſurface of thoſe bodies, meet there with the fineſt effluvia iſſuing from them, which are particles of the ſame element of fire, mixed and coloured with particles of the other elements, carried with them out of the ſame bodies; a mixture or compoſition by the chemiſts called oil: that theſe effluvia naturally unite themſelves with the rays of light falling on the ſurfaces of thoſe bodies whence they are emitted, as being chiefly of the ſame nature; ſo that thoſe rays of light, pure and uncoloured of themſelves, participate now of the colour of theſe effluvia; and being reflected back from bodies, into which the effluvia, ſtreaming forth, hinder them from entering, communicate their colour, in returning, to all thoſe continuous particles of light between the object and the eye, with which they unite themſelves; forming continued rays coloured by thoſe effluvia, and reaching home to the eye, whoſe pores they thus enter. Modern philoſophers account for colour from different refractions of the rays of light reflected.—S.

[1] As thus; that ſound was air, violently forced out of ſome body ſtricken, and propagating its motion by ſtrokes continually repeated along the element of air, until it reach the ear; in the ſame manner as colour along the rays of light, until it reach the eye: that odours were the ſubtle oily effluvia of bodies, united with the aërial, emitted together with them, and therefore mixing with the element of air, and conveyed along it to the organ of ſmell: that from moiſt bodies, applied to the palate, juices were expreſſed, a groſſer oil, inſinuating themſelves immediately into the pores of the organ of taſte: that the cauſes of heat and cold were the ſulphureous and the nitrous particles of body, or of the circumambient air, penetrating the pores of the ſkin, and thus affecting with thoſe different ſenſations the ſenſe of feeling.—S.

day, under a neceſſity of going away before the myſteries, but could ſtay and be initiated.

MENO. But if you would tell me many other things ſuch as this, I would certainly ſtay and hear them.

SOC. My beſt endeavours to ſay other ſuch things ſhall certainly not be wanting, for my own ſake as well as yours. But I fear I ſhall not be able to utter many ſentences of that kind. But now it comes to your turn to try if you can perform your part of the engagement, in giving me an account of what virtue is, virtue in general, the ſame in all particular virtues. And do not go on, making many out of one; as is often ſaid jocoſely of thoſe who pound or beat any thing to pieces. But leaving virtue as it is, whole and entire, define the nature of it, and tell me what it is. Patterns of ſuch a definition you have had from me.

MENO. I think then, Socrates, that virtue is agreeably to that of the poet,

> To feel a joy from what is fair,
> And [o'er it] to have pow'r[1]——

and accordingly I ſay, that virtue is this; having the deſire of things that are fair, to have it in our power to gain them.

SOC. I aſk you then, whether you ſuppoſe the perſons who deſire things that are fair, to deſire things that are good?

MENO. Certainly.

SOC. In giving that definition of virtue then, did you ſuppoſe that ſome men there were who deſire things which are evil, others who deſire things which are good? Do you not think, my friend, that all men deſire things which are good?

MENO. I do not.

SOC. But that ſome deſire things which are evil?

MENO. I do.

SOC. Think you that theſe men deſire things evil, with an opinion of

[1] This ſcrap of poetry is taken from ſome old lyric poet, whoſe works are not remaining: t is cited for this purpoſe, to prepare us for a matter of great importance, to be next brought upon the carpet.—S.

their

their being good? or that, knowing them to be evil, yet they nevertheleſs deſire them?

MENO. I anſwer Yes to both thoſe queſtions.

SOC. Is there any man then, do you imagine, who knowing the things which are evil to be what they are, that is, evil, yet nevertheleſs deſires them?

MENO. Without doubt.

SOC. What do you mean, when you ſay he deſires them? Do you not mean, that he deſires to have them?

MENO. To have them. For what can I mean beſides?

SOC. Does he deſire them, think you, imagining that evil things are advantageous to the perſon who has them, or knowing that evil things are hurtful wherever they are?

MENO. There are perſons who imagine of things which are indeed evil, that they are advantageous; and there are who know them to be hurtful.

SOC. Do you think that they know the evil things to be evil, thoſe who imagine ſuch evil things to be advantageous?

MENO. By no means do I think that.

SOC. Is it not then evident, that ſuch perſons deſire not things evil, ſuch as know not the nature of thoſe things which they deſire; but rather, that they deſire things which they imagine to be good, but which in reality are evil? So that thoſe who are ignorant of them, and falſely imagine them to be good, plainly deſire good things. Do they not?

MENO. Such ſort of perſons, I muſt own, ſeem to be deſirous of good things.

SOC. But thoſe others, thoſe who deſire things which are evil, as you ſay, and who at the ſame time know that evil things are hurtful to the poſſeſſor, do they know that they themſelves ſhall receive harm from thoſe evil things in their having them?

MENO. It is clear that they muſt know it.

SOC. But know they not, that ſuch as receive harm are in evil plight, ſo far as harm has befallen them?

MENO. This alſo muſt they know.

SOC. And know they not beſides, that ſuch as are in evil plight are unhappy too?

MENO.

MENO. I preſume they do.

Soc. Is there any man then, who chooſes to be in evil plight [1], and to be unhappy?

MENO. I ſuppoſe there is not any, Socrates.

Soc. No man, therefore, O Meno, wills or chooſes any thing evil; if it be true, that no man wills or chooſes to be in evil plight, or to be unhappy. For indeed what elſe is it to be thoroughly unhappy, than to deſire things which are evil, and to have them our own?

MENO. I ſuſpect that what you ſay, Socrates, is true. And no man wills or chooſes any thing evil.

Soc. Did you not ſay juſt now, that virtue conſiſted in the willing or deſiring things which are good, and in the having it in our power to gain them?

MENO. I did ſay ſo; it is true.

Soc. Is not this will or deſire [2] according to what has been ſaid in all men? ſo that, in this reſpect, one man is not at all better than another man.

MENO. It appears ſo.

Soc. It appears, therefore, that if one man is better than another, he muſt be ſo in reſpect of his power.

MENO. Undoubtedly.

Soc. This therefore, as it ſeems, according to your account, is virtue, the power of gaining things which are good.

MENO. The caſe ſeems to me, Socrates, to be entirely ſo, as you now ſtate it.

[1] This is referable to that verſe of an old poet, cited by Ariſtotle in his Nicomachean Ethicks, lib. iii. cap. 5.

Ουδεις εκων πονηρος, ουδ' ακων μακαρ.

No man in evil willingly can reſt:
No man with good unwillingly is bleſt.—S.

[2] In the Greek τουτου λεχθεντος. But it appears from Ficinus's tranſlation, that in his manuſcript it was read εκ του λεχθεντος. The ſenſe requires this reading; and we preſume, therefore, that it ought to be ſo printed. We have followed both the Baſil editions, and all the tranſlations, in making the ſentence interrogative: and in all future editions of Plato we hope it will be ſo marked.—S.

Soc.

Soc. Let us examine then if this account of yours be true: for perhaps it may be ſo. You ſay, that to be able to gain good things is virtue.

MENO. I do.

Soc. Good things do you not call ſuch things as health and riches, that is, the poſſeſſion of gold and ſilver, honours alſo in the ſtate, and offices in the government? You do not ſpeak of any other things as good, beſide things of this kind?

MENO. No other; I mean all ſuch ſort of things.

Soc. Well then, to get money [1] is virtue; as ſays Meno, the hereditary gueſt of the great king [2]. But let me aſk you a queſtion concerning this point; whether you would chooſe to add ſomething to this account of virtue, and to ſay that virtue is to get money honeſtly and religiouſly? or whether this addition makes no difference in your account; but that, however unjuſtly it be acquired, you call the mere acquiſition of money, equally in any way, virtue?

[1] We learn from Xenophon (in Expedit. Cyri, lib. ii.) that the paſſion predominant in Meno's ſoul was the love of money; that his deſire of honours and of power in the ſtate was ſubſervient to that other his maſter-paſſion; for, that he regarded power and honour no otherwiſe than as the means of accumulating wealth. In the paſſage, therefore, before us, it ſeems as if Plato meant, ſlily and indirectly, to exhibit to us this ſtrong feature in the character of Meno, or rather as if Socrates had a mind, in his uſual jocoſe manner, to exhibit to Meno a true picture of himſelf.

[2] In the more antient times of Greece, whenever men, illuſtrious for their birth or ſtation in life, travelled from one Grecian ſtate or kingdom to another, or croſſed the ſea to Aſia, with a view of obſerving the manners of other people, or of learning the policy of other governments (and they ſeldom travelled with any different view), they were always nobly entertained at the houſe of ſome great man in every country to which they came. Perſons of inferior rank, whenever they travelled, which they rarely did, were everywhere treated courteouſly at the public coſts. In the former caſe, that of private entertainment, not only the noble hoſt himſelf became entitled to the ſame hoſpitable reception from his gueſt, if ever he ſhould return the viſit on a like occaſion; but the rights of mutual hoſpitality accrued alſo from thence to the deſcendants of both the parties. Meno it ſeems had this connection with the Perſian monarch, being himſelf, probably, as well as his friend Ariſtippus, deſcended from one of the antient kings of Theſſaly. However this was, that his family was very noble appears from his appointment to the command of the forces which his country ſent to the aſſiſtance of Cyrus, in his youthful time of life.——Thus much for the explication of the paſſage now before us. The beauty of it ariſes from the oppoſition here ſeen between Meno's high rank, naturally productive of high ſpirit, and his ſordid avarice, that paſſion of the meaneſt ſouls.——S.

MENO.

MENO. By no means; for, to acquire it unjuſtly, I call vice and wickedneſs.

SOC. By all means, therefore, as it appears, this acquiſition of money ought to be accompanied by honeſty, or prudence, or ſanctity, or ſome other part of virtue; for otherwiſe it will not be virtue, notwithſtanding it procures for us good things.

MENO. For without that how ſhould it be virtue?

SOC. And if a man forbear to gain money, whether for himſelf or others, when he cannot gain it without diſhoneſty, is not the forbearance of this gain alſo virtue?

MENO. It is apparent.

SOC. Not the gaining of theſe good things, therefore, muſt be virtue, more than the forbearance of that gain; but, as it ſeems, that which comes accompanied by honeſty is virtue; that which is without any thing of that kind is vice and wickedneſs.

MENO. I think it muſt of neceſſity be as you ſay.

SOC. Did we not ſay, a little while ſince, that honeſty and prudence, and every thing of that kind, was a part of virtue?

MENO. We did.

SOC. Then, Meno, you are in jeſt with me.

MENO. How ſo, Socrates?

SOC. Becauſe, when I had deſired you, as I did juſt now, not to ſplit virtue into pieces, and had given you patterns to copy after, that you might anſwer as you ought; you, without paying any regard to them, tell me that virtue is the power of gaining good things with honeſty or juſtice; yet this, you ſay, is only a part of virtue.

MENO. I do.

SOC. It is to be collected then, from your own conceſſions, that with a part of virtue, to do whatever one does, this is virtue. For juſtice, you ſay, is but a part of virtue, and ſo of every other thing of like kind.

MENO. What then? granting that I ſay this.

SOC. It follows that, having been requeſted to tell me what the whole of virtue is, you are far from giving ſuch a complete account of it: for you ſay, that every action is virtue which is performed with a part of virtue; as though you had already told me what virtue was in the whole, and that I ſhould

ſhould now know it when you come to ſplit it into parts. We muſt therefore, as it ſeems to me, take the matter again from the beginning, and recur to this queſtion, What is virtue? Or ſhould every action, accompanied with a part of virtue, be ſaid to be virtue itſelf? For it is ſaying this, to ſay that every action, accompanied with juſtice, is virtue.——Do you think there is no occaſion for us to reſume the ſame queſtion; but that a man may know a part of virtue, what it is, without knowing what virtue is itſelf?

MENO. I think he cannot.

SOC. For, if you remember, when I anſwered juſt now your queſtion concerning figure, we rejected ſuch a kind of anſwer as aimed at explaining the propoſed ſubject in terms not as yet confeſſedly underſtood, but whoſe meaning was ſtill the ſubject of inquiry.

MENO. And we did right, Socrates, in rejecting ſuch an anſwer.

SOC. I would not have you imagine then, while we are as yet inquiring what virtue is, the whole of it, that by anſwering in terms which ſignify the parts of virtue, you will be able to explain to any man the nature of virtue; or, indeed, that the nature of any other thing can be explained in ſuch a way, but that ſtill there will be need of repeating the ſame queſtion what virtue is, that which is the ſubject of our converſation. Or do you think that I ſpeak idly and nothing to the purpoſe?

MENO. I think you ſpeak rightly.

SOC. Begin again, therefore, and tell me what it is you hold virtue to be, you and your friend Gorgias?

MENO. Socrates, I heard, before I had converſed with you, that the only part you take in converſation is this:—You pretend to be at a loſs and doubtful yourſelf upon all ſubjects, and make others too no leſs to be at a loſs what to think and ſay. You ſeem to be now playing the ſame conjurers tricks upon me; you manifeſtly uſe incantations to bewitch me, and to fill me with ſuch perplexity that I know not what to ſay. If you will allow me to joke a little, I think you reſemble exactly, not only in form but in other reſpects alſo, that broad ſea-fiſh called the cramp-fiſh; for that too never fails to give a numbneſs to every perſon who either touches or approaches it [1]. You ſeem to

[1] The benumbing faculty of this fiſh, by which it is enabled to catch its prey, is mentioned by Ariſtotle, in his Hiſtory of Animals, b. ix, c. 37, where he tells us that ſome perſons have been

to have done ſome ſuch thing at preſent to me, and to have benumbed me. For I actually ſuffer a kind of numbneſs and ſtupidity, both in mind and body, and find myſelf diſabled from giving you any anſwer; and yet have I a thouſand times diſcourſed much about virtue, and to many perſons, and extremely well too, as I thought; but I am now not in the leaſt able to tell ſo much as what virtue is. I think that you have acted very prudently in never going out of your own country either by ſea or land. For if you was to behave in this manner in any other city where you are a ſtranger, you would run a riſque of being driven thence as a magician or enchanter.

Soc. You are full of craftineſs, Meno; and I was very near being deceived by you.

Meno. Tell me how, Socrates, I pray you?

Soc. I know with what deſign you brought a ſimile to which you likened me.

Meno. With what deſign now, do you imagine?

Soc. That I, on my part, might bring ſome ſimile or reſemblance of you. For this I know to be true of all handſome perſons, they love to have images and pictures made of them. And indeed it is their intereſt; for of handſome perſons the pictures are handſome too. But I ſhall forbear the drawing of your picture in return. And as to that which you have produced of me, if the cramp-fiſh be itſelf numb, and through its numbneſs benumb others alſo, then am I like to it, but otherwiſe I am not. For I do not lead others into doubtfulneſs on any ſubject, and make them be at a loſs what to ſay; when at the ſame time I can eaſily explain the matter in hand, and have no doubts at all within my own mind: but as I am entirely diſtreſſed for true definitions of things myſelf; in this condition I involve in the ſame diſtreſſes thoſe with whom I am converſing. Thus at preſent concerning the nature of virtue; what it is, I, for my part, know not: you indeed knew formerly, perhaps, before that you had touched me; but now you are like one [1] who knows

eye-witneſſes of the manner in which it is done. Plutarch, in his Treatiſe of the Sagacity of Animals, relates the matter more circumſtantially; and farther aſſures us, that this power of the numb-fiſh not only operates on other fiſh, but on men too; and that it acts at ſome ſmall diſtance, as well as through immediate touch.—S.

[1] In all the editions of the Greek, we here read νυν μεντοι ομοιος; ει απ ειδυτι. This reading we have

knows nothing of the matter. I am deſirous, however, of conſidering it together with you, and of our ſearching out jointly what kind of a thing virtue is.

MENO. But in what way, Socrates, will you ſearch for a thing of which you are entirely ignorant? For by what mark which may diſcover it will you look for it when you know none of the marks that diſtinguiſh it? Or, if you ſhould not fail of meeting with it, how will you diſcern it, when met with, to be the very thing you was in ſearch of, and knew nothing of before?

SOC. I apprehend, Meno, what it is you mean. Do you obſerve how captious a way of reaſoning you introduce? For it follows from hence, that it is impoſſible for a man to ſeek, either for that which he knows, or for that of which he is ignorant. For no man would ſeek to know what he knows, becauſe he has the knowledge of it already, and has no need of ſeeking for what he has. Nor could any man ſeek for what he is ignorant of, becauſe he would not know what he was ſeeking for.

MENO. Do you not think then, Socrates, that this way of reaſoning is fair and right?

SOC. Not I, for my part.

MENO. Can you ſay in what reſpect it is wrong?

SOC. I can. For I have heard the ſayings of men and women who were wiſe, and knowing in divine things?

MENO. What ſayings?

SOC. Such as I think true, as well as beautiful.

MENO. But what ſayings were they? and by whom were they uttered?

SOC. Thoſe who uttered them were of the prieſts and prieſteſſes, ſuch as made it their buſineſs to be able to give a rational account of thoſe things in which they were employed. The ſame ſayings are delivered alſo by Pindar, and many other of the poets, as many as are divine. The ſayings are theſe;

have followed in our tranſlation, as thinking it to be right: but it is to be obſerved, that Ficinus ſeems, from his tranſlation, to have read in his manuſcript copy of Plato, νυν μεντοι εμοι ομοιος ει και ειδοτι. And as this reading produceth a ſenſe agreeable to that maſk of ignorance worn by Socrates throughout this dialogue, and wherever elſe he is introduced converſing with any of the ſophiſts, or of their diſciples, it deſerves a place amongſt the various readings which it will become a future editor of Plato to collect and publiſh.—S.

but do you conſider with yourſelf whether you think them true. Theſe perſons then tell us that the ſoul of man is immortal; that ſometimes it ends [1], which is called dying; and that afterwards it begins again, but never is diſſolved; and that for this reaſon we ought to live, throughout our lives, with all ſanctity. For

STROPHE.

[2] When guilt of leſſer crimes the ſoul hath ſtain'd,
Not meriting ſharp pains for aye;
And eight dark dreary years ſhe hath remain'd
In Hades, barr'd from gladd'ning day;
Preſerving all that time her ſenſe
Of good, lamenting her loſt innocence;
With ſorrow if her guilt ſhe rue,
And Proſerpine ſhould deem that ſorrow true,
She accepts in full atonement ſuch repentance due.

ANTISTROPHE.

Then the ninth year ſends back the ſoul to light,
And former objects here on earth:
Of theſe, thro' death, again ſhe loſes ſight;
Again to life renews her birth.
[3] At length, two trials well endur'd,
The ſoul, to leſſer virtues well inur'd,
Is born ſome king, for good renown'd;
Or ſage, well learn'd in wiſdom's lore profound;
Or hero, by his proweſs ſpreading peace around.

EPODE.

[1] That is, ends its preſent life, and begins a new life. For as Plato obſerves juſtly in his Phædo, life and death ſucceed each other alternately throughout nature. In the paſſage, however, now before us, the ending of the human ſoul and its beginning again may be taken in different ſenſes. The moſt obvious meaning is the diſſolution of that body which it inhabits, and its departure into the ſeeds of a new body, which it then animates, and gradually forms ſuitable to its own temper and diſpoſition. This ſenſe is agreeable to thoſe verſes immediately after cited out of Pindar.—S.

[2] In tranſlating the fine fragment of Pindar, which Plato has here preſerved to us, we found ourſelves under a neceſſity of paraphraſing very largely, to free it from that obſcurity in which it would otherwiſe appear to an Engliſh reader, partly becauſe of the conciſeneſs of Pindar's ſtyle, and partly becauſe of the ſentiments, taken from the antient mythology, with which our age is little acquainted. However, we have adhered cloſely to the ſenſe of our original, completing it only from the ſame mythology, without adding any new thoughts or conceiti of our own.—S.

[3] In this place we have made our tranſlation conformable to the reading found, as we preſume, by Ficinus in the manuſcript from which he tranſlated, and taken notice of by Stephens in the margin

EPODE.

Thro' goodneſs, wiſdom, virtue, truly great;
And greatly meriting advancement high;
Looſen'd from body, wing'd and fleet,
Freely ſhe mounts to pureſt ſky;
Ne'er more on earth to live, ne'er more to die.
Amongſt the gods in ſtarry ſheen,
Far off and wide thro' Nature ſeen,
She fixes her abode;
Aſſuming her celeſtial throne,
To godlike ſtate of being grown,
A deathleſs demi-god.
Thence thro' the reſt of time,
In hymns religious and in holy rhyme,
Mortals below ſhall lift their lays,
The deathleſs demi-god to praiſe;
Who, freed from earthy droſs,
And ev'ry element of body groſs,
To intellectual bliſs in heav'nly ſeat could climb.

The ſoul then being immortal, having been often born, having beheld the things which are here, the things which are in Hades, and all things, there is nothing of which ſhe has not gained the knowledge. No wonder, therefore, that ſhe is able to recollect, with regard to virtue as well as to other things, what formerly ſhe knew. For all things in nature being linked together in relationſhip, and the ſoul having heretofore known all things, nothing hinders but that any man, who has recalled to mind, or, according to the common phraſe, who has learnt, one thing only, ſhould of himſelf recover all his antient knowledge, and find out again all the reſt of things; if he has but courage, and faints not in the midſt of his reſearches. For inquiry and learning is reminiſcence [1] all. We therefore ought not to hearken to that ſophiſtical way of reaſoning afore-mentioned; for our believing it to be true would make us idle. And, accordingly, the indolent, and ſuch as are averſe to

margin of his edition. Not only the ſenſe of the fragment is bettered by that reading, but Plato's illuſtration of it evidently ſhows that he read it ſo himſelf.—S.

[1] For a defence of reminiſcence, which Plato juſtly conſiders as ranking among the moſt important doctrines of philoſophy, ſee the notes on the Phædo.—T.

taking pains, delight to hear it. But this other way of thinking, which I have juſt now given you an account of, makes men diligent, ſets them at work, and puts them upon inquiry. And as I believe it to be true, I am willing, with your aſſiſtance, to inquire into the nature of virtue.

MENO. With all my heart, Socrates. But ſay you this abſolutely, that we do not learn any thing; and that all, which we call learning, is only reminiſcence? Can you teach me to know this doctrine to be true?

SOC. I obſerved to you before how full you are of craftineſs, O Meno. And, to confirm my obſervation, you now aſk me if I can teach you; I, who ſay that there is no ſuch thing as teaching, but that all our knowledge is reminiſcence; that I may appear directly to contradict myſelf.

MENO. Not ſo, Socrates, by Jupiter. I did not expreſs myſelf in thoſe terms with any ſuch deſign; but merely from habit, and the common uſage of that expreſſion. But if any way you can prove to me that your doctrine is true, do ſo.

SOC. This is by no means an eaſy taſk. However, for your ſake, I am willing to try and do my utmoſt. Call hither to me then one of thoſe your numerous attendants, whichever you pleaſe, that I may prove in him the truth of what I ſay.

MENO. I will, gladly. Come hither, you.

SOC. Is he a Grecian, and ſpeaks he the Greek language?

MENO. Perfectly well. He was born in my own family.

SOC. Be attentive now, and obſerve whether he appears to recollect within himſelf, or to learn any thing from me.

MENO. I ſhall.

SOC. [1]Tell me, boy; do you know what a ſquare ſpace is? Is it of ſuch a figure as (fig. 1) this?

BOY.

[1] The beſt explanatory notes to this part of the Dialogue will be mathematical figures, drawn after the manner of thoſe uſed in demonſtrating geometrical propoſitions. Socrates is here ſuppoſed, in the firſt place, to draw a ſquare; and afterwards, while he is putting queſtions to the boy, he is ſuppoſed to be drawing new lines, ſuch as form and bound the ſeveral other figures of which he ſpeaks. But, in reading, the figures muſt be repreſented as already drawn; and therefore, in every part of the proceſs, a new figure is neceſſary. All theſe we have exhibited together, printed from a copper plate; numbering each figure, and referring to each, in its proper place, by the ſame number. Such figures ought to have been printed in the editions of Plato himſelf. The editors

Boy. It is.

Soc. A ſquare ſpace then is that which has (fig. 2) all theſe lines equal, A B, B C, C D, D A, four in number.

Boy. It is ſo truly.

Soc. Has it not alſo (fig. 3) theſe lines, which are drawn through the middle of it, A C and B D, equal each to the other?

Boy. Yes.

Soc. Cannot you imagine a ſpace, ſquare like this, but larger; and another ſuch, but leſſer?

Boy. Yes, for certain.

Soc. Now if (fig. 2) the ſide A B ſhould be two feet long, and the ſide A D ſhould be two feet long alſo, how many feet ſquare will the whole ſpace contain? Conſider it in this manner. If, in the ſide A B, the ſpace ſhould be two feet long, and in the ſide A D it ſhould be but one foot; would not the ſquare be that of two feet once told?

Boy. It would.

Soc. But ſince it is two feet this way as well as the other way, is it not a ſpace of two feet twice told?

Boy. Juſt ſo.

Soc. It is then a ſpace of two feet[1]?

Boy. So it is.

Soc. How many feet are twice two? reckon them, and tell me.

Boy. Four feet, Socrates.

Soc. May not a ſpace be made (fig. 4), E F G H, double to that other in ſize, but of the ſame kind, having, like that, all its ſides equal?

Boy. Yes, ſure.

Soc. How many ſquare feet then will this ſpace be of?

Boy. Eight.

Soc. Come now, try and tell me, of what length is each of the ſides in this ſquare ſpace. Now the ſides of that ſquare, you know, we have ſup-

editors of Ariſtotle have not been ſo much wanting in this reſpect, where it was neceſſary: though ſometimes indeed, through careleſſneſs, they have printed wrong figures, which are worſe than none; as, for inſtance, equilateral triangles inſtead of right-angled.—S.

[1] Meaning ſquare feet.—S.

poſed to be two feet long. Of what length then are the ſides of this ſquare, which is double in largeneſs to that other?

Boy. It is plain, Socrates, that they are twice as long.

Soc. You ſee, Meno, that I teach him none of theſe things which he aſſerts; I only aſk him queſtions. And now this boy imagines that he knows of what length the lines are which contain a ſpace of eight ſquare feet. Do you not think he does?

Meno. I do.

Soc. And does he really know?

Meno. Certainly not.

Soc. But he imagines them to be twice as long as the lines, which contain a ſpace of four ſquare feet.

Meno. He does.

Soc. I now view him ready to recollect, from this time forward, rightly and as he ought. Now hear me, boy. You ſay that lines, double in length to the ſides of the ſquare A B C D, contain a ſpace double to it in largeneſs: I mean a ſpace of the ſame kind; not one way long, the other way ſhort; but every way of equal length, like the ſpace A B C D, only twice as large, that is (fig. 4), a ſpace of eight ſquare feet[1]. Conſider now whether you ſtill think this ſquare E F G H to be meaſured by a line twice as long as the line which meaſures the ſquare A B C D.

Boy. I do.

Soc. Suppoſe we add to the line A B, from hence, from the point B, another line of equal length (fig. 5), the line B I. Is not the line A I of a length double to that of the line A B?

Boy. Yes, ſure.

Soc. Now, from the line A I, do you ſay that a ſpace will be made of eight ſquare feet, if four lines, each of them as long as the line A I, be drawn ſo as to contain ſpace?

Boy. I do.

Soc. Let us then draw (fig. 6) theſe four equal lines ſo as to contain ſpace, A I, I K, K L, L A. Is this ſpace now any other than that which you ſay is of eight ſquare feet?

[1] Meaning a ſquare equal in largeneſs to eight ſquare feet.

Boy.

Boy. No; it is the very ſame.

Soc. Are there not in this ſpace A I K L theſe (fig. 7) four ſpaces, A B M O, B I P M, M P K N, N L O M, each of which is equal to that ſpace of four ſquare feet, A B C D?

Boy. So there be.

Soc. How large is the whole ſpace A I K L? Is it not four times as large as the ſpace A B C D?

Boy. To be ſure it is.

Soc. Is it only double now to the ſpace A B C D, when it is four times as large?

Boy. No, by Jupiter.

Soc. What proportion then has it to the ſpace A B C D?

Boy. A quadruple one [1].

Soc. From a line, therefore, double in length, is drawn a ſquare ſpace, not double, but quadruple, in largeneſs.

Boy. Why, it is very true.

Soc. Four times four make ſixteen: do they not?

Boy. They do.

Soc. But from a line of what length is to be drawn a ſquare, ſuch a one as we ſuppoſe (fig. 4) the ſquare E F G H to be, that is a ſpace of eight ſquare feet? You ſee that from the (fig. 6) line A I is drawn a ſquare, quadruple in largeneſs to the ſquare A B C D.

Boy. I ſee it.

Soc. And from the line A B, which is half of the line A I (fig. 6), a ſquare, you ſee, is drawn, which is but the fourth part of the ſquare A K.

Boy. It is.

Soc. Well; but that ſquare of eight feet E F G H, is it not twice as large as the ſquare A B C D, and half as large as the ſquare A I K L?

Boy. It is ſo, to be ſure.

[1] We may obſerve that this boy, whom Meno ſeems to have choſen out from his retinue on account of his ignorance and total want of education, is repreſented as not wholly ignorant of common arithmetic. Perhaps Socrates meant to gain ſome ground in his argument by this circumſtance; inſinuating, that the principles of the art of numbering were natural to man, and required no teaching. Accordingly we find that the moſt barbarian nations, and the moſt unlettered perſons in thoſe which are civilized, acquire of themſelves ſo much of that art as is neceſſary for the uſes of common life.—S.

Soc. Muſt it not then be drawn from a line longer than the line A B, and ſhorter than the line A I?

Boy. I think it muſt.

Soc. You ſay well; for ſpeak that only which you think. And tell me, was not the line A B ſuppoſed to be two feet long, and the line A I four feet long?

Boy. Yes.

Soc. The ſide therefore of the ſquare E F G H muſt be ſhorter than a line of four feet, and longer than a line of two feet.

Boy. It muſt ſo.

Soc. Try now, and tell me how long you think it is.

Boy. Three feet long.

Soc. If then it be ſo, let us take half of the line B I (*fig.* 8), namely, B Q, and add it to the line A B; and now this line A Q will be ſuch a line as you ſpeak of, a line three feet long. For the lines A B, B I, are each of them two feet long, and the line B Q is half of the line B I, and therefore is one foot long. In the ſame manner, let us take half of the line O L, namely O R, and add it to the line A O; and thus the line A R will be three feet long alſo. For the lines A O, O L, are each of them two feet long, and the line O R is one foot long. From theſe two lines, A Q, A R, let us complete the ſquare A Q S R; and it is ſuch a ſquare as you was ſpeaking of, the ſquare of a line three feet long.

Boy. It is ſo.

Soc. If then the whole ſpace be three feet long and three feet broad, it is a ſpace of thrice three feet.

Boy. It appears ſo to be.

Soc. And how many feet are thrice three?

Boy. Nine.

Soc. But how many feet were there to be in a ſquare twice as large as the ſquare A B C D?

Boy. Eight.

Soc. It is not true then that from a line three feet long is to be drawn a ſquare containing only eight ſquare feet.

Boy. It is not.

Soc. Try and tell us then exactly how long the line muſt be from which

ſuch a ſquare is to be drawn. Or, if you chooſe not to tell us the meaſure of it in numbers [1], at leaſt point out to us from what line it may be drawn [2].

Boy. Now, by Jove, Socrates, I do not know.

Soc. Do you obſerve, Meno, what progreſs this boy has already made, and whereabouts he is, in the way to recollection? You ſee that, from the beginning of his examination, he knew not from what line a ſquare eight feet large was to be drawn; as indeed neither does he yet know; but he then fancied that he knew, and anſwered boldly as a knowing perſon would, without ſuſpecting that he ſhould ever be at a loſs for a true anſwer. But he now finds himſelf at a loſs, and thinks himſelf as ignorant as he really is.

Meno. You ſay what is true.

Soc. Is he not then in a better diſpoſition with regard to the matter which he was ignorant of?

Meno. I agree with you in this too.

Soc. In making him therefore to be at a loſs what to anſwer, and in benumbing him after the manner of the cramp-fiſh, have we done him any harm?

Meno. I think, we have not.

Soc. And more than this, we have advanced him a little, as it ſeems, in the way of finding out the truth in the ſubject laid before him. For, being now ſenſible of his ignorance, he is prepared to ſeek and to inquire. But he then fancied, that he could readily, at any time, and in the preſence of any number of people, ſhow with certainty, that a ſquare, twice as large as ſome other ſquare, was produced from a line twice as long.

Meno. So it ſeemed.

Soc. Think you then, that he would have ſet about ſeeking or learning that, which, however ignorant of it, he fancied that he knew; till he had

[1] If Socrates had not added this, he would ſeem to have put the boy on telling what was impoſſible for him to tell. For how long the ſide is of a ſquare, equal in largeneſs to eight ſquare feet, is impoſſible to be told in any whole number.—S.

[2] For it lay before his eyes; being the line A C (fig. 3), the diameter of the ſquare A B C D.—S.

found himſelf at a loſs, and felt his ignorance; and was become therefore deſirous of finding it out?

MENO. I think, Socrates, that he never would.

SOC. The benumbing him then was of advantage to him.

MENO. I think it was.

SOC. Now obſerve how, from this ſenſe of his ignorance, he will find out the truth in ſearching for it with me; though the part which I ſhall bear in the inquiry will be merely to aſk queſtions, and not to teach. But be ſure to mind, if any where you can catch me teaching or telling him any thing, inſtead of aſking him his own opinions. Now, boy, tell me, is not this ſpace (fig. 2) ABCD our ſquare, four feet large? Do you apprehend me?

BOY. I do.

SOC. Suppoſe we add to it this other ſquare (fig. 9) BTUC, equal to it in largeneſs?

BOY. Well.

SOC. And a third ſquare too, this (fig. 10), DCWX, equal in largeneſs to either of the others?

BOY. Very well.

SOC. What, if we add another ſquare of equal ſize, to fill up the corner here, this (fig. 11), UCWY?

BOY. Very well: and ſo it does.

SOC. Are not then theſe four ſquares equal all, ABCD, BTUC, CDXW, WYUC?

BOY. Yes.

SOC. This whole large ſquare then, ATYX, how much larger is it than the ſquare ABCD?

BOY. Four times as big.

SOC. But we wanted a ſquare only twice as big. Do you not remember?

BOY. I remember it very well.

SOC. Do not theſe lines, which I draw from corner to corner in each of theſe ſquares (fig. 12), BD, BU, DW, WU, cut each ſquare in half?

BOY. They do.

SOC.

Soc. Are not theſe four lines drawn of equal length, theſe, which encloſe the ſquare ſpace, BDWU?

Boy. They be ſo.

Soc. Now conſider, how large this ſquare is which is encloſed by thoſe four lines.

Boy. Why, I do not know.

Soc. Are not thoſe four ſquares (fig. 12), ABCD, BTUC, CDXW, WYUC, cut each of them in half by theſe four lines, BD, BU, DW, WU, drawn within them; or are they not?

Boy. They be.

Soc. In the ſquare (fig. 12), ATYX, how many ſpaces are there then, as large as the ſpace ABCD?

Boy. Four.

Soc. And how many ſuch in the ſquare (fig. 12), BDWU, from which half the other is cut off?

Boy. Two.

Soc. How many more are four than two?

Boy. Twice as many.

Soc. How many ſquare feet then doth this ſquare, BDWU, contain?

Boy. Eight.

Soc. From what line is it drawn?

Boy. From this here.

Soc. From (fig. 12) the line BD, do you ſay, reaching from corner to corner of the ſquare ABCD, which contains four ſquare feet?

Boy. Yes.

Soc. The ſophiſts call ſuch a line the diameter. If the diameter then be its name, from the diameter of a ſquare, as you ſay, you boy of Meno's, may be drawn a ſquare twice as large as the ſquare of which it is the diameter[1].

Boy.

[1] This theorem, ſaid to have been diſcovered by Pythagoras, is perhaps the moſt beautiful of all ſimple theorems in geometry: and yet is not to be found, in expreſs terms, among thoſe fundamental theorems, demonſtrated in Euclid's Elements. It is cited, however, in the demonſtration of the laſt propoſition in the tenth book: and a reference is there made to the 47th propoſition of the firſt book; in which indeed this fine theorem is implicitly contained: for

Omne

BOY. It is ſo, Socrates, for certain.

SOC. Well; what think you, Meno? Has this boy, in his anſwers, given any other opinion than his own?

MENO. None other: he has given his own opinion only.

SOC. And yet, but a little before, as we both obſerved, he had no knowledge of the matter propoſed, and knew not how to give a right anſwer.

MENO. True.

SOC. But thoſe very opinions, which you acknowledge to be his own, were in him all the time: were they not?

MENO. They were.

SOC. In a man therefore, who is ignorant, there are true opinions concerning thoſe very things of which he is ignorant.

MENO. It appears there are.

SOC. Thoſe opinions then are ſtirred up afreſh in the mind of that boy, as fancies are in dreaming. And if he ſhould frequently be queſtioned of theſe things, and by many different perſons, you may be aſſured he will at length know them with as much certainty as any man.

MENO. Indeed, it ſeems ſo.

SOC. Will he not then know them without being taught them, having only been aſked queſtions, and recovering of himſelf from within himſelf his loſt knowledge?

MENO. He will.

SOC. But our recovery of knowledge from within ourſelves, is not this what we call reminiſcence?

MENO. Without doubt.

SOC. And this knowledge, which he now has, muſt he not at ſome time or other have acquired it, or elſe have always been poſſeſſed of it?

MENO. Certainly.

Omne majus continet in ſe minus.—Proclus, in his Commentary on the Firſt Book of thoſe Elements, admires Euclid, becauſe the noble theorem, introduced here by Plato, relating only to right-angled iſoſceles-triangles, is by Euclid extended to all right-angled triangles, ſcalene as well as iſoſceles. We heartily join with him in this admiration; but could wiſh that the original theorem of Pythagoras had been ſubjoined, as a corollary, to that truly admirable propoſition, the 47th.—S.

SOC.

Soc. Now if he was always poſſeſſed of it, he was always a perſon of knowledge. But if at any time he firſt received it, was it not in this preſent life? unleſs ſome perſon has taught him the ſcience of geometry. For he will make his anſwers with no leſs certainty in every part of geometry, and indeed in all the other mathematical ſciences [1]. Is there any one, then, who has taught the boy all this? I aſk you; becauſe you ought to know, ſince he was born and bred up in your family.

MENO. I am certain that no perſon has ever taught him thoſe ſciences.

Soc. And yet he entertains thoſe opinions, which he has juſt now declared: does he not?

MENO. It appears, Socrates, that he muſt.

Soc. If then he had this knowledge within him [2], not having acquired it in this preſent life, it is plain that in ſome other time he had learnt it and actually poſſeſſed it.

MENO. It appears ſo.

Soc. And was not that time then, when he was not a man?

MENO. Certainly.

Soc. If true opinions then are in him, at both theſe times, the time when he is [3], and the time when he is not a man; opinions which, awakened and rouſed by queſtions [4], riſe up into ſcience; muſt not his ſoul be well furniſhed with this diſcipline [5] throughout all ages? for it is plain, that in every age he either is, or is not a man.

MENO. In all appearance it muſt be ſo.

[1] For every mathematical demonſtration depends on viewing equal and unequal, like and unlike, in all computations, in all diagrams, and in all meaſures, whether of ſound or of motion.—S.

[2] In the Greek we here find a negative, ει—ουκ ηδει τουτο, which, however, if it be retained, alters not the ſenſe upon the whole; but the ſentence is then to be tranſlated thus; "If then, not having acquired this knowledge in the preſent life, juſt now he had it not," (becauſe he had forgotten it;) &c. But the meaning ſeems eaſier to be conceived, if the ουκ be omitted.—S.

[3] Future editors of Plato may conſider, whether we ought not here to read ὁν αν η χρονον, inſtead of ὁταν η χρονος. Cornarius alſo, we find, has made this emendation.—S.

[4] We have here ſuppoſed, that the Greek of this place ſhould be thus read, αι αν' ερωτησεις επεγερθεισαι.—S.

[5] That is, with the principles of ſcience eſſential to the ſoul of man.—S.

Soc.

Soc. If the truth of things [1] therefore is always in the ſoul, the ſoul ſhould be immortal. So that whatever you happen now not to know, that is, not to remember, you ought to undertake with confidence to ſeek within yourſelf, and recall it to your mind.

Meno. You ſeem to me, Socrates, ſome how or other to ſpeak rightly.

Soc. As to my own part, Meno, I would not contend very ſtrenuouſly for the truth of my argument in other reſpects; but that in thinking it our duty to ſeek after the knowledge of things we are at preſent ignorant of, we ſhould become better men, more manly, and leſs idle, than if we ſuppoſe it not poſſible for us to find out, nor our duty to inquire into, what we know not; this I would, if I was able, ſtrongly, both by word and deed, maintain.

Meno. In this alſo, Socrates, you ſeem to me to ſay well.

Soc. Since then we are agreed in this point, that what a man knows not, he ought to inquire after and ſeek to know, are you willing that we attempt jointly to inquire into the nature of virtue?

Meno. By all means, willing. Not but that I ſhould have moſt pleaſure in taking into conſideration, and hearing what you have to ſay on the queſtion I firſt aſked you, whether, in ſetting about our inquiries concerning virtue, we ſhould conſider it as a thing that may be taught, or as being by nature with thoſe who have it, or as attainable by ſome other means, and what they are.

Soc. Were I to govern not only myſelf, Meno, but you too, we would not conſider whether virtue could be taught or not, before we had inquired, in the firſt place, what virtue was. But ſince you, without ſo much as attempting to govern yourſelf, for fear (I ſuppoſe) of being leſs free and leſs a gentleman, undertake however to govern me, and actually do govern me, I ſhall yield to you. For indeed how can I help myſelf? or what is to be done without it? We are to conſider then, it ſeems, what belongs to ſome certain thing, whilſt yet we know not what the thing is. But if you

[1] The words of Plato are αληθεια των οντων.——The truth or reality of all things which are, depends on the truth of the firſt principles of things. For truth metaphyſical is here meant. But in truths logical it is the ſame: all theſe depend on the truth of the firſt principles of ſcience.—S.

ſtill

ſtill perſiſt, however relax a little the ſtrictneſs of your command, and ſuffer the queſtion, whether virtue can be taught a man, or how otherwiſe it is attained, to be conſidered hypothetically. By hypothetically I mean in the ſame manner as geometricians often treat a queſtion; for inſtance, when they are aſked concerning ſome geometrical figure [1], whether it is poſſible for (fig. 13) ſuch a particular triangle to be inſcribed [2] in (fig. 14) ſuch a particular circle. A geometrician would anſwer,—I know not [3] as yet, of what kind this triangle is [4]. But I can make a ſuppoſition, which I think may be of uſe in anſwering your queſtion,——this;———Suppoſing the triangle to be of ſuch a kind, as that a circle being drawn about [5] a given ſide of it, the whole ſpace of the triangle be included within the circular ſpace deſcribed around it [6], the conſequence will then be one thing; but quite another conſequence will follow, if it cannot be ſo included [7]. Laying

[1] Or rather the largeneſs of the ſpace contained in that figure. The words of Plato are περι χωριου. And χωριον was a term uſed by the old Greek mathematicians to ſignify the ſpace comprehended by the lines of any geometrical figure.——S.

[2] The Greek word here is ενταθηναι, that is, *to be extended within*. The meaning of which words ſeems, at firſt ſight, to be the ſame with that of εγγραφεσθαι in Euclid's Elements, Lib. iv. Def. 3. But probably there is a difference between them, as will preſently be remarked.—S.

[3] The angles of this triangle being not, as yet, either meaſured or ſuppoſed.—S.

[4] Whether right-angled, obtuſe, or acute-angled.—S.

[5] It ſeems neceſſary here to make a ſmall alteration in the text as it is printed: by reading ΠΕΡΙ την δοθεισαν αυτου γραμμην ΠΕΡΙ τειναντα, inſtead of παρα and παρατειναντα.——Περιτεινειν ſeems, at firſt view, to have the ſame meaning with περιγραφειν in the fourth book of Euclid's Elements. The difference between them, as alſo between εντεινειν and εγγραφειν, will be conjectured in a ſubſequent note.—S.

[6] If the alteration, made in the preceding note, be juſt, we are obliged, in conſequence of it, to read here ΠΕΡΙτετραμενον in the Greek, inſtead of παρατετραμενον, the word in Stephen's edition. The former editions, by a miſtake ſtill greater, give us παρατετραμενων. For want of this ſmall emendation, Grynæus, who undertook to amend Ficinus's tranſlation, was led to fancy I know not what parallelograms; which throw ſo much obſcurity over this whole paſſage, that the true meaning of it has never ſince been ſo much as conjectured. Ficinus himſelf indeed ſeems to have had a ſhrewd gueſs at it, even without making the emendation; as appears by his marginal reference to the fourth book of Euclid's Elements, and by the triangles he preſents us with.—S.

[7] That is, if it be impoſſible to include the whole triangle within that circle, which is drawn about one of its ſides. And impoſſible this is, when ſome part of the circle υπερβαλλει *exceeds*, or reaches beyond the circle; and ουκ ελλειπει *does not fall within it*, as it does in the other, the caſe put firſt. See the figures referred to. It ſeems to be ſuppoſed in both the caſes, that it may appear by inſpection, or be found by menſuration of the diameters, whether a circle, drawn about the given ſide of the triangle, be equal or unequal to the circle given.—S.

down therefore theſe two hypotheſes diſtinctly, I can tell you what will follow, in each of theſe caſes[1], as to the inſcribing that triangle within the circle, whether it be impoſſible or poſſible. Now the ſame way ſhall we take in our inquiry concerning virtue: ſince we know not, either what it is, or what is to be attributed to it, we ſhall lay down an hypotheſis concerning it; and, on the footing of that hypotheſis, ſhall conſider whether it is to be taught or not. Let us then ſtate the queſtion thus: Suppoſing virtue to be in that order of things which belongs to the ſoul, is virtue, on this hypotheſis, to be taught, or not to be taught? In the firſt place, it is either a different kind of thing from knowledge, or a thing of the ſame kind with knowledge: and on each of theſe hypotheſes let us inquire, whether virtue is or is not to be taught, or (as we lately expreſſed it) recalled to mind; for whichever of theſe expreſſions we uſe, let it make no difference to us. The queſtion is then, whether virtue is to be taught. Now is it not evident to every one, that man is taught no other thing than knowledge?

MENO. To me it ſeems ſo.

SOC.

[1] In ſtating the queſtion, it muſt be ſuppoſed as evident, that the given ſide of the triangle is not greater than the diameter of the given circle. For if it be greater, no ſuch queſtion can be propoſed by any man; the abſurdity of it, or impoſſibility of the thing propoſed to be done, appears too plainly.—It ſhould ſeem alſo, that this given ſide is to be made the diameter of the circle to be drawn, by taking the middle point of this ſide for the centre. For thus, and thus only, can the circle properly be ſaid περιτεινεσθαι περι την δοθεισαν γραμμην, *to be drawn around* or about *the given ſide*. If this be granted; then, in the caſe which is put firſt (the poſſible one), that angle of the triangle, which is ſubtended by the given ſide, muſt be either (fig. 15) a right angle, or (fig. 16) an obtuſe angle: in the other (the impoſſible) caſe, that angle muſt be (fig. 17) acute. If the angle be ſuppoſed a right angle, then will the circle drawn be περιγραφομενον, *circumſcribed* about the triangle; and the triangle may alſo εγγραφεσθαι, be *inſcribed* within the equal given circle: for every angle of it would touch the circumference of that circle. Now in the caſe, firſt ſuppoſed by Plato, had he meant this only, we preſume he would have uſed thoſe very words of Euclid, περιγραφομενον and εγγραφεσθαι. For Euclid, the author of the Elements, was one of Plato's diſciples; and it is probable, beſides, that the terms of geometry were ſettled before the time of Plato. But if the angle in queſtion be ſuppoſed (fig. 18) an obtuſe angle, then though the triangle may εγγραφεσθαι, *be inſcribed* in a circle, whoſe diameter is greater than the ſide ſubtending the obtuſe angle; yet it cannot εγγραφεσθαι, *be inſcribed* (fig. 16) in a circle, whoſe diameter is equal to that ſide. However, it may properly enough be ſaid εντεθηναι, *to be extended within* ſuch a circle; becauſe the utmoſt extent of it is included within that circle. And juſt in the ſame manner, though ſuch a circle (fig. 16) cannot be ſaid, in ſpeaking ſtrictly, and according to Euclid's definition, περιγραφεσθαι, *to be circumſcribed* about it; yet is the circle περιτεινομενον, *ſtretched*

Soc. If virtue, therefore, be a certain kind of knowledge, it is evident that virtue is to be taught.

MENO. Undoubtedly.

Soc. We have quickly then diſpatched this part of the inquiry; and are fairly come to this concluſion, that if virtue be a thing of the ſame kind with knowledge, it is to be taught; otherwiſe not.

MENO. Very true.

Soc. Next after this, it ſeems, that we ſhould conſider whether virtue be knowledge or of a kind different from knowledge.

MENO. We ought, I think, in the next place to conſider this.

Soc. Well now; ſhall we ſuppoſe that virtue is a thing which is good; and ſhall we abide by this hypotheſis, laying it down for certain that virtue is ſomething good?

MENO. By all means.

Soc. Now if there be alſo any other good ſeparated from knowledge, then perhaps virtue may not be a certain kind of knowledge. But if there be no ſort of good which is not comprehended under knowledge, then a ſuſpicion that virtue was knowledge of a certain kind would be a juſt ſuſpicion.

MENO. What you ſay is true.

Soc. But further; is it not through virtue that we are good?

MENO. It is.

Soc. And if good, then advantageous. For all things that are good are advantageous: are they not?

MENO. They are.

Soc. Virtue then is a thing advantageous too.

ſtretched around it, and contains it. So by the Greek hiſtorians is a wall ſaid περιτεινεσθαι, around a camp or a city, when the wall ſurrounds and encloſes it, although no tent or houſe ſhould touch the wall. But Plato's meaning is, we think, put out of diſpute by the word ελλειπειν, which agrees not to a triangle that touches the circle by every one of its angles; and is compatible only to a triangle, one angle of which, at the leaſt, falls ſhort of the circumference of that (fig. 16) circle drawn around it. Ελλειπειν is alſo oppoſed to ὑπερβαλλειν. And in the latter caſe, ſuppoſed by Plato, where the whole triangle cannot be contained within the (fig. 17) circle drawn about the given ſide, the angle, which is ſubtended by this ſide, muſt be an acute angle; and the ſides, which contain this angle, will, to meet and form the angle, reach beyond the circumference of the circle.—S.

MENO. It follows of neceſſity from what we juſt now granted.

Soc. Now let us conſider what ſort of things thoſe are which profit and are advantageous to us; enumerating the particulars: health, we all ſay, and ſtrength, and beauty, and riches. Theſe things and others of like kind we call advantageous: do we not?

MENO. We do.

Soc. And ſay we not, that theſe very things are ſometimes hurtful to us? or do you pronounce otherwiſe?

MENO. No otherwiſe; I ſay the ſame.

Soc. Conſider now, what is the leading cauſe when any of theſe things profit us; and[1] what when they hurt us. Is it not, when right uſe preſides in the management of them, that they profit us, and when right uſe is wanting, that they hurt us?

MENO. Certainly ſo.

Soc. Further then, let us conſider things belonging to the ſoul. Do you admit that temperance is ſomething in the ſoul; and ſo of juſtice, and fortitude, and docility, and memory, and magnanimity, and all things of like kind?

MENO. I do.

Soc. Now conſider ſuch of theſe things, as you think not to conſiſt in knowledge, but to be of a kind different from knowledge. Do not theſe procure us ſometimes hurt, and ſometimes advantage? for inſtance, fortitude; unleſs fortitude is not where prudence is wanting: let our inſtance then be boldneſs. When a man is bold without reaſon or underſtanding, does he not incur miſchief? And when he is bold rationally and wiſely, does he not gain advantage?

MENO. It is true.

Soc. Is it not true of temperance alſo, and docility, that to a man who

[1] We have made our tranſlation here conformable to the text of Plato, as printed by Stephens, and explained in the margin of his edition, ὁταν τι, βλαπτει. But we ſuſpect an error in thoſe words, and that the right reading is, ὁταν μη, βλαπτει. For if Plato wrote τι, *wrong uſe* ought to be mentioned in what immediately follows. But it is not; and rightly not: becauſe wrong uſe is nothing poſitive, and can manage nothing; it is only the want of right uſe. As a crooked line is nothing certain or determinate; it is a deviation only from a ſtraight line.—S.

has

has learnt and is provided with them, if his ſoul at the ſame time be fraught with underſtanding, they are advantageous; but, if he wants underſtanding, they are hurtful?

MENO. Moſt undoubtedly.

SOC. In a word, all the abilities of the ſoul, whether they be of he active kind or of the paſſive, under the conduct of prudence, do they not tend to happineſs; but managed with imprudence, do they not produce the contrary effect?

MENO. It is probable they do.

SOC. If virtue then be one of thoſe things belonging to the ſoul, and if it be of neceſſity, as you ſay, always advantageous, virtue muſt be prudence: for we ſee, that all other things belonging to the ſoul are of themſelves neither advantageous nor hurtful; but let there be added to them imprudence or prudence, and they thus become either hurtful or advantageous. Now according to this reaſoning, virtue being always advantageous, muſt be ſome kind of prudence.

MENO. To me it ſeems ſo.

SOC. Now then as to thoſe other things, which we ſaid juſt now were ſometimes beneficial and ſometimes hurtful, riches, and the reſt of external goods; I aſk whether or no as prudence, preſiding in the ſoul, and governing her other powers and poſſeſſions, applies them to our advantage; and as imprudence, having the lead, turns them all to miſchief; whether in the ſame manner the ſoul, rightly uſing and adminiſtering thoſe outward things, employs them for our benefit, but by a wrong uſe renders them prejudicial and pernicious?

MENO. Moſt certainly.

SOC. And are not things adminiſtered and uſed rightly by a ſoul poſſeſſed of prudence; but amiſs and ill by a ſoul poſſeſſed with folly?

MENO. They are.

SOC. Thus then we may pronounce it to hold good univerſally: to man all external things [1] depend on his ſoul; and all things belonging to the ſoul itſelf depend on prudence for their being good and beneficial to him. Now

[1] In the Greek τα αλλα, all *other things*; all which are not within the ſoul. The ſtoical word we have uſed is exactly agreeable to the mind of Plato.—S.

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it follows from this reaſoning, that prudence is always advantageous. But did we not juſt now ſay the ſame of virtue too?

MENO. True.

SOC. We conclude, therefore, that prudence is virtue; either the whole of virtue, or ſome part at leaſt.

MENO. What has been ſaid ſeems to me, Socrates, to have been well ſaid.

SOC. If then it be ſo, the good are not good by nature.

MENO. It ſeems to me, they are not.

SOC. For then, this too would follow. If the good were good by nature we ſhould have, ſomewhere or other, perſons who knew which of our youth were good and virtuous in their natures; and theſe, when they had diſcovered them to us, we ſhould take and guard in the citadel, putting our ſeal on them more carefully than we ſhould on gold; that no perſon might corrupt them, and that when they arrived at the age of manhood, they might become uſeful to the ſtate.

MENO. It is likely, Socrates, that in that caſe this would be done.

SOC. Since the good, therefore, are not good by nature, whether are they good by teaching or not?

MENO. I think it now neceſſary to hold this in the affirmative. And it is plain, Socrates, that if virtue be knowledge, according to our hypotheſis before, then it may be taught.

SOC. Perhaps ſo, by Jove. But I fear we did amiſs in admitting that hypotheſis.

MENO. And yet very lately it ſeemed to be maintained fairly.

SOC. But I ſuſpect, it ought not only to have lately ſeemed to be maintained fairly, but to ſeem ſo at preſent, and hereafter too, if there be any thing in it ſound or faultleſs.

MENO. What is the matter now? in what reſpect do you find fault with it? and why doubt of its being true, that virtue is a kind of knowledge?

SOC. I will tell you, Meno. That virtue is to be taught, ſuppoſing it to be a ſcience, or ſome kind of knowledge, this poſition of ours I call not into queſtion, nor have any doubt of its being true. But conſider whether I appear not to have reaſon for doubting the truth of the ſuppoſition, that

virtue is a kind of knowledge. For anſwer me to this queſtion; whatever is taught, I ſpeak not of virtue only, but of every other ſubject of diſcipline or teaching, muſt there not be of neceſſity both teachers of it and ſcholars?

MENO. I think there muſt.

SOC. That thing, therefore, on the contrary, of which there are neither teachers nor ſcholars to be found, ſhould we not think rightly, in thinking it probable that it is not the ſubject of teaching?

MENO. True. But do you really think that no maſters are to be found who teach virtue?

SOC. Though I have often fought about, and inquired if there were any teachers of virtue, with my utmoſt endeavours I cannot find any. And yet I invite many perſons to join with me in the ſearch, eſpecially ſuch as I might preſume to have the moſt experience in that affair. And juſt now, Meno, in happy time, is this man [1] ſat down by us, who may be a party in our inquiry. And it ſhould ſeem reaſonable for us to make him a party: for, in the firſt place, he is the ſon of the wealthy and the wiſe Anthemion, a man who is become rich, not by accident, nor yet by legacy, as he has done to whom the riches of Polycrates [2] are now of late devolved, Iſmenias [3] of Thebes, but having acquired his wealth through his own wiſdom and induſtry; and then as to his other good qualities, he is a citizen who is thought neither contemptuous and inſolent, nor oſtentatious and giving

[1] Shewing Anytus to Meno, without mentioning his name, becauſe Meno was well acquainted with him, as being at that time entertained at his houſe. It is probable, that Anytus had now ſeated himſelf cloſe to Socrates, to catch at ſome words or other in his diſcourſe with Meno, for a better handle to the accuſation he was now meditating againſt him.—S.

[2] The Polycrates, whom we preſume to be here meant, was tyrant of Samos, ſo famous for ſucceeding in every affair that he engaged in, (as we learn from Herodotus, lib. iii.) that Lucian, in his Charon, calls him πανευδαιμων, *fortunate in all things*; and ſo immenſely rich, that the ſame Lucian, in his πλουτον, ranks him with Crœſus in that reſpect. The unhappy end he met with, in being murdered by one of his ſlaves, at the procurement of one of his courtiers, Orontes, a Perſian nobleman by birth, who ſeized on all his vaſt riches, was fortunate for Iſmenias, to whom at length they came by legacy.—S.

[3] Iſmenias was commander in chief of all the Theban forces, and ambaſſador from Thebes at the court of Artaxerxes; where he ingratiated himſelf ſo much by his addreſs, in complying with the ceremonial of that haughty court, without departing from the dignity of a free Grecian, that he not only met with ſucceſs in the public ends of his embaſſy, but obtained that prodigious increaſe

giving trouble to all about him, but behaves decently and conducts himſelf like a modeſt and frugal man. And beſides all this, he has educated and inſtructed his ſon here excellently well, in the opinion of the Athenian multitude; for they elect him to the higheſt offices in the ſtate. Such men it is right to make of our party, when we are inquiring after maſters who teach virtue, whether any are to be found and who they are. Join yourſelf therefore, Anytus, to us, to me, and Meno here, your gueſt at Athens, in our inquiry concerning virtue, who are the teachers of it. And conſider the queſtion thus; Suppoſe this Meno had an inclination to be made a good phyſician, and applied to us for our advice in the affair, to what maſters ſhould we ſend him? ſhould we not ſend him to the phyſicians?

ANY. By all means.

SOC. And to make him a good currier[1], ſhould we not ſend him to the curriers?

ANY. To be ſure.

SOC. And in all other ſubjects of inſtruction, ſhould we not take the ſame way?

ANY. Without doubt.

SOC. But concerning this point, let me aſk you another queſtion. In ſending him to the phyſicians, we ſay we ſhould do well, if we intended the making him a good phyſician. Now when we ſay this, do we not mean, that we ſhould act with prudence in ſending him, not to any who profeſs not the art of healing, but to thoſe who make it their profeſſion; and who, beſides, are paid for teaching[2] it to others; and thus, by this very acceptance of pay, take upon themſelves to teach any one who is willing to come and

increaſe of his private fortune, the inheritance of Orontes, left to him probably by the laſt of Orontes's deſcendants. That piece of addreſs, however, as related by Plutarch in his Life of Artaxerxes, and more fully by Ælian in his various hiſtories, was no other than ſuch as would have recommended him to our King James the Firſt. Not that we call in queſtion the perſonal merit of Iſmenias; for we ſuppoſe it to be with regard to this very merit, as well as to the reward it met with, that he is here ſet in contraſt with Anthemion.—S.

[1] A reflection this on the education of Anytus, ſlyly hinting that he was fit for nothing elſe. Plato, in this part of the dialogue, indulges a little his ſatirical genius, out of revenge for the death of Socrates, contrived and compaſſed by this Anytus.—S.

[2] It appears from this paſſage, that there were, in thoſe days, profeſſors of phyſic at Athens, ſuch as there are in modern univerſities.—S.

learn?

learn; I aſk you whether it is not from theſe conſiderations that we ſhould do well in ſending him to the phyſicians?

ANY. I anſwer, yes.

SOC. In the learning muſic too, and every other art, are not the ſame conſiderations juſt? Surely it is great want of underſtanding in us, if we are deſirous of having ſome perſon taught muſic, not to chooſe for his maſters ſuch as profeſs the teaching of the art, and the taking of money too for their teaching; but, inſtead of this, to give trouble to other people, expecting him to learn from thoſe who do not pretend to be teachers, and have not one ſcholar in that learning in which we expect our ſtudent ſhould be by them inſtructed. Think you not that ſuch an expectation would be very unreaſonable?

ANY. I do, by Jupiter; and a great ſign of ignorance too, beſides.

SOC. You ſay well. Now then you have an opportunity of conſidering together with me, and giving your advice about this gueſt of yours, Meno here. For he has often told me long ago [1], Anytus, that he wiſhed to acquire that wiſdom and virtue [2], through which men govern well both their families and the commonwealth; through which alſo they behave reſpectfully to their parents; and know how to entertain both their countrymen and foreigners, and what preſents to make them at their departure, in ſuch a manner as becomes a good man. Were we then to recommend to him any perſons [3] from whom he might learn this virtue, conſider whom we ſhould do right in recommending. Is it not clear that, agreeably to what we have juſt now ſaid in other caſes, they would be thoſe perſons who profeſs to be teachers of virtue, and publicly through all Greece offer themſelves to teach it to any one who deſires to learn; fixing the price of this their teaching, and demanding it as their juſt fee?

[1] This was probably in ſome former trip which Meno had made to Athens when a youth.—S.

[2] Here we have an account of the principal topics of praiſe and admiration in thoſe antient days.—S.

[3] In the Greek of this paſſage it is evident there is ſome word omitted. Stephens ſaw this, and in the margin of his edition conjectures the word διὰ to be wanting in the beginning of the ſentence. But as this conjecture is not ſatisfactory to us, we beg leave to offer to the future editors of Plato one or two of our own; viz. to read either διδαξοντας, or μαθησομενον, after αρετην, in the middle of the ſentence, or the latter of thoſe two words at the end of it.—S.

ANY. And what perſons, Socrates, do you mean?

SOC. You cannot be ignorant that I ſpeak of thoſe who are called ſophiſts[1].

ANY. O Hercules! ſpeak not ſo ſhamefully, Socrates. May none of my relations, friends, or acquaintance, fellow-citizens, or foreign gueſts, ever be ſeized with ſuch a madneſs as to go and be ſpoiled by thoſe men. For the bane and corruption thoſe men are of all who follow them.

SOC. How ſay you, Anytus? Are theſe the only men among thoſe who profeſs the knowledge of ſomething beneficial to human kind, ſo widely different from all the reſt, as not only not to improve and make better what is put into their hands as the others do, but on the contrary to corrupt and ſpoil it? and do they think fit openly to demand fees to be paid them for ſo doing? I cannot tell how I ſhould give credit to this account of yours. For I know one man in particular, Protagoras, to have acquired ſingly more riches from having this wiſdom, than Phidias has from his works ſo celebrated for their beauty, together with any ten other ſtatuaries beſides. It is a prodigy what you tell me; when the menders of old ſhoes and of old clothes could not eſcape a month from being publicly known, if they returned the clothes or ſhoes in a worſe condition than they received them; but doing ſo would be ſoon reduced to ſtarving; yet, that Protagoras ſhould corrupt and ſpoil his followers, and ſend them home worſe men than when they firſt came to him, without being diſcovered by all Greece, and this for above forty years. For I think he was near ſeventy years of age when he died, after having ſpent forty of them in the practice of his profeſſion. And during all that time he maintained a high reputation, which continues even to this day. And not only Protagoras met with this ſucceſs, but very many others: ſome of whom were prior to him in time, and ſome flouriſh at preſent. Now ſhall we ſuppoſe that they deceived and corrupted the youth, as you ſay they did, knowingly? or ſhall we ſuppoſe they did ſo unconſcious of it to themſelves? Shall we deem them to be ſo much out of their ſenſes, ſuch men, who are ſaid by ſome to be the wiſeſt of mankind?

[1] That Socrates in this ſpeaks ironically and in jeſt, the readers of Plato will of themſelves obſerve. But let them be pleaſed to obſerve further, how little Anytus could know of Socrates, of his way of thinking, or his common converſation, in taking him as he does to be here in earneſt.—S.

ANY.

ANY. They are far from being out of their ſenſes, Socrates: rather ſo are thoſe of the youth, who give them money for corrupting them; and ſtill more ſo than theſe youths are their relations in committing them to the guidance of ſuch men; but moſt of all ſo are thoſe cities which ſuffer ſuch men to come in amongſt them, and drive not away and baniſh every man, whether foreigner or citizen, who ſets up in any ſuch profeſſion.

SOC. Has any of the ſophiſts done you any injury, Anytus? or why elſe are you ſo angry with them?

ANY. I have never, by Jupiter, converſed with one of them myſelf; nor would I ſuffer ſo to do any perſon who belonged to me.

SOC. You have no experience at all then of thoſe men.

ANY. And never deſire to have any.

SOC. How then ſhould you know if there is any good or any harm in their teaching, when you have no experience of it at all?

ANY. Eaſily enough. For I know what ſort of fellows they are, whether I have had any experience or not of them and of their teaching.

SOC. You have the gift of divination perhaps, Anytus. For how otherwiſe you could know what they are, according to your own account, I ſhould much wonder. But we were not inquiring to what perſons Meno might go, and be made a bad man. As to theſe, if you will, let them be the ſophiſts. But now tell us of thoſe others: and do an act of kindneſs to this hereditary friend of yours, in directing him to what perſons in this great city he may go and be made eminent in that virtue which I gave you a deſcription of juſt now.

ANY. But why did not you direct him to ſuch perſons yourſelf?

SOC. What perſons I had imagined were the teachers of theſe duties I have told you. But I happen to have ſaid nothing to the purpoſe, as you inform me.

ANY. There is ſome truth however in that perhaps.

SOC. Now, therefore, do you in your turn tell him to whom of the Athenians he ſhould go. Name any one you chooſe.

ANY. What occaſion has he to hear any one man's name? For of the men of honour and virtue among the Athenians, there is not one, the firſt he meets with, who would not make him a better man than the ſophiſts would, if he will but hearken and be obſervant.

Soc. But did theſe men of honour and virtue become ſuch ſpontaneouſly, and without having learnt from any man to be what they are? and are they able to teach others what they were never taught themſelves?

Any. They, I preſume, learnt from thoſe who went before them, men of like honour and virtue. Or think you not that our city has produced many excellent men?

Soc. I think, Anytus, that in this city there are men excellent in political affairs, and that there have been others no leſs excellent before them. But were they good teachers of that political excellence? For it is this which happens to be the ſubject of our preſent debate: not whether men of honour and virtue are to be found at preſent in this city or not; nor whether ſuch were to be found here formerly: but whether virtue is to be taught or not. This we have been of a long time conſidering and inquiring; and in proſecuting the inquiry, we are fallen upon this queſtion, whether thoſe excellent men, either of theſe or of former days, knew how to impart, or to deliver down to others, that virtue in which they themſelves are ſo excellent; or whether it be impoſſible for man to deliver down or to impart virtue, and for men to receive it one from another. This it is which we have been long examining, I and Meno. Conſider the queſtion now in this manner, on the footing of your own argument. Would you not ſay that Themiſtocles [1] was a man of virtue?

Any. I would; and that he was ſo the moſt of all men too.

Soc. And would you not then ſay, that if ever any man could teach his own virtue to another, Themiſtocles was a good teacher?

Any. I ſuppoſe he was, had he had a mind to teach.

Soc. But do you ſuppoſe that he had no mind to have ſome others made men of honour and virtue, and eſpecially his own ſon? or do you imagine that he maliciouſly and deſignedly withheld from him that virtue in which he himſelf was excellent? Did you never hear that Themiſtocles taught [2] his

[1] For the character of this excellent general and ſtateſman ſee Plutarch, who has written his life.—S.

[2] Plutarch had in view this paſſage of Plato, where, in reckoning up the children of Themiſtocles, and coming to Cleophantus, he ſays, ου και πλατων ὁ φιλοσοφος ὡς ἱππεως αριστου, ταλλα δ' ουδενος αξιου γενομενου, μνημονευει, *that he is mentioned alſo by Plato the Philoſopher, as an excellent horſeman, but in other reſpects worthleſs.*—S.

ſon

ſon Cleophantus [1] to be an excellent horſeman? and that his ſon attained to ſuch a pitch of excellence, that he would keep himſelf for a long time ſtanding upright upon horſes in full ſpeed, and in this ſituation would throw his javelin; and performed many other ſurpriſing feats [2] of horſemanſhip, in which his father had him inſtructed; and that he made him ſkilled in all other accompliſhments, ſuch as depend on having had good maſters? Have you heard all this from elderly people who remember it?

ANY. I have.

SOC. The diſpoſition of his ſon therefore is not to be found fault with as untowardly and unteachable.

ANY. Perhaps it is not.

SOC. But what ſay you to this? That Cleophantus the ſon of Themiſtocles was a ſkilful and an excellent man in the ſame way as his father was, have you ever heard this from any man, either young or old?

ANY. No, truly.

SOC. Do we imagine then that he choſe to breed him up in ſuch ſtudies and exerciſes as he did; and yet, in that wiſdom and ſkill in which he himſelf excelled, to make him, his own ſon, not at all a better man than his neighbours, if virtue could be taught?

ANY. That indeed is, perhaps, not to be ſuppoſed.

SOC. Such a teacher of virtue now is this teacher of yours, a man whom you yourſelf acknowledge to have been one of the beſt men of the laſt age. And now let us conſider another, Ariſtides [3], the ſon of Lyſimachus. Do you not agree that he was a man of virtue?

ANY. I do entirely.

[1] In the Greek of this ſentence the word *ειναι* is plainly dropped, and ought to be reſtored in all future editions of Plato. In the Dialogue *περι αρετης*, attributed by ſome to Æſchines the Socratic, but which is almoſt copied from this part of the Meno, the neceſſary word *ειναι* is not omitted. It is ſtrange that neither Cornaro nor Stephens obſerved ſo groſs an omiſſion in the manuſcripts of Plato.—S.

[2] It is obſervable that Plato here uſes the plural number: from whence we may conclude that the ſame wonderful performances in horſemanſhip were then taught at Athens which have lately been exhibited in our own country, ſuch as the ſtepping or ſkipping upright from horſe to horſe in full gallop, &c.—S.

[3] How great and how good a ſtateſman Ariſtides was appears in Plutarch's Life of him.—S.

Soc. And did he not give his ſon Lyſimachus [1] the beſt education to be had at Athens, ſo far as depended on maſters and teachers? and do you think he has made him a better man than common? You have had ſome acquaintance with him, and you ſee what ſort of a man he is [2]. Let another inſtance, if you pleaſe, be Pericles [3], a man ſo magnanimouſly wiſe [4]. You know that he bred up two ſons, Paralus and Xanthippus [5].

ANY. I do.

Soc. Theſe, as you know alſo, he taught horſemanſhip ſo as to make them equal in that ſkill to any of the Athenians. In muſic too, and gymnaſtic, and all other accompliments which depend on art, he inſtructed them ſo well that none excelled them. But had he no mind to make them good men? I believe he wanted not inclination ſo to do [6]; but I ſuſpect it to be impoſſible to teach virtue. And that you may not imagine that I ſpeak only of a few, and thoſe of the meaneſt birth [7] among the Athenians, and ſuch as

[1] It was common amongſt the Athenians to give the eldeſt ſon the name of his grandfather; ſo that two names were continued alternately in the ſame family.—S.

[2] We find nothing more of this Lyſimachus, than what we read in Plutarch, that the Athenians, out of reſpect to the memory of his father, who died poor, gave him a little landed eſtate, a ſum of money in hand, and a ſmall penſion; probably finding him unfit for any office in the ſtate. He is one of the ſpeakers, however, in Plato's Dialogue called Laches: in which he complains that his father, Ariſtides, had too much indulged him in leading an idle and luxurious life, and, giving himſelf up wholly to ſtate affairs, had neglected to cultivate his ſon's mind and to form his manners.—S.

[3] Plutarch has written the life of this conſummate politician, this truly great man.—S.

[4] In the Greek ατω μεγαλοπρεπως σοφον. With what propriety this epithet is beſtowed on him may be ſeen in Plutarch.—S.

[5] Concerning Paralus, nothing is recorded by Plutarch to his diſadvantage. Indeed he only mentions his name, and that he, as well as his brother and ſiſters, died of the plague, that great plague deſcribed in ſo lively a manner by Thucydides the hiſtorian. But as to Xanthippus, we learn from the great biographer, how unworthy he was of ſuch a father as Pericles, and how diſreſpectful and undutiful to him was his conduct.—S.

[6] This inſtance of Pericles is produced for the ſame purpoſe as it is here, by Plato in his Protagoras.—S.

[7] It is here plainly intimated, that the three great men, whom he had juſt before celebrated, were of mean extraction. Of Themiſtocles this is expreſsly confirmed by Plutarch, who ſays that he was of an obſcure family. Of Ariſtides it is probable, from the great poverty under which he laboured all his life-time. But of Pericles, Plutarch reports, on the contrary, that his mother was of a conſiderable family, and his father a man of great perſonal merit.—S.

wanted

wanted abilities for ſuch an affair, conſider that Thucydides [1] alſo bred up two ſons, Meleſias and Stephanus [2], giving them a good education in all other reſpects, and particularly in the exerciſe of wreſtling, in which they excelled all their countrymen. For he had one of his ſons inſtructed by Xanthius, the other by Eudorus [3]; and theſe two maſters, in the art of wreſtling, were thought to be the beſt of the age. Do you not remember this?

ANY. I remember that I have heard ſo.

SOC. Is it not evident then, that he would never have taught his children thoſe things, the teaching of which muſt have put him to expenſe, and, at the ſame time, have neglected what would have coſt him nothing, the teaching them to be good men, if ſuch a thing was poſſible to be taught? But Thucydides, perhaps it may be imagined, was a mean inconſiderable perſon, who had but few friends among the Athenians or their allies. It was not ſo. For he was of a noble houſe [4], and had great power in Athens, and much weight in the other Grecian ſtates [5]. So that, if his ſons could have made good

[1] Thucydides, here mentioned by Plato, was a different perſon from the hiſtorian of the ſame name. Plutarch tells us, and it is confirmed by Marcellinus, that he was a great politician and haranguer in the forum, and was ſet up by the ariſtocratical party in the commonwealth to oppoſe Pericles, who favoured the other ſide, the democratic. It is highly probable that he was the ſame Thucydides who, as we are told by the celebrated writer of the Hiſtory of the Peloponneſian War, was one of the commanders of the Athenian fleet ſent to Samos, to ſecond that which had been ſent thither before, under the command of Pericles; for the ſon of Meleſias ſeems to have been a proper perſon to counterpoiſe the exceſſive weight of the power of Pericles, and to pleaſe and conciliate to the Athenians the ariſtocratic party among the Samians.—S.

[2] This Meleſias is introduced by Plato in his Laches, as joining Lyſimachus in lamenting his want of the better parts of education, and in complaining of his father Thucydides's too great indulgence to him.—S.

[3] In all the editions of Plato he is called Euodorus; a name, we believe, not to be met with elſewhere. We have therefore not ſcrupled to follow the tranſlation of Cornarius, who, we preſume, read in his manuſcript Eudorus, a name to be found in Homer.—S.

[4] Of the greatneſs of his family, we know not of any thing appearing on record expreſsly to confirm this paſſage. But his alliance with Cimon, the ſon of Miltiades, makes it probable: for it is not uſual for either men or women, of noble anceſtry, to intermarry with the baſe-born. Now Plutarch ſays of this Thucydides, that he was ἀνεψιὸς Κίμωνος, *a near relation of Cimon's by marriage.*—S.

[5] This is very probable, if he was, as Plutarch relates, εἷς τῶν καλῶν καγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν, *one of the men of honour and virtue* in that age. Plutarch, in another place, calls him ἀνδρὰ σωφρονικὸν, *a man of ſound underſtanding.* Steſimbrotus the Thracian, alſo wrote a treatiſe, as we are informed by

good men by teaching, he might eaſily have found out ſome perſon to make them ſo, either one of his own countrymen, or a foreigner, if he himſelf wanted leiſure, on account of his public employments and his adminiſtration of the ſtate. But I fear, friend Anytus, that virtue is a thing impoſſible to be taught [1].

ANY. You ſeem to me, Socrates, to be ready at abuſe, and to ſpeak ill of others with great facility. But I would adviſe you, if you chooſe to hearken to me, to be more cautious, and to take care of yourſelf. For that, in other cities too, it is perhaps an eaſy matter to do a man a miſchief, as well as a piece of ſervice; but here, at Athens, it is ſo more eſpecially [2]; and, if I miſtake not, you are [3] ſenſible of it yourſelf [4].

by Athenæus, p. 589, concerning Themiſtocles, Thucydides, and Pericles. From the company, therefore, in which he is placed, both by Plato and Steſimbrotus, it appears how very conſiderable a perſon he was accounted.——We have written theſe laſt notes to prevent its being thought that Socrates ſpeaks here of Thucydides ironically, and really meaning to diſparage him. But we cannot conceive what, beſide malice, could darken the underſtanding of Athenæus to ſuch a degree, as to make him imagine that Plato in this dialogue ſpeaks ill of and vilifies Pericles and Themiſtocles, thoſe greateſt of the Grecians, ſays that writer, p. 506. Anytus, however, as we ſhall preſently ſee, was ſmitten with the ſame blindneſs, and perhaps from the ſame cauſe, the malignity of his own temper.—S.

[1] Meaning that it is impoſſible for thoſe to learn it who want the εὐφυια, a truly good natural diſpoſition; and impoſſible alſo for thoſe to teach it who cannot teach it ſcientifically, for want of the principles of wiſdom, that is, impoſſible for any but true philoſophers. For this is what Plato would inſinuate in all this latter part of the dialogue.—S.

[2] Becauſe of the power of the populace, who were eaſily led away by ſome favourite demagogue. On which account Socrates, as Ælian reports in his Various Hiſtorys, b. iii. ch. xvii. likened the Athenian democracy to a tyranny, the arbitrary government of one man; or to a monarchy (abſolute), where the legiſlative power is in the hands of one: ſo far was it from an equal republic or commonwealth, which ſecures the rights, both natural and acquired, of every citizen; and is equitable alike to all.——Within three years before the death of Socrates, an oligarchy was forced upon the Athenians by their Lacedæmonian conquerors. Then was that great Leviathan, with the demagogic head, thrown to the ground, and a monſter with thirty heads tyrannized in his room, ſlaughtered thouſands without even pretence of law, and favoured only its own abettors.——The time of this dialogue ſeems to be, either towards the end of the oligarchic tyranny, or ſoon after the reſtoration of the democracy: what Anytus here ſays is equally applicable to both.—S.

[3] Hinting at the dangers which Socrates had incurred under both governments, by a manly oppoſition to the acts of tyranny committed in each, and by a ſtrict adherence to the antient laws of his country, as interpreted and explained by the eternal laws of juſtice and equity.—S.

[4] Anytus, having finiſhed his menacing ſpeech, appears to have turned himſelf away from Socrates

Soc. Anytus ſeems to me to be angry, Meno. And I am not at all ſurpriſed at it. For, in the firſt place, he ſuppoſes that I ſpoke ill of thoſe perſons I mentioned: and then he takes himſelf[1] to be ſuch another as they were. Now if this man ſhould ever come to know what it is to ſpeak ill of others, he will ceaſe to be angry: but at preſent he is ignorant of it. Do you therefore anſwer now, and tell me; are there not amongſt us men of honour and virtue?

MENO. Certainly there are.

Soc. But are theſe men willing to offer themſelves to the youth to teach them virtue? do they profeſs the teaching of it? or do they agree that virtue is a thing which can be taught?

MENO. No, by Jupiter, Socrates, they do not. For you may hear them ſometimes maintaining that it may be taught, at other times that it cannot be taught.

Soc. Shall we ſay then that theſe men are teachers of virtue, when they have not ſettled ſo much as this point, whether virtue can be taught or not?

MENO. I think we ſhould not, Socrates.

Soc. Well; but what ſay you of thoſe ſophiſts, the only perſons who profeſs to teach virtue, think you that they are the teachers?

MENO. It is for this, O Socrates, that I eſpecially admire Gorgias; for that one ſhall never hear him making any ſuch profeſſions, or taking upon himſelf an office of that kind. On the contrary, he laughs at thoſe others whenever he hears them engaging to teach men to be virtuous; and thinks it the office of a ſophiſt only to make men great orators and powerful in ſpeaking.

Soc. You do not think then that the ſophiſts neither are the teachers of virtue?

MENO. I know not what to ſay, Socrates, to this point. They have the ſame effect on me as they have on moſt other people; ſometimes I think they are, and ſometimes that they are not.

Socrates, but not to have withdrawn from the ſcene of converſation, which is continued on between Socrates and Meno to the end of the dialogue.—S.

[1] That is, he takes himſelf to be a great man like them; μεγαλοφρονων εφ' εαυτῳ, *thinking highly of himſelf*, ſays Laertius, in his Life of Socrates, referring to the Meno; meaning undoubtedly this paſſage, and rightly explaining it.—S.

Soc. Do you know, that not only yourſelf and thoſe others, who are verſed in civil affairs, ſometimes think that virtue is acquired through teaching, and ſometimes that it is not; do you know that Theognis the poet is of the ſame mind, and ſpeaks exactly in the ſame manner?

MENO. In what verſes of his?

Soc. In his Elegiacs [1]; where he ſays,

> Mix evermore with men, through virtue, great;
> And near to theirs be placed thy happy ſeat:
> Still be companion of their board and bowl,
> And ſtill to what delights them bend thy ſoul.
> For good through ſweet contagion ſhall be caught,
> And virtue be by living manners taught.
> But converſe of bad men is folly's ſchool;
> Where ſenſe, taught backward, ſinks into a fool.

Do you perceive, that in theſe verſes he ſpeaks of virtue as if it might be acquired through teaching?

MENO. It appears ſo to me.

Soc. And yet in other verſes [2] a little farther on he ſays,

> To fools their wiſdom could the wiſe impart;
> Could underſtanding be infus'd by art;
> Or could right thought into the mind be driv'n;
> For this how oft would great rewards be giv'n?

That is, to thoſe men who were complete maſters in this ſkill. And again he ſays,

[1] An elegiac verſe, properly ſpeaking, is a pentameter, a verſe conſiſting of four feet and two half feet, equally divided; two feet and a half conſtituting the former part of the verſe, and two feet and a half the latter. But very few poems were ever written purely in this metre. Thoſe verſes were commonly called elegiac, where hexameter and pentameter verſes were uſed alternately; ſuch as the verſes cited here by Plato. They are found in that collection of the verſes of Theognis, extant at this day, under the title of Γνωμαι ελεγιακαι, beginning at verſe 33. One would imagine, from the laſt queſtion of Meno and this anſwer of Socrates, that Theognis wrote ſome other poems in a different metre. Fabricius accordingly ſays, that Γνωμαι were written by Theognis in 2800 verſes of heroic meaſure: and cites Suidas as his authority for this. We preſume that he read thus in ſome manuſcript or old edition of Suidas: but in Kuſter's edition we read elegiac and not heroic.—S.

[2] The verſes here cited, and thoſe which follow, begin at line 434 of Theognis.—S.

Ne'er

Ne'er did bad ſon from virtuous father riſe,
If duly nurtur'd by his precepts wiſe.
But whate'er culture careful we beſtow,
Ne'er in bad ſoil can ſeed of virtue grow.

Do you obſerve, that in ſpeaking again upon the ſame ſubject, he contradicts himſelf, and ſays the very reverſe of what he had ſaid before?

MENO. So it appears.

SOC. Can you tell me now of any other thing, where they who profeſs to be teachers are held by all men to be ſo far from teaching it to others, as to be ignorant of it themſelves, and to have no merit in that very thing which they pretend to teach; and where thoſe who are by all men allowed to be excellent themſelves, ſometimes ſay it may be taught, and ſometimes that it cannot? Thoſe who are ſo unſettled and perplexed about any ſubject whatever, would you ſay that they are the proper maſters and teachers of it?

MENO. By Jupiter, not I.

SOC. If then neither the ſophiſts, nor thoſe who are themſelves excellent men, are teachers of virtue, it is plain there can be no others beſide.

MENO. I think there can be none.

SOC. And if no teachers, then no ſcholars neither.

MENO. I think what you ſay is true.

SOC. But we agreed before, that a thing in which neither teachers of it nor ſcholars are to be found, is not the ſubject of teaching, and cannot be taught.

MENO. We were agreed in this.

SOC. Of virtue now there appear no where any teachers.

MENO. Very true.

SOC. And if no teachers of it, then no ſcholars in it neither.

MENO. It appears ſo.

SOC. Virtue therefore muſt be a thing which cannot be taught.

MENO. It ſeems ſo, if we have conſidered the matter rightly. And hence, Socrates, I am led to wonder, whether any men really good are ever to be found or not; and if there are, by what means they became ſuch.

SOC. We are in danger, O Meno! of being found, you and I, both of us, very inſufficient reaſoners on the point in queſtion; and you not to have been fully inſtructed by Gorgias, nor I by Prodicus. Above all things

therefore ought we to apply our minds to ourſelves; and to ſearch out a perſon who by ſome certain means would make us better men. I ſay this with regard to the inquiry now before us; in which we have been ſo fooliſh as not to conſider, that it is not under the conduct of ſcience that the affairs of men are adminiſtered rightly and well; or, if we ſhould not chooſe to grant that, at leaſt that it is not under the conduct of ſcience only, but of ſome other thing alſo which is different from ſcience; and perhaps the knowledge of the means by which men become good hath eſcaped us.

MENO. How ſo, Socrates?

SOC. I will tell you how. That thoſe men who are good and virtuous muſt alſo be advantageous to us we have agreed rightly; and that it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe. Is not this true?

MENO. Certainly.

SOC. And that they are advantageous to us on this account, becauſe they conduct our affairs rightly, ſhould we not do well in admitting this?

MENO. Without doubt.

SOC. But we ſeem not to have done well in granting, that unleſs a man be prudent, it is not poſſible for him to conduct affairs rightly.

MENO. What mean you now by the word rightly?

SOC. I will tell you what I mean. If a man who knew the way to Lariſſa [1], or wherever elſe you pleaſe, were to walk at the head of others whom he had undertaken to conduct thither, would he not conduct them well and rightly?

MENO. Without doubt.

SOC. And how would it be were a man to undertake this who had only a right opinion about the way, but had never gone thither himſelf, nor had any certain knowledge of the way, would not he alſo conduct them rightly?

MENO. To be ſure.

SOC. And ſo long as he had any how a right opinion of the way, which the other man knew with certainty, he would not in the leaſt be a worſe guide, though only ſurmiſing juſtly, and not knowing clearly, than the other with all his perfect knowledge?

[1] The road to Lariſſa is made the inſtance, becauſe moſt familiar to Meno, who was of Pharſalus, a city of Theſſaly, near to Lariſſa, the chief city of all that part of the country, and with which Meno was particularly well acquainted.—S.

MENO.

MENO. Not at all worſe.

SOC. Right opinion, therefore, with regard to right action, is not at all a worſe guide than ſcience or perfect knowledge. And this it is which we omitted juſt now in conſidering the nature of virtue; when we ſaid that prudence only or knowledge led to right action; it is this, right opinion.

MENO. It ſeems ſo.

SOC. Right opinion therefore is not at all of leſs adantage to man than certain knowledge.

MENO. In this reſpect, however, Socrates, it is; in that he who has a perfect knowledge of his end, would always attain to it; but the man who had only a right opinion of it, ſometimes would attain to it, and ſometimes would not.

SOC. How ſay you? would not the man, who had a right opinion of it, always attain to it, ſo long as he entertained that right opinion?

MENO. It appears to me that he muſt. And therefore I wonder, Socrates, this being the caſe, on what account it is that ſcience is ſo much more valuable than right opinion; and indeed in what reſpect it is that they differ at all one from the other.

SOC. Do you know now why you wonder? or ſhall I tell you?

MENO. By all means tell me.

SOC. It is becauſe you never conſidered attentively thoſe images [1] made by Dædalus. But perhaps you have none of them in your country.

MENO. With what view is it now that you ſpeak of theſe images?

SOC. Becauſe theſe, if they are not faſtened, run away from us, and become fugitives: but if they are faſtened, they abide by us.

MENO. Well; and what then?

SOC. To have in one's poſſeſſion any of theſe works of his looſe and unfaſtened, is like to the being maſter of a runaway ſlave, a matter of little value, becauſe not permanent: but when faſtened and ſecured, they are things of great value; for indeed they are works of great beauty. But you aſk, with what view it is that I ſpeak of theſe images. I anſwer,—It is with a view to true opinions. For true opinions alſo, ſo long as they abide

[1] Theſe were ſmall figures of the gods, reported to have in them the power of ſelf motion.—S.

by us, are valuable goods, and procure for us all good things: but they are not diſpoſed to abide with us a long time; for they ſoon ſlip away out of our ſouls, and become fugitives. Hence are they of ſmall value to a man, until he has faſtened and bound them down, by deducing them rationally from their cauſe [1]. And this, my friend Meno, is reminiſcence, as we before agreed. But when they are thus bound and faſtened, in the firſt place they become truly known, and in conſequence of this they become ſtable and abide with us. Now it is on this very account that ſcience is a thing more valuable than right opinion; and in this reſpect it is they differ, in that the parts of ſcience only are faſtened one to another, and bound down together.

MENO. By Jupiter, Socrates, they are ſimilar to ſome ſuch things as thoſe to which you reſemble them.

SOC. Nay, for my part, I ſpeak thus not from knowledge; but only from conjecture. But that right opinion and ſcience are two different things, this, as it appears to me, I do not merely imagine or conjecture. For if I were to profeſs the knowledge of any things whatever (and there are but

[1] In the Greek, αιτιας λογισμῳ, *by a rational account of the cauſe*; or by proving, how and from what cauſe it is that they are true. The cauſe of every truth is ſome other truth, higher and more general, in which it is included. To thoſe who have conſidered the method, naturally uſed by the mind in reaſoning, commonly but improperly called the art of reaſoning, this will appear from hence;—A propoſition is an opinion of the mind expreſſed in words, which affirm or deny ſome one thing to belong to ſome other. If the propoſition, that is, if the opinion be true, it admits of a rational proof. And all rational proof conſiſts in ſhowing or exhibiting of ſome general truth, or true propoſition, in which is virtually included the propoſition to be proved. In ſyllogiſtical reaſoning (the only way of reaſoning upwards, or tracing any truths from their cauſes) that truth, or true propoſition, which is more general than the propoſition to be proved, is called the major propoſition on that very account, becauſe it is of larger extent, or more general than the propoſition to be proved, the concluſion; containing in it the truth of that concluſion, together with many other truths, collateral to one another, and all of them ſubordinate to, or leſs general than, the major propoſition itſelf. In the ſame manner, the truth of this major and more general propoſition is to be traced out and deduced from another propoſition ſtill more general; and ſo on till we arrive at ſome truth ſelf-evident, apparently the cauſe from which is deduced the truth of thoſe other propoſitions leſs general, which gradually and in order lead the mind up to it; the cauſe why they are true. If many ſubordinate truths ariſe out of one and the ſame general truth, as they all equally depend from this, ſo by means of this too they are all connected together, like the collateral chains, mentioned in the way of ſimilitude (though to another ſubject) by Plato in his Io, depending all from the iron ring at top faſtened to the magnet.—S.

a few

a few things which I could profeſs to know), this I would ſet down for one of them [1].

MENO. You are entirely right, Socrates [2].

Soc. Well; and am I not right in this alſo, that true opinion, having the conduct of any work or action whatever, executes her office full as well as ſcience?

MENO. In this too I think you are in the right.

Soc. Right opinion, therefore, is a thing not at all inferior to ſcience, nor leſs beneficial with regard to the execution of any work [3], or the performance of any action: nor is the man, who has right opinions, inferior (in this reſpect) to the man of ſcience.

MENO. Very true.

Soc. And we agreed before, that a good man was beneficial or advantageous to others.

MENO. We did.

Soc. Since, therefore, it is not through ſcience only that men have been good and beneficial to their country (if any ſuch men there may have been),

[1] This ſentence, together with that which immediately precedes it, ſeems to us the right key to open that part of the converſation of Socrates with his friends, in which he was generally ſuppoſed to diſſemble his great knowledge. We find him here diſclaiming the knowledge of thoſe things which are not the proper objects of knowledge, but of imagination and opinion only; and ſuch are almoſt all the ſubjects even of philoſophical converſation: and we find him at the ſame time openly avowing, not with irony, but with much ſerioufneſs, that he knew the different nature of thoſe two judgments of the ſoul, ſcience and opinion; one of which is from mind, the other from ſenſe. Now if all ſcience depends on knowing the principle of ſcience, if this principle is mind, and if the human ſoul partakes of mind, it follows, that the human mind knowing herſelf, knows in what ſhe differs from the lower faculties of the ſoul, and how her own judgment of things, which is ſcience, differs from theirs, which amounts to no more than mere opinion: it follows, that ſhe knows what ſcience is, and conſequently knows what falls ſhort of it: it follows alſo, that ſhe knows what the objects are of ſcience, and what thoſe of opinion; having and contemplating the former ſort in herſelf; but rejecting and diſclaiming the latter, as not belonging to her province. Accordingly we ſhall find that Socrates, who knew himſelf, his true ſelf, his mind, on the one hand never pretended, as ignorant men are apt to do, to know things which cannot be known; nor on the other hand, affected not to know the nature of the human mind, the principles of it, or any of its objects, ſo far as they are communicated to particular minds from and by mind univerſal.—S.

[2] That is, in diſtinguiſhing ſcience from right opinion.—S.

[3] This is becauſe right opinion principally verges to ſenſibles; but ſcience to intelligibles.—T.

but

but alſo by means of right opinion; and ſince neither of theſe is with men by nature, neither ſcience nor right opinion; or [1] do you think that either of them comes by nature?

MENO. Not I.

Soc. Since then, they are not by nature, by nature neither is it that men could have been good and virtuous.

MENO. Certainly not.

Soc. Seeing now, that virtue comes not by nature, we ſhould, in the next place, after this conſider if it comes through teaching.

MENO. To be ſure we ſhould.

Soc. Did it not appear to us both, that if virtue was wiſdom, then it came through teaching?

MENO. It did.

Soc. And that if virtue came through teaching, then virtue would be wiſdom?

MENO. Very true.

Soc. And that if there were any teachers of virtue, virtue would in that caſe be a thing that came through teaching; otherwiſe not?

MENO. Juſt ſo.

Soc. But we have agreed that there were no teachers of it.

[1] Juſt here, in all the editions of the Greek, are added theſe two words, *ουτ επιϰτητα, neither are they acquired.* Which part of the ſentence is apparently falſe: for ſcience and right opinion are both of them acquired; ſcience through teaching; and right opinion through other adventitious means: but ſuppoſing it ever ſo true with regard to right opinion; and ſuppoſing alſo, that the word *επιϰτητα* means in this place *acquired through teaching*; it would be impertinent to this part of the argumentation, and premature: for Socrates is here proving only this, that virtue comes not by nature: and this he proves by ſhowing that all men who act rightly and well, act thus either from ſcience or from right opinion; neither of which principles of action men have from nature. It is not till afterwards, in the next place, that he proves virtue not to be acquired through teaching. With great judgment, therefore, did Cornarius, in his tranſlation, take no notice of thoſe two words; and, in his Eclogæ, has with great probability ſuppoſed the words *αλλ' επιϰτητα* to have been an antient ſcholium written in the margin, and by ſubſequent tranſcribers, as happened frequently, aſſumed into the text; and afterwards the word *αλλ'* to have been changed into *ουτ* by ſome later copyiſt, not attending to the courſe of the argumentation, but to the concluſion only. The neceſſity of the omiſſion is ſo clear, that we wonder not ſo much at the acuteneſs of Cornarius in ſeeing it, as at the blindneſs of Stephens in not ſeeing but expreſsly denying it.—S.

MENO.

MENO. True.

Soc. We are agreed, therefore, that virtue comes not through teaching; and that virtue is not wiſdom.

MENO. Certainly ſo.

Soc. But we agreed beſides, that virtue was ſomething good.

MENO. True.

Soc. And that whatever conducted affairs rightly was a thing good and ſerviceable to us.

MENO. We did clearly.

Soc. And that affairs are conducted rightly by theſe two things only, true opinion and ſcience; poſſeſſed of either of which two, a man makes a good leader and guide. Whatever comes from fortune is not the effect of human conduct. But ſo far as man has to do in conducting rightly, it is only through one of theſe means, true opinion and ſcience.

MENO. I think ſo.

Soc. Now ſince virtue comes not through teaching, it is not the effect of ſcience.

MENO. It appears that it is not.

Soc. Of the two only things then, which are good and ſerviceable to man's right conduct, we have thrown one out of the queſtion; having agreed that ſcience is not the thing through which civil affairs are adminiſtered and conducted rightly.

MENO. I think it is not.

Soc. Not therefore through any wiſdom, nor as being wiſe, did ſuch men govern in the ſtate; ſuch as Themiſtocles, and the reſt, whom Anytus here juſt now recounted. And for this very reaſon they were not capable of making others to be ſuch men as themſelves; becauſe it was not ſcience that made them what they were.

MENO. The caſe, O Socrates, ſeems to be as you repreſent it.

Soc. If then it is not ſcience, it follows that it muſt be the other thing which remains of the two, namely, right opinion, through which public affairs are adminiſtered rightly by our ſtateſmen and politicians; men who, in point of wiſdom, are not at all ſuperior to the oracle ſingers and divine prophets. For theſe alſo utter many true ſayings, but have no real knowledge of any one thing they utter.

MENO. I ſuſpect this to be the caſe.

SOC. Now do not thoſe men, O Meno, deſerve the character of divine men, who either ſpeak or act aright in many things of great importance, without any intellectual knowledge of the ſubjects concerning which they ſpeak or act?

MENO. By all means do they.

SOC. Rightly then ſhould we call thoſe men divine, whom we juſt now mentioned, the oracle ſingers and the prophets, and all who are inſpired by the Muſes. Nor at all leſs divine men than theſe ſhould we ſay that the politicians are, no leſs enthuſiaſts, inſpired divinely, and poſſeſſed by the Divinity, when in their ſpeeches they direct aright many and great affairs, without any real knowledge of the ſubjects they are ſpeaking of.

MENO. Certainly we ſhould.

SOC. And accordingly the women, you know, Meno, call men of virtue by the name of divine men. And the Lacedæmonians, when they celebrate with encomiums any man of virtue, are uſed to ſay of him that he is a divine man.

MENO. And they appear, O Socrates, to ſpeak juſtly too. And yet, perhaps, Anytus here is offended at what you ſay.

SOC. I give myſelf no manner of concern about it. With him, Meno, we ſhall have ſome diſcourſe at another time. But if we, at this time, during all this converſation, have purſued our inquiries and reaſonings aright, virtue can neither come by nature, nor yet through teaching; but to thoſe with whom it is, it muſt come by a divine portion or allotment, without the intelligence or true knowledge of it; unleſs amongſt the politicians there ſhould be found ſome perſon capable of making another man a good politician. But if there ſhould, he might almoſt be ſaid to be ſuch a one amongſt the living, as Homer tells us that Tireſias is amongſt the dead; where, ſpeaking of him and of the reſt who are in Hades, he ſays [1],

> Fill'd is he only with diſcerning mind;
> The reſt flit, empty ſhadows, dark and blind.

Exactly the ſame pre-eminence hath ſuch a man; being as it were the

[1] In his Odyſſey, lib. x. ver. 495.

truth

truth and ſubſtance of things, compared with ſhadows [1], in reſpect of virtue.

MENO. What you ſay, O Socrates, ſeems to me to be in the higheſt degree juſt.

SOC. From this reaſoning then, Meno, it appears to us, that ſuch as are poſſeſſed of virtue, have it as a divine portion or allotment to them. But on this point we ſhall then arrive at certainty, when, previous to our inquiries by what means it is that virtue comes to men, we ſet about ſearching firſt, what the eſſence is of virtue.——But it is now time for me to go ſomewhere elſe. And do you, ſince you are perſuaded yourſelf of the truth of thoſe concluſions, the reſult of our inquiries, perſuade your friend Anytus to believe them alſo. For he may thus be ſoftened and become milder; and you, by thus perſuading him, may poſſibly do a piece of ſervice to your country.

[1] It is obvious to be ſeen, that this is a metaphor taken from the ſimile here uſed, of Tireſias and the reſt of the ghoſts in Hades; or an application of the ſimile to that which it is brought to illuſtrate in terms uſed properly in the ſimile, but metaphorically in the application. For the application of the ſimile is this:—As all the other ghoſts in Hades are to Tireſias, ſo are men of right opinion only, void of ſcientific principles, to men of true ſcience, men who are knowing in thoſe principles. In the ſimile, the common herd of ghoſts are unreal, unſubſtantial ſhades, or ſhadows, compared with Tireſias, who therefore, with reſpect to them, is real ſubſtance. In the ſubject, reſembled to this ſimile, men of right opinion are as ſhadows when compared with men of real ſcience.—The juſtneſs of the ſimilitude depends on theſe doctrines of Plato: that matters of opinion are objects of the imagination, and matters of ſcience are objects of the mind or intellect; that all objects of the imagination are only images of the objects of ſenſe, or things ſenſible; and that theſe objects of ſenſe, or things ſenſible, are but the ſhadows of things intelligible, the objects of intellect.—S.