

Epistles

Plato



I

Plato to Dionysius wishes well-doing.

After I had spent so long a time with you and was trusted above all others in my administration of your government, while you were enjoying the benefits I was enduring the slanders, grievous as they were. For I knew that men would not believe that any of your more brutal acts were done with my consent, seeing that I have for my witnesses all those who take a part in your government, many of whom I have helped in their times of trial and saved them from no small damage. But after I had oftentimes kept guard over your City as sole Dictator, I was dismissed with more ignominy than a beggar would deserve who had stayed with you for so long a time, were you to pack him off and order him to sail away. For the future, therefore, I for my part will consult my own interests in less philanthropic fashion, while you, "gross tyrant that you are, will dwell alone." And as for the splendid sum of gold which you gave for my journey home, Baccheius, the bearer of this letter, is taking it back to you. For it was neither a sufficient sum for my journey nor was it otherwise useful for my support; and since it reflects the greatest disgrace on you who offer it, and not much less on me if I accept it, I therefore refuse to accept it. But evidently neither the giving nor the accepting of such an amount makes any difference to you; take it, then, and befriend therewith some other companion of yours as you did me; for I, in sooth, have had enough of your "befriending." Indeed, I may appropriately quote the verse of Euripides — that one day, when other fortunes befall you,

Thou'lt pray for such a helper by thy side.

And I desire to remind you that most of the other tragedians also, when they show a tyrant on the stage slaughtered by someone, represent him as crying out —

Bereft of friends — ah! woe is me — I die.

But not one of them has represented him as dying for lack of gold. This other poem also to men of judgement seemeth not amiss —

In this our human life, with halting hopes,

It is not glittering gold that rarest is:

Not diamond nor couches silver-wrought

Appear so brilliant in the eyes of men:
Nor do the fertile fields of earth's broad breast,
Laden with crops, so all-sufficing seem
As gallant men's unanimous resolve.

Farewell; and may you learn how much you have lost in us, so that you may
behave yourself better towards all others.

II

Plato to Dionysius wishes well-doing.

I hear from Archedemus that you think that not only I myself should keep quiet but my friends also from doing or saying anything bad about you; and that "you except Dion only." Now your saying this, that Dion is excepted, implies that I have no control over my friends; for had I had this control over you and Dion, as well as the rest, more blessings would have come to us all and to the rest of the Greeks also, as I affirm. But as it is, my greatness consists in making myself follow my own instructions. However, I do not say this as though what Cratistolus and Polyxenus have told you is to be trusted; for it is said that one of these men declares that at Olympia he heard quite a number of my companions maligning you. No doubt his hearing is more acute than mine; for I certainly heard no such thing. For the future, whenever anyone makes such a statement about any of us, what you ought, I think, to do is to send me a letter of inquiry; for I shall tell the truth without scruple or shame. Now as for you and me, the relation in which we stand towards each other is really this. There is not a single Greek, one may say, to whom we are unknown, and our intercourse is a matter of common talk; and you may be sure of this, that it will be common talk also in days to come, because so many have heard tell of it owing to its duration and its publicity. What, now, is the point of this remark? I will go back to the beginning and tell you. It is natural for wisdom and great power to come together, and they are for ever pursuing and seeking each other and consorting together. Moreover, these are qualities which people delight in discussing themselves in private conversation and hearing others discuss in their poems. For example, when men talk about Hiero or about Pausanias the Lacedaemonian they delight to bring in their meeting

with Simonides and what he did and said to them; and they are wont to harp on Periander of Corinth and Thales of Miletus, and on Pericles and Anaxagoras, and on Croesus also and Solon as wise men with Cyrus as potentate. The poets, too, follow their example, and bring together Creon and Tiresias, Polyeidus and Minos, Agamemnon and Nestor, Odysseus and Palamedes; and so it was, I suppose, that the earliest men also brought together Prometheus and Zeus. And of these some were — as the poets tell — at feud with each other, and others were friends; while others again were now friends and now foes, and partly in agreement and partly in disagreement. Now my object in saying all this is to make it clear, that when we ourselves die men's talk about us will not likewise be silenced; so that we must be careful about it. We must necessarily, it seems, have a care also for the future, seeing that, by some law of nature, the most slavish men pay no regard to it, whereas the most upright do all they can to ensure that they shall be well spoken of in the future. Now I count this as a proof that the dead have some perception of things here on earth; for the best souls divine that this is so, while the worst deny it; and the divinings of men who are godlike are of more authority than those of men who are not. I certainly think that, had it been in their power to rectify what was wrong in their intercourse, those men of the past whom I have mentioned would have striven to the utmost to ensure a better report of themselves than they now have. In our case, then — if God so grant — it still remains possible to put right whatever has been amiss in word or deed during our intercourse in the past. For I maintain that, as regards the true philosophy, men will think and speak well of it if we ourselves are upright, and ill if we are base. And in truth we could do nothing more pious than to give attention to this matter, nothing more impious than to disregard it. How this result should be brought about, and what is the just course to pursue, I will now explain. I came to Sicily with the reputation of being by far the most eminent of those engaged in philosophy; and I desired, on my arrival in Syracuse, to gain your testimony as well, in order that I might get philosophy held in honor even by the multitude. In this, however, I was disappointed. But the reason I give for this is not that which is commonly given; rather it was because you showed that you did not fully trust me but wished rather to get rid of me somehow and invite others in my place; and owing, as I believe, to your distrust of me, you showed yourself inquisitive as to what my business was. Thereupon it was proclaimed aloud by

many that you utterly despised me and were devoted to other affairs. This certainly was the story noised abroad. And now I will tell you what it is right to do after this, that so I may reply also to your question how you and I ought to behave towards each other. If you altogether despise philosophy, leave it alone. If, again, you have been taught by someone else or have yourself invented better doctrines than mine, hold them in honor. But if you are contented with my doctrines, then you should hold me also in special honor. So now, just as at the beginning, do you lead the way and I will follow. If I am honored by you, I will honor you; but if I am not honored I will keep to myself. Moreover, if you honor me and take the lead in so doing, you will be thought to be honoring philosophy; and the very fact that you have studied other systems as well will gain you the credit, in the eyes of many, of being a philosopher yourself. But if I honor you, while you do not honor me, I shall be deemed to be a man who worships and pursues after wealth; and to such conduct everyone, we know, gives a bad name. So, to sum it all up, if you pay the honor, it will be a credit to both of us, but if I pay it a disgrace to both. So much, then, about this subject. As to the globe, there is something wrong with it; and Archedemus will point it out to you when he arrives. There is also another matter — much more valuable and divine than the globe — which he most certainly must explain, as you were puzzled about it when you sent him. For, according to his report, you say that you have not had a sufficient demonstration of the doctrine concerning the nature of “the First.” Now I must expound it to you in a riddling way in order that, should the tablet come to any harm “in folds of ocean or of earth,” he that readeth may not understand. The matter stands thus: Related to the King of All are all things, and for his sake they are, and of all things fair He is the cause. And related to the Second are the second things and related to the Third the third. About these, then, the human soul strives to learn, looking to the things that are akin to itself, whereof none is fully perfect. But as to the King and the objects I have mentioned, they are of quite different quality. In the next place the soul inquires— “Well then, what quality have they?” But the cause of all the mischief, O son of Dionysius and Doris, lies in this very question, or rather in the travail which this question creates in the soul; and unless a man delivers himself from this he will never really attain the truth. You, however, declared to me in the garden, under the laurels, that you had formed this notion

yourself and that it was a discovery of your own; and I made answer that if it was plain to you that this was so, you would have saved me from a long discourse. I said, however, that I had never met with any other person who had made this discovery; on the contrary most of the trouble I had was about this very problem. So then, after you had either, as is probable, got the true solution from someone else, or had possibly (by Heaven's favor) hit on it yourself, you fancied you had a firm grip on the proofs of it, and so you omitted to make them fast; thus your view of the truth sways now this way, now that, round about the apparent object; whereas the true object is wholly different. Nor are you alone in this experience; on the contrary, there has never yet been anyone, I assure you, who has not suffered the same confusion at the beginning, when he first learnt this doctrine from me; and they all overcome it with difficulty, one man having more trouble and another less, but scarcely a single one of them escapes with but little. So now that this has occurred, and things are in this state, we have pretty well found an answer, as I think, to the question how we ought to behave towards each other. For seeing that you are testing my doctrines both by attending the lectures of other teachers and by examining my teaching side by side with theirs, as well as by itself, then, if the test you make is a true one, not only will these doctrines implant themselves now in your mind, but you also will be devoted both to them and to us. How, then, will this, and all that I have said, be brought to pass? You have done right now in sending Archedemus; and in the future also, after he returns to you and reports my answer, you will probably be beset later on with fresh perplexities. Then, if you are rightly advised, you will send Archedemus back to me, and he with his cargo will return to you again. And if you do this twice or thrice, and fully test the doctrines I send you, I shall be surprised if your present difficulties do not assume quite a new aspect. Do you, therefore, act so, and with confidence; for there is no merchandise more fair than this or dearer to Heaven which you can ever dispatch or Archedemus transport. Beware, however, lest these doctrines be ever divulged to uneducated people. For there are hardly any doctrines, I believe, which sound more absurd than these to the vulgar, or, on the other hand, more admirable and inspired to men of fine disposition. For it is through being repeated and listened to frequently for many years that these doctrines are refined at length, like gold, with prolonged labor. But listen now to the most remarkable result of all. Quite a

number of men there are who have listened to these doctrines — men capable of learning and capable also of holding them in mind and judging them by all sorts of tests — and who have been hearers of mine for no less than thirty years and are now quite old; and these men now declare that the doctrines that they once held to be most incredible appear to them now the most credible, and what they then held most credible now appears the opposite. So, bearing this in mind, have a care lest one day you should repent of what has now been divulged improperly. The greatest safeguard is to avoid writing and to learn by heart; for it is not possible that what is written down should not get divulged. For this reason I myself have never yet written anything on these subjects, and no treatise by Plato exists or will exist, but those which now bear his name belong to a Socrates become fair and young. Fare thee well, and give me credence; and now, to begin with, read this letter over repeatedly and then burn it up.

So much, then, for that. You were surprised at my sending Polyxenus to you; but now as of old I repeat the same statement about Lycophron also and the others you have with you, that, as respects dialectic, you are far superior to them all both in natural intelligence and in argumentative ability; and I maintain that if any of them is beaten in argument, this defeat is not voluntary, as some imagine, but involuntary. All the same, it appears that you treat them with the greatest consideration and make them presents. So much, then, about these men; too much, indeed, about such as they! As for Philistion, if you are making use of him yourself by all means do so; but if not, lend him if possible to Speusippus and send him home. Speusippus, too, begs you to do so; and Philistion also promised me, that, if you would release him, he would gladly come to Athens. Many thanks for releasing the man in the stone-quarries; and my request with regard to his household and Hegesippus, the son of Ariston, is no hard matter; for in your letter you said that should anyone wrong him or them and you come to know of it you would not allow it. It is proper for me also to say what is true about Lysicleides; for of all those who have come to Athens from Sicily he is the only one who has not misrepresented your association with me; on the contrary, he always speaks nicely about past events and puts the best construction on them.

Plato to Dionysius wishes well-doing.

“Plato to Dionysius wishes joy!”

If I wrote thus, should I be hitting on the best mode of address? Or rather, by writing, according to my custom, “wishes well-doing,” this being my usual mode of address, in my letters to my friends? You, indeed, — as was reported by the spectators then present — addressed even the God himself at Delphi in this same flattering phrase, and wrote, as they say, this verse —

I wish you joy! And may you always keep

The tyrant’s life a life of pleasantness.

But as for me, I would not call upon a man, and much less a god, and bid him enjoy himself — a god, because I would be imposing a task contrary to his nature (since the Deity has his abode far beyond pleasure or pain), — nor yet a man, because pleasure and pain generate mischief for the most part, since they breed in the soul mental sloth and forgetfulness and witlessness and insolence. Let such, then, be my declaration regarding the mode of address; and you, when you read it, accept it in what sense you please. It is stated by not a few that you related to some of the ambassadors at your Court, that upon one occasion I heard you speaking of your intention to occupy the Greek cities in Italy and to relieve the Syracusans by changing the government to a monarchy instead of a tyranny, and at that time (as you assert) I stopped you from doing so, although you were most eager to do it, whereas now I am urging Dion to do precisely the same thing; and thus we are robbing you of your empire by means of your own plans. Whether you derive any benefit from this talk you know best yourself, but you certainly wrong me by saying what is contrary to the fact. For of false accusation I have had enough from Philistides and many others who accused me to the mercenaries and to the Syracusan populace because I stayed in the acropolis; and the people outside, whenever a mistake occurred, ascribed it entirely to me, alleging that you obeyed me in all things. But you yourself know for certain that I willingly took part in some few of your political acts at the first, when I thought that I was doing some good by it and that I gave a fair amount of attention to the Preludes of the laws, besides other small matters, apart from the additions in writing made by you or anyone else — for I am told that some of you afterwards revised my Preludes; but no doubt the several contributions will be evident to those who are

competent to appreciate my style. Well then, as I said just now, what I need is not any further accusation to the Syracusans, or any others there may be who believe your story, but much rather a defence not only against the previous false accusations, but also against the graver and more violent accusation which is now being concocted to follow it. Against the two accusations I must necessarily make a twofold defence — stating, firstly, that I reasonably avoided sharing in your political transactions; and, secondly, that neither the advice was mine, nor yet the hindrance you alleged, — when you said that I had stopped you when you proposed to plant colonists in the Greek cities.

So, listen first to the origin of the first of the accusations I have mentioned. It was on your invitation and Dion's that I came to Syracuse. Dion was a tried comrade of mine and a guest-friend of old standing, and he was a man of staid middle age, — qualities that are specially required by men who possess even a particle of sense when they intend to advise concerning affairs so important as yours then were. You, on the other hand, were extremely young, and in your case I was quite without experience of those points regarding which experience was required, as I was totally unacquainted with you. Thereafter, some man or god or chance, with your assistance, cast out Dion, and you were left alone. Do you suppose, then, that I took any part with you in your political acts, when I had lost my wise partner and saw the unwise one left behind in the company of a crowd of evil men, not ruling himself, but being ruled by men of that sort, while fancying himself the ruler? In these circumstances what ought I to have done? Was I not bound to do as I did, — to bid farewell for the future to politics, shunning the slanders which proceed from envy, and to use every endeavor to make you and Dion as friendly to each other as possible, separated though you were and at variance with each other? Yea, you yourself also are a witness of this, that I have never yet ceased to strive for this very object. And it was agreed between us — although with difficulty — that I should sail home, since you were engaged in war, and that, when peace was restored, Dion and I should go to Syracuse and that you should invite us. And that was how things took place as regards my first sojourn at Syracuse and my safe return home again. But on the second occasion, when peace was restored, you did not keep to our agreement in the invitation you gave me but wrote that I should come alone, and stated that you would send for Dion later on. On this account I did not go; and,

moreover, I was vexed also with Dion; for he was of opinion that it was better for me to go and to yield to your wishes. Subsequently, after a year's interval, a trireme arrived with letters from you, and the first words written in the letters were to the effect that if I came I should find that Dion's affairs would all proceed as I desired, but the opposite if I failed to come. And indeed I am ashamed to say how many letters came at that time from Italy and Sicily from you and from others on your account, or to how many of my friends and acquaintances they were addressed, all enjoining me to go and beseeching me to trust you entirely. It was the firm opinion of everyone, beginning with Dion, that it was my duty to make the voyage and not be faint-hearted. But I always made my age an excuse; and as for you, I kept assuring them that you would not be able to withstand those who slander us and desire that we should quarrel; for I saw then, as I see now, that, as a rule, when great and exorbitant wealth is in the hands either of private citizens or of monarchs, the greater it is, the greater and more numerous are the slanderers it breeds and the hordes of parasites and wastrels — than which there is no greater evil generated by wealth or by the other privileges of power. Notwithstanding, I put aside all these considerations and went, resolving that none of my friends should lay it to my charge that owing to my lack of energy all their fortunes were ruined when they might have been saved from ruin. On my arrival — for you know, to be sure, all that subsequently took place — I, of course, requested, in accordance with the agreement in your letters, that you should, in the first place, recall Dion on terms of friendship — which terms I mentioned; and if you had then yielded to this request, things would probably have turned out better than they have done now both for you and Syracuse and for the rest of Greece — that, at least, is my own intuitive belief. Next, I requested that Dion's family should have possession of his property, instead of the distributors, whom you wot of, having the distribution of it. And further, I deemed it right that the revenue which was usually paid over to him year by year should be forwarded to him all the more, rather than all the less, because of my presence. None of these requests being granted, I asked leave to depart. Thereupon you kept urging me to stop for the year, declaring that you would sell all Dion's property and send one half of the proceeds to Corinth and retain the other half for his son. And I could mention many other promises none of which you fulfilled; but the number of them is so great that I cut it

short. For when you had sold all the goods, without Dion's consent — though you had declared that without his consent you would not dispose of them — you put the coping-stone on all your promises, my admirable friend, in a most outrageous way: you invented a plan that was neither noble nor ingenious nor just nor profitable — namely, to scare me off from so much as seeking for the dispatch of the money, as being in ignorance of the events then going on. For when you sought to expel Heracleides unjustly, as it seemed to the Syracusans as well as to myself — because I had joined with Theodotes and Eurybius in entreating you not to do so, you took this as an ample excuse, and asserted that it had long been plain to you that I paid no regard to you, but only to Dion and Dion's friends and connections, and now that Theodotes and Heracleides, who were Dion's connections, were the subjects of accusations, I was using every means to prevent their paying the just penalty.

Such, then, was the course of events as regards our association in political affairs. And if you perceived any other estrangement in my attitude towards you, you may reasonably suppose that that was the way in which all these things took place. Nor need you be surprised; for I should justly be accounted base by any man of sense had I been influenced by the greatness of your power to betray my old and intimate guest-friend — a man, to say the least, in no wise inferior to you — when, because of you, he was in distress, and to prefer you, the man who did the wrong, and to do everything just as you bade me — for filthy lucre's sake, obviously; for to this, and nothing else, men would have ascribed this change of front in me, if I had changed. Well, then, it was the fact that things took this course, owing to you, which produced this wolf-love and want of fellowship between you and me.

Practically continuous with the statement made just now there comes, I find, that other statement against which, as I said, I have to make my second defence. Consider now and pay the closest attention, in case I seem to you to be lying at all and not speaking the truth. I affirm that when Archedemus and Aristocritus were with us in the garden, some twenty days before I departed home from Syracuse, you made the same complaint against me that you are making now — that I cared more for Heracleides and for all the rest than for you. And in the presence of those men you asked me whether I remembered bidding you, when I first arrived, to plant settlers in the Greek cities. I granted you that I did remember, and that I still believed that this was the best policy.

But, Dionysius, I must also repeat, the next observation that was made on this occasion. For I asked you whether this and this only was what I advised, or something else besides and you made answer to me in a most indignant and most mocking tone, as you supposed — and consequently the object of your mockery then has now turned out a reality instead of a dream; for you said with a very artificial laugh, if my memory serves me— “You bade me be educated before I did all these things or else not do them.” I replied that your memory was excellent. You then said— “Did you mean educated in land-measuring or what?” But I refrained from making the retort which it occurred to me to make, for I was alarmed about the homeward voyage I was hoping for, lest instead of having an open road I should find it shut, and all because of a short saying. Well then, the purpose of all I have said is this: do not slander me by declaring that I was hindering you from colonizing the Greek cities that were ruined by the barbarians, and from relieving the Syracusans by substituting a monarchy for a tyranny. For you could never bring any false accusation against me that was less appropriate than these; and, moreover, in refutation of them I could bring still clearer statements if any competent tribunal were anywhere to be seen — showing that it was I who was urging you, and you who were refusing, to execute these plans. And, verily, it is easy to affirm frankly that these plans, if they had been executed, were the best both for you and the Syracusans, and for all the Siceliots. But, my friend, if you deny having said this, when you have said it, I am justified; while if you confess it, you should further agree that Stesichorus was a wise man, and imitate his palinode, and renounce the false for the true tale.

IV

Plato to Dion of Syracuse wishes well-doing.

It has been plain, I believe, all along that I took a keen interest in the operations that have been carried out, and that I was most anxious to see them finally completed. In this I was mainly prompted by my jealous regard for what is noble; for I esteem it just that those who are truly virtuous, and who act accordingly, should achieve the reputation they deserve. Now for the present (God willing) affairs are going well; but it is in the future that the chief struggle lies. For while it might be thought that excellence in courage and speed and strength might belong to various other men, everyone would agree

that surpassing excellence in truth, justice, generosity and the outward exhibition of all these virtues naturally belongs to those who profess to hold them in honor. Now the point of this remark is plain; but none the less it is right that we should remind ourselves that it behoves certain persons (who these are of course you know) to surpass the rest of mankind as if they were less than children. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to show plainly that we are the sort of men we claim to be, and that all the more because (God willing) it will be an easy task. For whereas all other men find it necessary to wander far afield if they mean to get themselves known, you are in such a position now that people all the world over — bold though it be to say so — have their eyes fixed on one place only, and in that place upon you above all men. Seeing, then, that you have the eyes of all upon you, prepare yourself to play the part of that ancient worthy Lysurgus and of Cyrus and of all those others who have been famed hitherto for their excellence of character and of statesmanship; and that all the more because there are many, including nearly all the people here, who keep saying that, now that Dionysius is overthrown, there is every prospect that things will go to ruin owing to the jealous rivalry of yourself, and Heracleides and Theodotes and the other notables. I pray, then, that no one, if possible, may suffer from this complaint; but in case anyone should, after all, do so, you must play the part of a physician; and so things will turn out best for you all.

Probably it strikes you as ridiculous that I should say this, seeing that you yourself also know it quite well; but I notice how even in the theaters the players are spurred on by the plaudits of the children — not to speak of their own friends — whenever a player believes them to be genuine and well-meaning in their encouragement. So do you also play your parts now; and if you have need of anything send us word. Affairs with us are in much the same state as when you were here. Send us word also about what you have already done or happen to be doing now, since we know nothing although we hear many reports. Even at this moment letters have come to Lacedaemon and Aegina from Theodotes and Heracleides; but we, as I said, know nothing, although we hear many reports from the people here. And, Dion, do you also bear in mind that you are thought by some to be unduly wanting in affability; so do not forget that successful action depends on pleasing people, whereas arrogance is next neighbor to isolation. Good-luck attend thee!

V

Plato to Perdiccas wishes well-doing.

I counselled Euphraeus, in accordance with your message, to devote his time to the task of caring for your interests; and I feel myself bound also to give you friendly, and what is called “sacred,” counsel both about the other matters you mention and as to how you ought now to make use of Euphraeus. For the man is useful for many things, the most important being that in which you yourself are deficient owing to your youth, and also because it is a matter about which there are not many counsellors available for the young. For forms of government, like animals, have each their own kind of language, one for democracy, another for oligarchy, and a third kind for monarchy; and though a vast number of people would assert that they understand these languages, yet all but a few of them are very far indeed from discerning them. Now each of these polities, if it speaks its own language both to gods and to men, and renders its actions conformable to its language, remains always flourishing and secure; but if it imitates another it becomes corrupted. It is for this study, then, that Euphraeus will be specially useful to you, although there are also other studies in which he is competent. For he, I hope, will help you to explore the speech of monarchy as well as any of the persons you employ. So if you make use of him for this purpose you will not only benefit yourself but will also be helping him immensely. Suppose, however, that on hearing this someone were to say: “Plato, as it seems, is claiming to know what is of advantage to democracy; yet when he has had it in his power to speak before the demos and to counsel it for the best he has never yet stood up and made a speech” — to this you may reply that “Plato was born late in the history of his country, and he found the demos already old and habituated by the previous statesmen to do many things at variance with his own counsel. For he would have given counsel to it, as to his father, with the greatest possible pleasure, had he not supposed that he would be running risks in vain, and would do no good. And I suppose that he would do the same as regards counselling me. For if he deemed us to be in an incurable state, he would bid us a long farewell and leave off giving counsel about me or my affairs.” Good-luck be thine!

VI

Plato to Hermeias and Erastus and Coriscus wishes well-doing.

Some God, as it seems plain to me, is preparing for you good fortune in a gracious and bountiful way, if only you accept it with grace. For you dwell near together as neighbors in close association so that you can help one another in the things of greatest importance. For Hermeias will find in his multitude of horses or of other military equipment, or even in the gaining of gold itself, no greater source of power for all purposes than in the gaining of steadfast friends possessed of a sound character; while Erastus and Coriscus, in addition to this fair Science of Ideas, need also — as I, old though I am, assert — the science which is a safeguard in dealing with the wicked and unjust, and a kind of self-defensive power. For they lack experience owing to the fact that they have spent a large part of their lives in company with us who are men of moderation and free from vice; and for this reason, as I have said, they need these additional qualities, so that they may not be compelled to neglect the true Science, and to pay more attention than is right to that which is human and necessitated. Now Hermeias, on the other hand, seems to me — so far as I can judge without having met him as yet — to possess this practical ability both by nature and also through the skill bred of experience. What, then, do I suggest? To you, Hermeias, I, who have made trial of Erastus and Coriscus more fully than you, affirm and proclaim and testify that you will not easily discover more trustworthy characters than these your neighbors; and I counsel you to hold fast to these men by every righteous means, and regard this as a duty of no secondary importance. To Coriscus and Erastus the counsel I give is this — that they in turn should hold fast to Hermeias, and endeavor by thus holding to one another to become united in the bonds of friendship. But in case any one of you should be thought to be breaking up this union in any way — for what is human is not altogether durable — send a letter here to me and my friends stating the grounds of complaint; for I believe that — unless the disruption should happen to be serious — the arguments sent you from here by us, based on justice and reverence, will serve better than any incantation to weld you and bind you together once again into your former state of friendship and fellowship. If, then, all of us — both we and you — practice this philosophy, as each is able, to the utmost of our power, the prophecy I have now made will come true; but if we fail to do this, I keep silence as to the consequence; for the prophecy I am making is one of good omen, and I

declare that we shall, God willing, do all these things well. All you three must read this letter, all together if possible, or if not by twos; and as often as you possibly can read it in common, and use it as a form of covenant and a binding law, as is right; and with an earnestness that is not out of tune combined with the playfulness that is sister to earnestness, swear by the God that is Ruler of all that is and that shall be, and swear by the Lord and Father of the Ruler and Cause, Whom, if we are real philosophers, we shall all know truly so far as men well-fortuned can.

VII

The seventh letter is addressed to Plato's associates and the companions of Dion, most likely after Dion's assassination in 353 BCE. It is the longest of the epistles and is now considered to be the most important. It contains a defense of Plato's political activities in Syracuse as well as a long digression concerning the nature of philosophy, the theory of the forms, and the problems inherent to teaching. It also espouses the so called "unwritten doctrine" of Plato which urges that nothing of importance should be committed to writing.

Plato to Dion's associates and friends wishes well-doing.

You wrote to me that I ought to consider that your policy was the same as that which Dion had; and moreover you charged me to support it, so far as I can, both by deed and word. Now if you really hold the same views and aims as he, I consent to support them, but if not, I will ponder the matter many times over. And what was his policy and his aim I will tell you, and that, as I may say, not from mere conjecture but from certain knowledge. For when I originally arrived at Syracuse, being about forty years old, Dion was of the age which Hipparinus has now reached, and the views which he had then come to hold he continued to hold unchanged; for he believed that the Syracusans ought to be free and dwell under the best laws. Consequently, it is no matter of surprise if some Deity has made Hipparinus also come to share his views about government and be of the same mind. Now the manner in which these views originated is a story well worth hearing for young and old alike, and I shall endeavor to narrate it to you from the beginning; for at the present moment it is opportune.

In my youth I went through the same experience as many other men. I fancied that if, early in life, I became my own master, I should at once embark on a political career. And I found myself confronted with the following occurrences in the public affairs of my own city. The existing constitution being generally condemned, a revolution took place, and fifty-one men came to the front as rulers of the revolutionary government, namely eleven in the city and ten in the Peiraeus — each of these bodies being in charge of the market and municipal matters — while thirty were appointed rulers with full powers over public affairs as a whole. Some of these were relatives and acquaintances of mine, and they at once invited me to share in their doings, as something to which I had a claim. The effect on me was not surprising in the case of a young man. I considered that they would, of course, so manage the State as to bring men out of a bad way of life into a good one. So I watched them very closely to see what they would do.

And seeing, as I did, that in quite a short time they made the former government seem by comparison something precious as gold — for among other things they tried to send a friend of mine, the aged Socrates, whom I should scarcely scruple to describe as the most upright man of that day, with some other persons to carry off one of the citizens by force to execution, in order that, whether he wished it, or not, he might share the guilt of their conduct; but he would not obey them, risking all consequences in preference to becoming a partner in their iniquitous deeds — seeing all these things and others of the same kind on a considerable scale, I disapproved of their proceedings, and withdrew from any connection with the abuses of the time.

Not long after that a revolution terminated the power of the thirty and the form of government as it then was. And once more, though with more hesitation, I began to be moved by the desire to take part in public and political affairs. Well, even in the new government, unsettled as it was, events occurred which one would naturally view with disapproval; and it was not surprising that in a period of revolution excessive penalties were inflicted by some persons on political opponents, though those who had returned from exile at that time showed very considerable forbearance. But once more it happened that some of those in power brought my friend Socrates, whom I have mentioned, to trial before a court of law, laying a most iniquitous charge against him and one most inappropriate in his case: for it was on a charge of

impiety that some of them prosecuted and others condemned and executed the very man who would not participate in the iniquitous arrest of one of the friends of the party then in exile, at the time when they themselves were in exile and misfortune.

As I observed these incidents and the men engaged in public affairs, the laws too and the customs, the more closely I examined them and the farther I advanced in life, the more difficult it seemed to me to handle public affairs aright. For it was not possible to be active in politics without friends and trustworthy supporters; and to find these ready to my hand was not an easy matter, since public affairs at Athens were not carried on in accordance with the manners and practices of our fathers; nor was there any ready method by which I could make new friends. The laws too, written and unwritten, were being altered for the worse, and the evil was growing with startling rapidity. The result was that, though at first I had been full of a strong impulse towards political life, as I looked at the course of affairs and saw them being swept in all directions by contending currents, my head finally began to swim; and, though I did not stop looking to see if there was any likelihood of improvement in these symptoms and in the general course of public life, I postponed action till a suitable opportunity should arise. Finally, it became clear to me, with regard to all existing communities, that they were one and all misgoverned. For their laws have got into a state that is almost incurable, except by some extraordinary reform with good luck to support it. And I was forced to say, when praising true philosophy that it is by this that men are enabled to see what justice in public and private life really is. Therefore, I said, there will be no cessation of evils for the sons of men, till either those who are pursuing a right and true philosophy receive sovereign power in the States, or those in power in the States by some dispensation of providence become true philosophers.

With these thoughts in my mind I came to Italy and Sicily on my first visit. My first impressions on arrival were those of strong disapproval — disapproval of the kind of life which was there called the life of happiness, stuffed full as it was with the banquets of the Italian Greeks and Syracusans, who ate to repletion twice every day, and were never without a partner for the night; and disapproval of the habits which this manner of life produces. For with these habits formed early in life, no man under heaven could possibly attain to

wisdom — human nature is not capable of such an extraordinary combination. Temperance also is out of the question for such a man; and the same applies to virtue generally. No city could remain in a state of tranquillity under any laws whatsoever, when men think it right to squander all their property in extravagant spending, and consider it a duty to be idle in everything else except eating and drinking and the laborious prosecution of debauchery. It follows necessarily that the constitutions of such cities must be constantly changing, tyrannies, oligarchies and democracies succeeding one another, while those who hold the power cannot so much as endure the name of any form of government which maintains justice and equality of rights.

With a mind full of these thoughts, on the top of my previous convictions, I crossed over to Syracuse — led there perhaps by chance — but it really looks as if some higher power was even then planning to lay a foundation for all that has now come to pass with regard to Dion and Syracuse — and for further troubles too, I fear, unless you listen to the advice which is now for the second time offered by me. What do I mean by saying that my arrival in Sicily at that movement proved to be the foundation on which all the sequel rests? I was brought into close intercourse with Dion who was then a young man, and explained to him my views as to the ideals at which men should aim, advising him to carry them out in practice. In doing this I seem to have been unaware that I was, in a fashion, without knowing it, contriving the overthrow of the tyranny which subsequently took place. For Dion, who rapidly assimilated my teaching as he did all forms of knowledge, listened to me with an eagerness which I had never seen equalled in any young man, and resolved to live for the future in a better way than the majority of Italian and Sicilian Greeks, having set his affection on virtue in preference to pleasure and self-indulgence. The result was that until the death of Dionysios he lived in a way which rendered him somewhat unpopular among those whose manner of life was that which is usual in the courts of despots.

After that event he came to the conclusion that this conviction, which he himself had gained under the influence of good teaching, was not likely to be confined to himself. Indeed, he saw it being actually implanted in other minds — not many perhaps, but certainly in some; and he thought that with the aid of the Gods, Dionysios might perhaps become one of these, and that, if such a thing did come to pass, the result would be a life of unspeakable happiness

both for himself and for the rest of the Syracusans. Further, he thought it essential that I should come to Syracuse by all manner of means and with the utmost possible speed to be his partner in these plans, remembering in his own case how readily intercourse with me had produced in him a longing for the noblest and best life. And if it should produce a similar effect on Dionysios, as his aim was that it should, he had great hope that, without bloodshed, loss of life, and those disastrous events which have now taken place, he would be able to introduce the true life of happiness throughout the whole territory.

Holding these sound views, Dion persuaded Dionysios to send for me; he also wrote himself entreating me to come by all manner of means and with the utmost possible speed, before certain other persons coming in contact with Dionysios should turn him aside into some way of life other than the best. What he said, though perhaps it is rather long to repeat, was as follows: "What opportunities," he said, "shall we wait for, greater than those now offered to us by Providence?" And he described the Syracusan empire in Italy and Sicily, his own influential position in it, and the youth of Dionysios and how strongly his desire was directed towards philosophy and education. His own nephews and relatives, he said, would be readily attracted towards the principles and manner of life described by me, and would be most influential in attracting Dionysios in the same direction, so that, now if ever, we should see the accomplishment of every hope that the same persons might actually become both philosophers and the rulers of great States. These were the appeals addressed to me and much more to the same effect.

My own opinion, so far as the young men were concerned, and the probable line which their conduct would take, was full of apprehension — for young men are quick in forming desires, which often take directions conflicting with one another. But I knew that the character of Dion's mind was naturally a stable one and had also the advantage of somewhat advanced years.

Therefore, I pondered the matter and was in two minds as to whether I ought to listen to entreaties and go, or how I ought to act; and finally the scale turned in favour of the view that, if ever anyone was to try to carry out in practice my ideas about laws and constitutions, now was the time for making the attempt; for if only I could fully convince one man, I should have secured thereby the accomplishment of all good things.

With these views and thus nerved to the task, I sailed from home, in the spirit which some imagined, but principally through a feeling of shame with regard to myself, lest I might some day appear to myself wholly and solely a mere man of words, one who would never of his own will lay his hand to any act. Also there was reason to think that I should be betraying first and foremost my friendship and comradeship with Dion, who in very truth was in a position of considerable danger. If therefore anything should happen to him, or if he were banished by Dionysios and his other enemies and coming to us as exile addressed this question to me: "Plato, I have come to you as a fugitive, not for want of hoplites, nor because I had no cavalry for defence against my enemies, but for want of words and power of persuasion, which I knew to be a special gift of yours, enabling you to lead young men into the path of goodness and justice, and to establish in every case relations of friendship and comradeship among them. It is for the want of this assistance on your part that I have left Syracuse and am here now. And the disgrace attaching to your treatment of me is a small matter. But philosophy — whose praises you are always singing, while you say she is held in dishonour by the rest of mankind — must we not say that philosophy along with me has now been betrayed, so far as your action was concerned? Had I been living at Megara, you would certainly have come to give me your aid towards the objects for which I asked it; or you would have thought yourself the most contemptible of mankind. But as it is, do you think that you will escape the reputation of cowardice by making excuses about the distance of the journey, the length of the sea voyage, and the amount of labour involved? Far from it." To reproaches of this kind what creditable reply could I have made? Surely none.

I took my departure, therefore, acting, so far as a man can act, in obedience to reason and justice, and for these reasons leaving my own occupations, which were certainly not discreditable ones, to put myself under a tyranny which did not seem likely to harmonise with my teaching or with myself. By my departure I secured my own freedom from the displeasure of Zeus Xenios, and made myself clear of any charge on the part of philosophy, which would have been exposed to detraction, if any disgrace had come upon me for faint-heartedness and cowardice.

On my arrival, to cut a long story short, I found the court of Dionysios full of intrigues and of attempts to create in the sovereign ill-feeling against

Dion. I combated these as far as I could, but with very little success; and in the fourth month or thereabouts, charging Dion with conspiracy to seize the throne, Dionysios put him on board a small boat and expelled him from Syracuse with ignominy. All of us who were Dion's friends were afraid that he might take vengeance on one or other of us as an accomplice in Dion's conspiracy. With regard to me, there was even a rumour current in Syracuse that I had been put to death by Dionysios as the cause of all that had occurred. Perceiving that we were all in this state of mind and apprehending that our fears might lead to some serious consequence, he now tried to win all of us over by kindness: me in particular he encouraged, bidding me be of good cheer and entreating me on all grounds to remain. For my flight from him was not likely to redound to his credit, but my staying might do so. Therefore, he made a great pretence of entreating me. And we know that the entreaties of sovereigns are mixed with compulsion. So to secure his object he proceeded to render my departure impossible, bringing me into the acropolis, and establishing me in quarters from which not a single ship's captain would have taken me away against the will of Dionysios, nor indeed without a special messenger sent by him to order my removal. Nor was there a single merchant, or a single official in charge of points of departure from the country, who would have allowed me to depart unaccompanied, and would not have promptly seized me and taken me back to Dionysios, especially since a statement had now been circulated contradicting the previous rumours and giving out that Dionysios was becoming extraordinarily attached to Plato. What were the facts about this attachment? I must tell the truth. As time went on, and as intercourse made him acquainted with my disposition and character, he did become more and more attached to me, and wished me to praise him more than I praised Dion, and to look upon him as more specially my friend than Dion, and he was extraordinarily eager about this sort of thing. But when confronted with the one way in which this might have been done, if it was to be done at all, he shrank from coming into close and intimate relations with me as a pupil and listener to my discourses on philosophy, fearing the danger suggested by mischief-makers, that he might be ensnared, and so Dion would prove to have accomplished all his object. I endured all this patiently, retaining the purpose with which I had come and the hope that he might come to desire the philosophic life. But his resistance prevailed against

me.

The time of my first visit to Sicily and my stay there was taken up with all these incidents. On a later occasion I left home and again came on an urgent summons from Dionysios. But before giving the motives and particulars of my conduct then and showing how suitable and right it was, I must first, in order that I may not treat as the main point what is only a side issue, give you my advice as to what your acts should be in the present position of affairs; afterwards, to satisfy those who put the question why I came a second time, I will deal fully with the facts about my second visit; what I have now to say is this.

He who advises a sick man, whose manner of life is prejudicial to health, is clearly bound first of all to change his patient's manner of life, and if the patient is willing to obey him, he may go on to give him other advice. But if he is not willing, I shall consider one who declines to advise such a patient to be a man and a physician, and one who gives in to him to be unmanly and unprofessional. In the same way with regard to a State, whether it be under a single ruler or more than one, if, while the government is being carried on methodically and in a right course, it asks advice about any details of policy, it is the part of a wise man to advise such people. But when men are travelling altogether outside the path of right government and flatly refuse to move in the right path, and start by giving notice to their adviser that he must leave the government alone and make no change in it under penalty of death — if such men should order their counsellors to pander to their wishes and desires and to advise them in what way their object may most readily and easily be once for all accomplished, I should consider as unmanly one who accepts the duty of giving such forms of advice, and one who refuses it to be a true man.

Holding these views, whenever anyone consults me about any of the weightiest matters affecting his own life, as, for instance, the acquisition of property or the proper treatment of body or mind, if it seems to me that his daily life rests on any system, or if he seems likely to listen to advice about the things on which he consults me, I advise him with readiness, and do not content myself with giving him a merely perfunctory answer. But if a man does not consult me at all, or evidently does not intend to follow my advice, I do not take the initiative in advising such a man, and will not use compulsion to him, even if he be my own son. I would advise a slave under such

circumstances, and would use compulsion to him if he were unwilling. To a father or mother I do not think that piety allows one to offer compulsion, unless they are suffering from an attack of insanity; and if they are following any regular habits of life which please them but do not please me, I would not offend them by offering useless advice, nor would I flatter them or truckle to them, providing them with the means of satisfying desires which I myself would sooner die than cherish. The wise man should go through life with the same attitude of mind towards his country. If she should appear to him to be following a policy which is not a good one, he should say so, provided that his words are not likely either to fall on deaf ears or to lead to the loss of his own life. But force against his native land he should not use in order to bring about a change of constitution, when it is not possible for the best constitution to be introduced without driving men into exile or putting them to death; he should keep quiet and offer up prayers for his own welfare and for that of his country.

These are the principles in accordance with which I should advise you, as also, jointly with Dion, I advised Dionysios, bidding him in the first place to live his daily life in a way that would make him as far as possible master of himself and able to gain faithful friends and supporters, in order that he might not have the same experience as his father. For his father, having taken under his rule many great cities of Sicily which had been utterly destroyed by the barbarians, was not able to found them afresh and to establish in them trustworthy governments carried on by his own supporters, either by men who had no ties of blood with him, or by his brothers whom he had brought up when they were younger, and had raised from humble station to high office and from poverty to immense wealth. Not one of these was he able to work upon by persuasion, instruction, services and ties of kindred, so as to make him a partner in his rule; and he showed himself inferior to Darius with a sevenfold inferiority. For Darius did not put his trust in brothers or in men whom he had brought up, but only in his confederates in the overthrow of the Mede and Eunuch; and to these he assigned portions of his empire, seven in number, each of them greater than all Sicily; and they were faithful to him and did not attack either him or one another. Thus he showed a pattern of what the good lawgiver and king ought to be; for he drew up laws by which he has secured the Persian empire in safety down to the present time.

Again, to give another instance, the Athenians took under their rule very many cities not founded by themselves, which had been hard hit by the barbarians but were still in existence, and maintained their rule over these for seventy years, because they had in each of them men whom they could trust. But Dionysios, who had gathered the whole of Sicily into a single city, and was so clever that he trusted no one, only secured his own safety with great difficulty. For he was badly off for trustworthy friends; and there is no surer criterion of virtue and vice than this, whether a man is or is not destitute of such friends.

This, then, was the advice which Dion and I gave to Dionysios, since, owing to the bringing up which he had received from his father, he had had no advantages in the way of education or of suitable lessons, in the first place . . . ; and, in the second place, that, after starting in this way, he should make friends of others among his connections who were of the same age and were in sympathy with his pursuit of virtue, but above all that he should be in harmony with himself; for this it was of which he was remarkably in need. This we did not say in plain words, for that would not have been safe; but in covert language we maintained that every man in this way would save both himself and those whom he was leading, and if he did not follow this path, he would do just the opposite of this. And after proceeding on the course which we described, and making himself a wise and temperate man, if he were then to found again the cities of Sicily which had been laid waste, and bind them together by laws and constitutions, so as to be loyal to him and to one another in their resistance to the attacks of the barbarians, he would, we told him, make his father's empire not merely double what it was but many times greater. For, if these things were done, his way would be clear to a more complete subjugation of the Carthaginians than that which befell them in Gelon's time, whereas in our own day his father had followed the opposite course of levying tribute for the barbarians. This was the language and these the exhortations given by us, the conspirators against Dionysios according to the charges circulated from various sources — charges which, prevailing as they did with Dionysios, caused the expulsion of Dion and reduced me to a state of apprehension. But when — to summarise great events which happened in no great time — Dion returned from the Peloponnese and Athens, his advice to Dionysios took the form of action.

To proceed — when Dion had twice over delivered the city and restored it to the citizens, the Syracusans went through the same changes of feeling towards him as Dionysios had gone through, when Dion attempted first to educate him and train him to be a sovereign worthy of supreme power and, when that was done, to be his coadjutor in all the details of his career. Dionysios listened to those who circulated slanders to the effect that Dion was aiming at the tyranny in all the steps which he took at that time, his intention being that Dionysios, when his mind had fallen under the spell of culture, should neglect the government and leave it in his hands, and that he should then appropriate it for himself and treacherously depose Dionysios. These slanders were victorious on that occasion; they were so once more when circulated among the Syracusans, winning a victory which took an extraordinary course and proved disgraceful to its authors. The story of what then took place is one which deserves careful attention on the part of those who are inviting me to deal with the present situation.

I, an Athenian and friend of Dion, came as his ally to the court of Dionysios, in order that I might create good will in place of a state of war; in my conflict with the authors of these slanders I was worsted. When Dionysios tried to persuade me by offers of honours and wealth to attach myself to him, and with a view to giving a decent colour to Dion's expulsion a witness and friend on his side, he failed completely in his attempt. Later on, when Dion returned from exile, he took with him from Athens two brothers, who had been his friends, not from community in philosophic study, but with the ordinary companionship common among most friends, which they form as the result of relations of hospitality and the intercourse which occurs when one man initiates the other in the mysteries. It was from this kind of intercourse and from services connected with his return that these two helpers in his restoration became his companions. Having come to Sicily, when they perceived that Dion had been misrepresented to the Sicilian Greeks, whom he had liberated, as one that plotted to become monarch, they not only betrayed their companion and friend, but shared personally in the guilt of his murder, standing by his murderers as supporters with weapons in their hands. The guilt and impiety of their conduct I neither excuse nor do I dwell upon it. For many others make it their business to harp upon it, and will make it their business in the future. But I do take exception to the statement that, because

they were Athenians, they have brought shame upon this city. For I say that he too is an Athenian who refused to betray this same Dion, when he had the offer of riches and many other honours. For his was no common or vulgar friendship, but rested on community in liberal education, and this is the one thing in which a wise man will put his trust, far more than in ties of personal and bodily kinship. So the two murderers of Dion were not of sufficient importance to be causes of disgrace to this city, as though they had been men of any note.

All this has been said with a view to counselling the friends and family of Dion. And in addition to this I give for the third time to you the same advice and counsel which I have given twice before to others — not to enslave Sicily or any other State to despots — this is my counsel — but to put it under the rule of laws — for the other course is better neither for the enslavers nor for the enslaved, for themselves, their children's children and descendants; the attempt is in every way fraught with disaster. It is only small and mean natures that are bent upon seizing such gains for themselves, natures that know nothing of goodness and justice, divine as well as human, in this life and in the next.

These are the lessons which I tried to teach, first to Dion, secondly to Dionysios, and now for the third time to you. Do you obey me thinking of Zeus the Preserver, the patron of third ventures, and looking at the lot of Dionysios and Dion, of whom the one who disobeyed me is living in dishonour, while he who obeyed me has died honourably. For the one thing which is wholly right and noble is to strive for that which is most honourable for a man's self and for his country, and to face the consequences whatever they may be. For none of us can escape death, nor, if a man could do so, would it, as the vulgar suppose, make him happy. For nothing evil or good, which is worth mentioning at all, belongs to things soulless; but good or evil will be the portion of every soul, either while attached to the body or when separated from it.

And we should in very truth always believe those ancient and sacred teachings, which declare that the soul is immortal, that it has judges, and suffers the greatest penalties when it has been separated from the body. Therefore also we should consider it a lesser evil to suffer great wrongs and outrages than to do them. The covetous man, impoverished as he is in the

soul, turns a deaf ear to this teaching; or if he hears it, he laughs it to scorn with fancied superiority, and shamelessly snatches for himself from every source whatever his bestial fancy supposes will provide for him the means of eating or drinking or glutting himself with that slavish and gross pleasure which is falsely called after the goddess of love. He is blind and cannot see in those acts of plunder which are accompanied by impiety what heinous guilt is attached to each wrongful deed, and that the offender must drag with him the burden of this impiety while he moves about on earth, and when he has travelled beneath the earth on a journey which has every circumstance of shame and misery.

It was by urging these and other like truths that I convinced Dion, and it is I who have the best right to be angered with his murderers in much the same way as I have with Dionysios. For both they and he have done the greatest injury to me, and I might almost say to all mankind, they by slaying the man that was willing to act righteously, and he by refusing to act righteously during the whole of his rule, when he held supreme power, in which rule if philosophy and power had really met together, it would have sent forth a light to all men, Greeks and barbarians, establishing fully for all the true belief that there can be no happiness either for the community or for the individual man, unless he passes his life under the rule of righteousness with the guidance of wisdom, either possessing these virtues in himself, or living under the rule of godly men and having received a right training and education in morals. These were the aims which Dionysios injured, and for me everything else is a trifling injury compared with this.

The murderer of Dion has, without knowing it, done the same as Dionysios. For as regards Dion, I know right well, so far as it is possible for a man to say anything positively about other men, that, if he had got the supreme power, he would never have turned his mind to any other form of rule, but that, dealing first with Syracuse, his own native land, when he had made an end of her slavery, clothed her in bright apparel, and given her the garb of freedom, he would then by every means in his power have ordered aright the lives of his fellow-citizens by suitable and excellent laws; and the thing next in order, which he would have set his heart to accomplish, was to found again all the States of Sicily and make them free from the barbarians, driving out some and subduing others, an easier task for him than it was for

Hiero. If these things had been accomplished by a man who was just and brave and temperate and a philosopher, the same belief with regard to virtue would have been established among the majority which, if Dionysios had been won over, would have been established, I might almost say, among all mankind and would have given them salvation. But now some higher power or avenging fiend has fallen upon them, inspiring them with lawlessness, godlessness and acts of recklessness issuing from ignorance, the seed from which all evils for all mankind take root and grow and will in future bear the bitterest harvest for those who brought them into being. This ignorance it was which in that second venture wrecked and ruined everything.

And now, for good luck's sake, let us on this third venture abstain from words of ill omen. But, nevertheless, I advise you, his friends, to imitate in Dion his love for his country and his temperate habits of daily life, and to try with better auspices to carry out his wishes — what these were, you have heard from me in plain words. And whoever among you cannot live the simple Dorian life according to the customs of your forefathers, but follows the manner of life of Dion's murderers and of the Sicilians, do not invite this man to join you, or expect him to do any loyal or salutary act; but invite all others to the work of resettling all the States of Sicily and establishing equality under the laws, summoning them from Sicily itself and from the whole Peloponnese — and have no fear even of Athens; for there, also, are men who excel all mankind in their devotion to virtue and in hatred of the reckless acts of those who shed the blood of friends.

But if, after all, this is work for a future time, whereas immediate action is called for by the disorders of all sorts and kinds which arise every day from your state of civil strife, every man to whom Providence has given even a moderate share of right intelligence ought to know that in times of civil strife there is no respite from trouble till the victors make an end of feeding their grudge by combats and banishments and executions, and of wreaking their vengeance on their enemies. They should master themselves and, enacting impartial laws, framed not to gratify themselves more than the conquered party, should compel men to obey these by two restraining forces, respect and fear; fear, because they are the masters and can display superior force; respect, because they rise superior to pleasures and are willing and able to be servants to the laws. There is no other way save this for terminating the troubles of a city

that is in a state of civil strife; but a constant continuance of internal disorders, struggles, hatred and mutual distrust is the common lot of cities which are in that plight.

Therefore, those who have for the time being gained the upper hand, when they desire to secure their position, must by their own act and choice select from all Hellas men whom they have ascertained to be the best for the purpose. These must in the first place be men of mature years, who have children and wives at home, and, as far as possible, a long line of ancestors of good repute, and all must be possessed of sufficient property. For a city of ten thousand householders their numbers should be fifty; that is enough. These they must induce to come from their own homes by entreaties and the promise of the highest honours; and having induced them to come they must entreat and command them to draw up laws after binding themselves by oath to show no partiality either to conquerors or to conquered, but to give equal and common rights to the whole State.

When laws have been enacted, what everything then hinges on is this. If the conquerors show more obedience to the laws than the conquered, the whole State will be full of security and happiness, and there will be an escape from all your troubles. But if they do not, then do not summon me or any other helper to aid you against those who do not obey the counsel I now give you. For this course is akin to that which Dion and I attempted to carry out with our hearts set on the welfare of Syracuse. It is indeed a second best course. The first and best was that scheme of welfare to all mankind which we attempted to carry out with the co-operation of Dionysios; but some chance, mightier than men, brought it to nothing. Do you now, with good fortune attending you and with Heaven's help, try to bring your efforts to a happier issue.

Let this be the end of my advice and injunction and of the narrative of my first visit to Dionysios. Whoever wishes may next hear of my second journey and voyage, and learn that it was a reasonable and suitable proceeding. My first period of residence in Sicily was occupied in the way which I related before giving my advice to the relatives and friends of Dion. After those events I persuaded Dionysios by such arguments as I could to let me go; and we made an agreement as to what should be done when peace was made; for at that time there was a state of war in Sicily. Dionysios said that, when he had put the affairs of his empire in a position of greater safety for himself, he would send

for Dion and me again; and he desired that Dion should regard what had befallen him not as an exile, but as a change of residence. I agreed to come again on these conditions.

When peace had been made, he began sending for me; he requested that Dion should wait for another year, but begged that I should by all means come. Dion now kept urging and entreating me to go. For persistent rumours came from Sicily that Dionysios was now once more possessed by an extraordinary desire for philosophy. For this reason Dion pressed me urgently not to decline his invitation. But though I was well aware that as regards philosophy such symptoms were not uncommon in young men, still it seemed to me safer at that time to part company altogether with Dion and Dionysios; and I offended both of them by replying that I was an old man, and that the steps now being taken were quite at variance with the previous agreement.

After this, it seems, Archytes came to the court of Dionysios. Before my departure I had brought him and his Tarentine circle into friendly relations with Dionysios. There were some others in Syracuse who had received some instruction from Dion, and others had learnt from these, getting their heads full of erroneous teaching on philosophical questions. These, it seems, were attempting to hold discussions with Dionysios on questions connected with such subjects, in the idea that he had been fully instructed in my views. Now he is not at all devoid of natural gifts for learning, and he has a great craving for honour and glory. What was said probably pleased him, and he felt some shame when it became clear that he had not taken advantage of my teaching during my visit. For these reasons he conceived a desire for more definite instruction, and his love of glory was an additional incentive to him. The real reasons why he had learnt nothing during my previous visit have just been set forth in the preceding narrative. Accordingly, now that I was safe at home and had refused his second invitation, as I just now related, Dionysios seems to have felt all manner of anxiety lest certain people should suppose that I was unwilling to visit him again because I had formed a poor opinion of his natural gifts and character, and because, knowing as I did his manner of life, I disapproved of it.

It is right for me to speak the truth, and make no complaint if anyone, after hearing the facts, forms a poor opinion of my philosophy, and thinks that the tyrant was in the right. Dionysios now invited me for the third time,

sending a trireme to ensure me comfort on the voyage; he sent also Archedemos — one of those who had spent some time with Archytes, and of whom he supposed that I had a higher opinion than of any of the Sicilian Greeks — and, with him, other men of repute in Sicily. These all brought the same report, that Dionysios had made progress in philosophy. He also sent a very long letter, knowing as he did my relations with Dion and Dion's eagerness also that I should take ship and go to Syracuse. The letter was framed in its opening sentences to meet all these conditions, and the tenor of it was as follows: "Dionysios to Plato," here followed the customary greeting and immediately after it he said, "If in compliance with our request you come now, in the first place, Dion's affairs will be dealt with in whatever way you yourself desire; I know that you will desire what is reasonable, and I shall consent to it. But if not, none of Dion's affairs will have results in accordance with your wishes, with regard either to Dion himself or to other matters." This he said in these words; the rest it would be tedious and inopportune to quote. Other letters arrived from Archytes and the Tarentines, praising the philosophical studies of Dionysios and saying that, if I did not now come, I should cause a complete rupture in their friendship with Dionysios, which had been brought about by me and was of no small importance to their political interests.

When this invitation came to me at that time in such terms, and those who had come from Sicily and Italy were trying to drag me thither, while my friends at Athens were literally pushing me out with their urgent entreaties, it was the same old tale — that I must not betray Dion and my Tarentine friends and supporters. Also I myself had a lurking feeling that there was nothing surprising in the fact that a young man, quick to learn, hearing talk of the great truths of philosophy, should feel a craving for the higher life. I thought therefore that I must put the matter definitely to the test to see whether his desire was genuine or the reverse, and on no account leave such an impulse unaided nor make myself responsible for such a deep and real disgrace, if the reports brought by anyone were really true. So blindfolding myself with this reflection, I set out, with many fears and with no very favourable anticipations, as was natural enough. However, I went, and my action on this occasion at any rate was really a case of "the third to the Preserver," for I had the good fortune to return safely; and for this I must, next to the God, thank

Dionysios, because, though many wished to make an end of me, he prevented them and paid some proper respect to my situation.

On my arrival, I thought that first I must put to the test the question whether Dionysios had really been kindled with the fire of philosophy, or whether all the reports which had come to Athens were empty rumours. Now there is a way of putting such things to the test which is not to be despised and is well suited to monarchs, especially to those who have got their heads full of erroneous teaching, which immediately upon my arrival I found to be very much the case with Dionysios. One should show such men what philosophy is in all its extent; what their range of studies is by which it is approached, and how much labour it involves. For the man who has heard this, if he has the true philosophic spirit and that godlike temperament which makes him akin to philosophy and worthy of it, thinks that he has been told of a marvellous road lying before him, that he must forthwith press on with all his strength, and that life is not worth living if he does anything else. After this he uses to the full his own powers and those of his guide in the path, and relaxes not his efforts, till he has either reached the end of the whole course of study or gained such power that he is not incapable of directing his steps without the aid of a guide. This is the spirit and these are the thoughts by which such a man guides his life, carrying out his work, whatever his occupation may be, but throughout it all ever cleaving to philosophy and to such rules of diet in his daily life as will give him inward sobriety and therewith quickness in learning, a good memory, and reasoning power; the kind of life which is opposed to this he consistently hates. Those who have not the true philosophic temper, but a mere surface colouring of opinions penetrating, like sunburn, only skin deep, when they see how great the range of studies is, how much labour is involved in it, and how necessary to the pursuit it is to have an orderly regulation of the daily life, come to the conclusion that the thing is difficult and impossible for them, and are actually incapable of carrying out the course of study; while some of them persuade themselves that they have sufficiently studied the whole matter and have no need of any further effort. This is the sure test and is the safest one to apply to those who live in luxury and are incapable of continuous effort; it ensures that such a man shall not throw the blame upon his teacher but on himself, because he cannot bring to the pursuit all the qualities necessary to it. Thus it came about that I said to Dionysios what I did

say on that occasion.

I did not, however, give a complete exposition, nor did Dionysios ask for one. For he professed to know many, and those the most important, points, and to have a sufficient hold of them through instruction given by others. I hear also that he has since written about what he heard from me, composing what professes to be his own handbook, very different, so he says, from the doctrines which he heard from me; but of its contents I know nothing; I know indeed that others have written on the same subjects; but who they are, is more than they know themselves. Thus much at least, I can say about all writers, past or future, who say they know the things to which I devote myself, whether by hearing the teaching of me or of others, or by their own discoveries — that according to my view it is not possible for them to have any real skill in the matter. There neither is nor ever will be a treatise of mine on the subject. For it does not admit of exposition like other branches of knowledge; but after much converse about the matter itself and a life lived together, suddenly a light, as it were, is kindled in one soul by a flame that leaps to it from another, and thereafter sustains itself. Yet this much I know — that if the things were written or put into words, it would be done best by me, and that, if they were written badly, I should be the person most pained. Again, if they had appeared to me to admit adequately of writing and exposition, what task in life could I have performed nobler than this, to write what is of great service to mankind and to bring the nature of things into the light for all to see? But I do not think it a good thing for men that there should be a disquisition, as it is called, on this topic — except for some few, who are able with a little teaching to find it out for themselves. As for the rest, it would fill some of them quite illogically with a mistaken feeling of contempt, and others with lofty and vain-glorious expectations, as though they had learnt something high and mighty.

On this point I intend to speak a little more at length; for perhaps, when I have done so, things will be clearer with regard to my present subject. There is an argument which holds good against the man who ventures to put anything whatever into writing on questions of this nature; it has often before been stated by me, and it seems suitable to the present occasion.

For everything that exists there are three instruments by which the knowledge of it is necessarily imparted; fourth, there is the knowledge itself, and, as fifth, we must count the thing itself which is known and truly exists. The first is the

name, the second the definition, the third the image, and the fourth the knowledge. If you wish to learn what I mean, take these in the case of one instance, and so understand them in the case of all. A circle is a thing spoken of, and its name is that very word which we have just uttered. The second thing belonging to it is its definition, made up names and verbal forms. For that which has the name “round,” “annular,” or, “circle,” might be defined as that which has the distance from its circumference to its centre everywhere equal. Third, comes that which is drawn and rubbed out again, or turned on a lathe and broken up — none of which things can happen to the circle itself — to which the other things mentioned have reference; for it is something of a different order from them. Fourth, comes knowledge, intelligence and right opinion about these things. Under this one head we must group everything which has its existence, not in words nor in bodily shapes, but in souls — from which it is clear that it is something different from the nature of the circle itself and from the three things mentioned before. Of these things intelligence comes closest in kinship and likeness to the fifth, and the others are farther distant.

The same applies to straight as well as to circular form, to colours, to the good, the beautiful, the just, to all bodies whether manufactured or coming into being in the course of nature, to fire, water, and all such things, to every living being, to character in souls, and to all things done and suffered. For in the case of all these, no one, if he has not somehow or other got hold of the four things first mentioned, can ever be completely a partaker of knowledge of the fifth. Further, on account of the weakness of language, these (i.e., the four) attempt to show what each thing is like, not less than what each thing is. For this reason no man of intelligence will venture to express his philosophical views in language, especially not in language that is unchangeable, which is true of that which is set down in written characters.

Again you must learn the point which comes next. Every circle, of those which are by the act of man drawn or even turned on a lathe, is full of that which is opposite to the fifth thing. For everywhere it has contact with the straight. But the circle itself, we say, has nothing in either smaller or greater, of that which is its opposite. We say also that the name is not a thing of permanence for any of them, and that nothing prevents the things now called round from being called straight, and the straight things round; for those who make changes and

call things by opposite names, nothing will be less permanent (than a name). Again with regard to the definition, if it is made up of names and verbal forms, the same remark holds that there is no sufficiently durable permanence in it. And there is no end to the instances of the ambiguity from which each of the four suffers; but the greatest of them is that which we mentioned a little earlier, that, whereas there are two things, that which has real being, and that which is only a quality, when the soul is seeking to know, not the quality, but the essence, each of the four presenting to the soul by word and in act that which it is not seeking (i.e., the quality), a thing open to refutation by the senses, being merely the thing presented to the soul in each particular case whether by statement or the act of showing, fills, one may say, every man with puzzlement and perplexity.

Now in subjects in which, by reason of our defective education, we have not been accustomed even to search for the truth, but are satisfied with whatever images are presented to us, we are not held up to ridicule by one another, the questioned by questioners, who can pull to pieces and criticise the four things. But in subjects where we try to compel a man to give a clear answer about the fifth, any one of those who are capable of overthrowing an antagonist gets the better of us, and makes the man, who gives an exposition in speech or writing or in replies to questions, appear to most of his hearers to know nothing of the things on which he is attempting to write or speak; for they are sometimes not aware that it is not the mind of the writer or speaker which is proved to be at fault, but the defective nature of each of the four instruments. The process however of dealing with all of these, as the mind moves up and down to each in turn, does after much effort give birth in a well-constituted mind to knowledge of that which is well constituted. But if a man is ill-constituted by nature (as the state of the soul is naturally in the majority both in its capacity for learning and in what is called moral character) — or it may have become so by deterioration — not even Lynceus could endow such men with the power of sight.

In one word, the man who has no natural kinship with this matter cannot be made akin to it by quickness of learning or memory; for it cannot be engendered at all in natures which are foreign to it. Therefore, if men are not by nature or kinship allied to justice and all other things that are honourable, though they may be good at learning and remembering other knowledge of

various kinds — or if they have the kinship but are slow learners and have no memory — none of all these will ever learn to the full the truth about virtue and vice. For both must be learnt together; and together also must be learnt, by complete and long continued study, as I said at the beginning, the true and the false about all that has real being. After much effort, as names, definitions, sights, and other data of sense are brought into contact and friction one with another, in the course of scrutiny and kindly testing by men who proceed by question and answer without ill will, with a sudden flash there shines forth understanding about every problem, and an intelligence whose efforts reach the furthest limits of human powers. Therefore every man of worth, when dealing with matters of worth, will be far from exposing them to ill feeling and misunderstanding among men by committing them to writing. In one word, then, it may be known from this that, if one sees written treatises composed by anyone, either the laws of a lawgiver, or in any other form whatever, these are not for that man the things of most worth, if he is a man of worth, but that his treasures are laid up in the fairest spot that he possesses. But if these things were worked at by him as things of real worth, and committed to writing, then surely, not gods, but men “have themselves bereft him of his wits.”

Anyone who has followed this discourse and digression will know well that, if Dionysios or anyone else, great or small, has written a treatise on the highest matters and the first principles of things, he has, so I say, neither heard nor learnt any sound teaching about the subject of his treatise; otherwise, he would have had the same reverence for it, which I have, and would have shrunk from putting it forth into a world of discord and uncomeliness. For he wrote it, not as an aid to memory — since there is no risk of forgetting it, if a man’s soul has once laid hold of it; for it is expressed in the shortest of statements — but if he wrote it at all, it was from a mean craving for honour, either putting it forth as his own invention, or to figure as a man possessed of culture, of which he was not worthy, if his heart was set on the credit of possessing it. If then Dionysios gained this culture from the one lesson which he had from me, we may perhaps grant him the possession of it, though how he acquired it — God wot, as the Theban says; for I gave him the teaching, which I have described, on that one occasion and never again.

The next point which requires to be made clear to anyone who wishes to discover how things really happened, is the reason why it came about that I did

not continue my teaching in a second and third lesson and yet oftener. Does Dionysios, after a single lesson, believe himself to know the matter, and has he an adequate knowledge of it, either as having discovered it for himself or learnt it before from others, or does he believe my teaching to be worthless, or, thirdly, to be beyond his range and too great for him, and himself to be really unable to live as one who gives his mind to wisdom and virtue? For if he thinks it worthless, he will have to contend with many who say the opposite, and who would be held in far higher repute as judges than Dionysios; if, on the other hand, he thinks he has discovered or learnt the things and that they are worth having as part of a liberal education, how could he, unless he is an extraordinary person, have so recklessly dishonoured the master who has led the way in these subjects? How he dishonoured him, I will now state.

Up to this time he had allowed Dion to remain in possession of his property and to receive the income from it. But not long after the foregoing events, as if he had entirely forgotten his letter to that effect, he no longer allowed Dion's trustees to send him remittances to the Peloponnese, on the pretence that the owner of the property was not Dion but Dion's son, his own nephew, of whom he himself was legally the trustee. These were the actual facts which occurred up to the point which we have reached. They had opened my eyes as to the value of Dionysios' desire for philosophy, and I had every right to complain, whether I wished to do so or not. Now by this time it was summer and the season for sea voyages; therefore I decided that I must not be vexed with Dionysios rather than with myself and those who had forced me to come for the third time into the strait of Scylla, that once again I might to fell Charybdis measure back my course, but must tell Dionysios that it was impossible for me to remain after this outrage had been put upon Dion. He tried to soothe me and begged me to remain, not thinking it desirable for himself that I should arrive post haste in person as the bearer of such tidings. When his entreaties produced no effect, he promised that he himself would provide me with transport. For my intention was to embark on one of the trading ships and sail away, being indignant and thinking it my duty to face all dangers, in case I was prevented from going — since plainly and obviously I was doing no wrong, but was the party wronged.

Seeing me not at all inclined to stay, he devised the following scheme to make me stay during that sailing season. On the next day he came to me and

made a plausible proposal: "Let us put an end," he said, "to these constant quarrels between you and me about Dion and his affairs. For your sake I will do this for Dion. I require him to take his own property and reside in the Peloponnese, not as an exile, but on the understanding that it is open for him to migrate here, when this step has the joint approval of himself, me, and you his friends; and this shall be open to him on the understanding that he does not plot against me. You and your friends and Dion's friends here must be sureties for him in this, and he must give you security. Let the funds which he receives be deposited in the Peloponnese and at Athens, with persons approved by you, and let Dion enjoy the income from them but have no power to take them out of deposit without the approval of you and your friends. For I have no great confidence in him, that, if he has this property at his disposal, he will act justly towards me, for it will be no small amount; but I have more confidence in you and your friends. See if this satisfies you; and on these conditions remain for the present year, and at the next season you shall depart taking the property with you. I am quite sure that Dion will be grateful to you, if you accomplish so much on his behalf."

When I heard this proposal I was vexed, but after reflection said I would let him know my view of it on the following day. We agreed to that effect for the moment, and afterwards when I was by myself I pondered the matter in much distress. The first reflection that came up, leading the way in my self-communing, was this: "Come, suppose that Dionysios intends to do none of the things which he has mentioned, but that, after my departure, he writes a plausible letter to Dion, and orders several of his creatures to write to the same effect, telling him of the proposal which he has now made to me, making out that he was willing to do what he proposed, but that I refused and completely neglected Dion's interests. Further, suppose that he is not willing to allow my departure, and without giving personal orders to any of the merchants, makes it clear, as he easily can, to all that he not wish me to sail, will anyone consent to take me as a passenger, when I leave the house of Dionysios?"

For in addition to my other troubles, I was lodging at that time in the garden which surrounds his house, from which even the gatekeeper would have refused to let me go, unless an order had been sent to him from Dionysios. "Suppose however that I wait for the year, I shall be able to write word of these things to Dion, stating the position in which I am, and the steps which I am

trying to take. And if Dionysios does any of the things which he says, I shall have accomplished something that is not altogether to be sneered at; for Dion's property is, at a fair estimate, perhaps not less than a hundred talents. If however the prospect which I see looming in the future takes the course which may reasonably be expected, I know not what I shall do with myself. Still it is perhaps necessary to go on working for a year, and to attempt to prove by actual fact the machinations of Dionysios."

Having come to this decision, on the following day I said to Dionysios, "I have decided to remain. But," I continued, "I must ask that you will not regard me as empowered to act for Dion, but will along with me write a letter to him, stating what has now been decided, and enquire whether this course satisfies him. If it does not, and if he has other wishes and demands, he must write particulars of them as soon as possible, and you must not as yet take any hasty step with regard to his interests."

This was what was said and this was the agreement which was made, almost in these words. Well, after this the trading-ships took their departure, and it was no longer possible for me to take mine, when Dionysios, if you please, addressed me with the remark that half the property must be regarded as belonging to Dion and half to his son. Therefore, he said, he would sell it, and when it was sold would give half to me to take away, and would leave half on the spot for the son. This course, he said, was the most just. This proposal was a blow to me, and I thought it absurd to argue any longer with him; however, I said that we must wait for Dion's letter, and then once more write to tell him of this new proposal. His next step was the brilliant one of selling the whole of Dion's property, using his own discretion with regard to the manner and terms of the sale and of the purchasers. He spoke not a word to me about the matter from beginning to end, and I followed his example and never talked to him again about Dion's affairs; for I did not think that I could do any good by doing so. This is the history so far of my efforts to come to the rescue of philosophy and of my friends.

After this Dionysios and I went on with our daily life, I with my eyes turned abroad like a bird yearning to fly from its perch, and he always devising some new way of scaring me back and of keeping a tight hold on Dion's property. However, we gave out to all Sicily that we were friends. Dionysios, now deserting the policy of his father, attempted to lower the pay of the older

members of his body guard. The soldiers were furious, and, assembling in great numbers, declared that they would not submit. He attempted to use force to them, shutting the gates of the acropolis; but they charged straight for the walls, yelling out an unintelligible and ferocious war cry. Dionysios took fright and conceded all their demands and more to the peltasts then assembled.

A rumour soon spread that Heracleides had been the cause of all the trouble. Hearing this, Heracleides kept out of the way. Dionysios was trying to get hold of him, and being unable to do so, sent for Theodotes to come to him in his garden. It happened that I was walking in the garden at the same time. I neither know nor did I hear the rest of what passed between them, but what Theodotes said to Dionysios in my presence I know and remember. "Plato," he said, "I am trying to convince our friend Dionysios that, if I am able to bring Heracleides before us to defend himself on the charges which have been made against him, and if he decides that Heracleides must no longer live in Sicily, he should be allowed (this is my point) to take his son and wife and sail to the Peloponnese and reside there, taking no action there against Dionysios and enjoying the income of his property. I have already sent for him and will send for him again; and if he comes in obedience either to my former message or to this one — well and good. But I beg and entreat Dionysios that, if anyone finds Heracleides either in the country or here, no harm shall come to him, but that he may retire from the country till Dionysios comes to some other decision. Do you agree to this?" he added, addressing Dionysios. "I agree," he replied, "that even if he is found at your house, no harm shall be done to him beyond what has now been said."

On the following day Eurybios and Theodotes came to me in the evening, both greatly disturbed. Theodotes said, "Plato, you were present yesterday during the promises made by Dionysios to me and to you about Heracleides?" "Certainly," I replied. "Well," he continued, "at this moment peltasts are scouring the country seeking to arrest Heracleides; and he must be somewhere in this neighbourhood. For Heaven's sake come with us to Dionysios." So we went and stood in the presence of Dionysios; and those two stood shedding silent tears, while I said: "These men are afraid that you may take strong measures with regard to Heracleides contrary to what was agreed yesterday. For it seems that he has returned and has been seen somewhere about here."

On hearing this he blazed up and turned all colours, as a man would in a rage. Theodotes, falling before him in tears, took his hand and entreated him to do nothing of the sort. But I broke in and tried to encourage him, saying: "Be of good cheer, Theodotes; Dionysios will not have the heart to take any fresh step contrary to his promises of yesterday." Fixing his eye on me, and assuming his most autocratic air he said, "To you I promised nothing small or great." "By the gods," I said, "you did promise that forbearance for which our friend here now appeals." With these words I turned away and went out. After this he continued the hunt for Heracleides, and Theodotes, sending messages, urged Heracleides to take flight. Dionysios sent out Teisias and some peltasts with orders to pursue him. But Heracleides, as it was said, was just in time, by a small fraction of a day, in making his escape into Carthaginian territory.

After this Dionysios thought that his long-cherished scheme not to restore Dion's property would give him a plausible excuse for hostility towards me; and first of all he sent me out of the acropolis, finding a pretext that the women were obliged to hold a sacrificial service for ten days in the garden in which I had my lodging. He therefore ordered me to stay outside in the house of Archedemos during this period. While I was there, Theodotes sent for me and made a great outpouring of indignation at these occurrences, throwing the blame on Dionysios. Hearing that I had been to see Theodotes he regarded this as another excuse, sister to the previous one, for quarrelling with me. Sending a messenger, he enquired if I had really been conferring with Theodotes on his invitation. "Certainly," I replied. "Well," continued the messenger, "he ordered me to tell you that you are not acting at all well in preferring always Dion and Dion's friends to him." And he did not send for me to return to his house, as though it were now clear that Theodotes and Heracleides were my friends, and he my enemy. He also thought that I had no kind feelings towards him because the property of Dion was now entirely done for.

After this I resided outside the acropolis among the mercenaries. Various people then came to me, among them those of the ships' crews who came from Athens, my own fellow citizens, and reported that I was evil spoken of among the peltasts, and that some of them were threatening to make an end of me, if they could get hold of me. Accordingly I devised the following plan for my safety.

I sent to Archytes and my other friends in Taras, telling them the plight I was in. Finding some excuse for an embassy from their city, they sent a thirty-oared galley with Lamiscos, one of themselves, who came and entreated Dionysios about me, saying that I wanted to go, and that he should on no account stand in my way. He consented and allowed me to go, giving me money for the journey. But for Dion's property I made no further request, nor was any of it restored.

I made my way to the Peloponnese to Olympia, where I found Dion a spectator at the Games, and told him what had occurred. Calling Zeus to be his witness, he at once urged me with my relatives and friends to make preparations for taking vengeance on Dionysios — our ground for action being the breach of faith to a guest — so he put it and regarded it, while his own was his unjust expulsion and banishment. Hearing this, I told him that he might call my friends to his aid, if they wished to go; "But for myself," I continued, "you and others in a way forced me to be the sharer of Dionysios' table and hearth and his associate in the acts of religion. He probably believed the current slanders, that I was plotting with you against him and his despotic rule; yet feelings of scruple prevailed with him, and he spared my life. Again, I am hardly of the age for being comrade in arms to anyone; also I stand as a neutral between you, if ever you desire friendship and wish to benefit one another; so long as you aim at injuring one another, call others to your aid." This I said, because I was disgusted with my misguided journeyings to Sicily and my ill-fortune there. But they disobeyed me and would not listen to my attempts at reconciliation, and so brought on their own heads all the evils which have since taken place. For if Dionysios had restored to Dion his property or been reconciled with him on any terms, none of these things would have happened, so far as human foresight can foretell. Dion would have easily been kept in check by my wishes and influence. But now, rushing upon one another, they have caused universal disaster.

Dion's aspiration however was the same that I should say my own or that of any other right-minded man ought to be. With regard to his own power, his friends and his country the ideal of such a man would be to win the greatest power and honour by rendering the greatest services. And this end is not attained if a man gets riches for himself, his supporters and his country, by forming plots and getting together conspirators, being all the while a poor

creature, not master of himself, overcome by the cowardice which fears to fight against pleasures; nor is it attained if he goes on to kill the men of substance, whom he speaks of as the enemy, and to plunder their possessions, and invites his confederates and supporters to do the same, with the object that no one shall say that it is his fault, if he complains of being poor. The same is true if anyone renders services of this kind to the State and receives honours from her for distributing by decrees the property of the few among the many — or if, being in charge of the affairs of a great State which rules over many small ones, he unjustly appropriates to his own State the possessions of the small ones. For neither a Dion nor any other man will, with his eyes open, make his way by steps like these to a power which will be fraught with destruction to himself and his descendants for all time; but he will advance towards constitutional government and the framing of the justest and best laws, reaching these ends without executions and murders even on the smallest scale.

This course Dion actually followed, thinking it preferable to suffer iniquitous deeds rather than to do them; but, while taking precautions against them, he nevertheless, when he had reached the climax of victory over his enemies, took a false step and fell, a catastrophe not at all surprising. For a man of piety, temperance and wisdom, when dealing with the impious, would not be entirely blind to the character of such men, but it would perhaps not be surprising if he suffered the catastrophe that might befall a good ship's captain, who would not be entirely unaware of the approach of a storm, but might be unaware of its extraordinary and startling violence, and might therefore be overwhelmed by its force. The same thing caused Dion's downfall. For he was not unaware that his assailants were thoroughly bad men, but he was unaware how high a pitch of infatuation and of general wickedness and greed they had reached. This was the cause of his downfall, which has involved Sicily in countless sorrows.

What counsel I have to offer, after this narrative of events, has been given already, and so let it suffice. But I deemed it necessary to explain the reasons why I undertook my second journey to Sicily because absurd and irrational stories are being told about it. If, therefore, the account I have now given appears to anyone more rational, and if anyone believes that it supplies sufficient excuses for what took place, then I shall regard that account as both

reasonable and sufficient.

VIII

The eighth epistle is addressed to the companions of Dion and was probably written some months after the Seventh Letter but before Dion's assassin, Callippus, had been driven out by Hipparinus. It counsels compromise between the parties of Dion and Dionysius the Younger, the former favoring democracy, the latter, tyranny. The compromise would be a monarchy limited by laws. Plato to the relatives and companions of Dion wishes well-doing.

The policy which would best serve to secure your real "well-doing" is that which I shall now endeavor as best I can to describe to you. And I hope that my advice will not only be salutary to you (though to you in special), but also to all the Syracusans, in the second place, and, in the third, to your enemies and your foes, unless any of them be a doer of impious deeds; for such deeds are irremediable and none could ever wash out their stain. Mark, then, what I now say. Now that the tyranny is broken down over the whole of Sicily all your fighting rages round this one subject of dispute, the one party desiring to recover the headship, and the other to put the finishing touch to the expulsion of the tyrants. Now the majority of men always believe that the right advice about these matters is the advising of such action as will do the greatest possible harm to one's enemies and the greatest possible good to one's friends; whereas it is by no means easy to do much harm to others without also suffering in turn much harm oneself. And without going far afield one may see such consequences clearly in the recent events in Sicily itself, where the one faction is trying to inflict injury and the other to ward off the injurers; and the tale thereof, if ever you told it to others, would inevitably prove a most impressive lesson. Of such policies, one may say, there is no lack; but as for a policy which would prove beneficial to all alike, foes as well as friends, or at least as little detrimental as possible to either, such a policy is neither easy to discern, nor, when discerned, easy to carry out; and to advise such a policy or attempt to describe it is much like saying a prayer. Be it so, then, that this is nothing but a prayer (and in truth every man ought always to begin his speaking and his thinking with the gods); yet may it attain fulfilment in indicating some such counsel as this: — Now and almost ever since the war

began both you and your enemies have been ruled continuously by that one family which your fathers set on the throne in the hour of their greatest distress, when Greek Sicily was in the utmost danger of being entirely overrun by the Carthaginians and barbarized. On that occasion they chose Dionysius because of his youth and warlike prowess to take charge of the military operations for which he was suited, with Hipparinus, who was older, as his fellow-counsellor, appointing them dictators for the safeguarding of Sicily, with the title, as men say, of “tyrants.” But whether one prefers to suppose that the cause which ultimately brought about their salvation was divine Fortune and the Deity, or the virtue of the rulers, or possibly the combination of both assisted by the citizens of that age — as to this let everyone form his own notion; in any case this was the way in which salvation for the men of that generation came about. Seeing, then, that they proved themselves men of such a quality, it is surely right that they should be repaid with gratitude by all those whom they saved. But if in after times the tyrant’s house has wrongly abused the bounty of the city, the penalty for this it has suffered in part, and in part it will have to pay. What, then, is the penalty rightly to be exacted from them under existing circumstances? If you were able to get quit of them easily, without serious dangers and trouble, or if they were able to regain the empire without difficulty, then, in either case, it would not have been possible for me so much as to offer the advice which I am now about to utter; but as it is, both of you ought to bear in mind and remember how many times each party has hopefully imagined that it lacked but a little of achieving complete success almost every time; and, what is more, that it is precisely this little deficiency which is always turning out to be the cause of great and numberless evils. And of these evils no limit is ever reached, but what seems to be the end of the old is always being linked on to the beginning of a new brood; and because of this endless chain of evil the whole tribe of tyrants and democrats alike will be in danger of destruction. But should any of these consequences — likely as they are though lamentable — come to pass, hardly a trace of the Greek tongue will remain in all Sicily, since it will have been transformed into a province or dependency of Phoenicians or Opicians. Against this all the Greeks must with all zeal provide a remedy. If, therefore, any man knows of a remedy that is truer and better than that which I am now about to propose, and puts it openly before us, he shall have the best right to the title “Friend of Greece.”

The remedy, however, which commends itself to me I shall now endeavor to explain, using the utmost freedom of speech and a tone of impartial justice. For indeed I am speaking somewhat like an arbitrator, and addressing to the two parties, the former despot and his subjects, as though each were a single person, the counsel I gave of old. And now also my word of advice to every despot would be that he should shun the despot's title and his task, and change his despotism for kingship. That this is possible has been actually proved by that wise and good man Lycurgus; for when he saw that the family of his kinsmen in Argos and in Messene had in both cases destroyed both themselves and their city by advancing from kingship to despotic power, he was alarmed about his own city as well as his own family, and as a remedy he introduced the authority of the Elders and of the Ephors to serve as a bond of safety for the kingly power; and because of this they have already been kept safe and glorious all these generations since Law became with them supreme king over men instead of men being despots over the laws. And now also I urgently admonish you all to do the same. Those of you who are rushing after despotic power I exhort to change their course and to flee betimes from what is counted as "bliss" by men of insatiable cravings and empty heads, and to try to transform themselves into the semblance of a king, and to become subject to kingly laws, owing their possession of the highest honors to the voluntary goodwill of the citizens and to the laws. And I should counsel those who follow after the ways of freedom, and shun as a really evil thing the yoke of bondage, to beware lest by their insatiable craving for an immoderate freedom they should ever fall sick of their forefathers' disease, which the men of that time suffered because of their excessive anarchy, through indulging an unmeasured love of freedom. For the Siceliots of the age before Dionysius and Hipparinus began to rule were living blissfully, as they supposed, being in luxury and ruling also over their rulers; and they even stoned to death the ten generals who preceded Dionysius, without any legal trial, to show that they were no slaves of any rightful master, nor of any law, but were in all ways altogether free. Hence it was that the rule of the despots befell them. For as regards both slavery and freedom, when either is in excess it is wholly evil, but when in moderation wholly good; and moderate slavery consists in being the slave of God, immoderate, in being the slave of men; and men of sound sense have Law for their God, but men without sense Pleasure. Since these things are naturally

ordained thus, I exhort Dion's friends to declare what I am advising to all the Syracusans, as being the joint advice both of Dion and myself; and I will be the interpreter of what he would have said to you now, were he alive and able to speak. "Pray then," someone might say, "what message does the advice of Dion declare to us concerning the present situation?" It is this: "Above all else, O ye Syracusans, accept such laws as do not appear to you likely to turn your minds covetously to money-making and wealth; but rather — since there are three objects, the soul, the body, and money besides, — accept such laws as cause the virtue of the soul to be held first in honor, that of the body second, subordinate to that of the soul, and the honor paid to money to come third and last, in subjection to both the body and the soul. The ordinance which effects this will be truly laid down by you as law, since it really makes those who obey it blessed; whereas the phrase which terms the rich "blessed" is not only a miserable one in itself, being the senseless phrase of women and children, but also renders those who believe it equally miserable. That this exhortation of mine is true you will learn by actual experience if you make trial of what I am now saying concerning laws; for in all matters experience is held to be the truest test. And when you have accepted laws of this kind, inasmuch as Sicily is beset with dangers, and you are neither complete victors nor utterly vanquished, it will be, no doubt, both just and profitable for you all to pursue a middle course — not only those of you who flee from the harshness of the tyranny, but also those who crave to win back that tyranny — the men whose ancestors in those days performed the mightiest deed in saving the Greeks from the barbarians, with the result that it is possible for us now to talk about constitutions; whereas, if they had then been ruined, no place would have been left at all for either talk or hope. So, then, let the one party of you gain freedom by the aid of kingly rule, and the other gain a form of kingly rule that is not irresponsible, with the laws exercising despotic sway over the kings themselves as well as the rest of the citizens, in case they do anything illegal. On these conditions set up kings for all of you, by the help of the gods and with honest and sound intent, — my own son first in return for twofold favors, namely that conferred by me and that conferred by my father; for he delivered the city from barbarians in his own day, while I, in the present day, have twice delivered it from tyrants, whereof you yourselves are witnesses. And as your second king created the man who possesses the same name as my father and is

son to Dionysius, in return for his present assistance and for his pious disposition; for he, though he is sprung from a tyrant's loins, is in act of delivering the city of his own free will, gaining thereby for himself and for his race everlasting honor in place of a transitory and unrighteous tyranny. And, thirdly, you ought to invite to become king of Syracuse — as willing king of a willing city — him who is now commander of your enemies' army, Dionysius, son of Dionysius, if so be that he is willing of his own accord to transform himself into a king, being moved thereto by fear of fortune's changes, and by pity for his country and the untended state of her temples and her tombs, lest because of his ambition he utterly ruin all and become a cause of rejoicing to the barbarians. And these three, — whether you grant them the power of the Laconian kings or curtail that power by a common agreement, — you should establish as kings in some such manner as the following, which indeed has been described to you before, yet listen to it now again. If you find that the family of Dionysius and Hipparinus is willing to make an end of the evils now occurring in order to secure the salvation of Sicily provided that they receive honors both in the present and for the future for themselves and for their family, then on these terms, as was said before, convoke envoys empowered to negotiate a pact, such men as they may choose, whether they come from Sicily or from abroad or both, and in such numbers as may be mutually agreed. And these men, on their arrival, should first lay down laws and a constitution which is so framed as to permit the kings to be put in control of the temples and of all else that fitly belongs to those who once were benefactors. And as controllers of war and peace they should appoint Law-wardens, thirty-five in number, in conjunction with the People and the Council. And there should be various courts of law for various suits, but in matters involving death or exile the Thirty-five should form the court; and in addition to these there should be judges selected from the magistrates of each preceding year, one from each magistracy — the one, that is, who is approved as the most good and just; and these should decide for the ensuing year all cases which involve the death, imprisonment or transportation of citizens; and it should not be permissible for a king to be a judge of such suits, but he, like a priest, should remain clean from bloodshed and imprisonment and exile. This is what I planned for you when I was alive, and it is still my plan now. With your aid, had not Furies in the guise of guests prevented me, I should then have

overcome our foes, and established the State in the way I planned; and after this, had my intentions been realized, I should have resettled the rest of Sicily by depriving the barbarians of the land they now hold — excepting those who fought in defence of the common liberty against the tyranny — and restoring the former occupiers of the Greek regions to their ancient and ancestral homes. And now likewise I counsel you all with one accord to adopt and execute these same plans, and to summon all to this task, and to count him who refuses as a common enemy. Nor is such a course impossible; for when plans actually exist in two souls, and when they are readily perceived upon reflection to be the best, he who pronounces such plans impossible is hardly a man of understanding. And by the “two souls” I mean the soul of Hipparinus the son of Dionysius and that of my own son; for should these agree together, I believe that all the rest of the Syracusans who have a care for their city will consent. Well then, when you have paid due honor, with prayer, to all the gods and all the other powers to whom, along with the gods, it is due, cease not from urging and exhorting both friends and opponents by gentle means and every means, until, like a heaven-sent dream presented to waking eyes, the plan which I have pictured in words be wrought by you into plain deeds and brought to a happy consummation.”

IX

Plato to Archytas of Tarentum wishes well-doing.

Archippus and Philonides and their party have arrived, bringing us the letter which you gave them, and also reporting your news. Their business with the city they have completed without difficulty — for in truth it was not at all a hard task; and they have given us a full account of you, telling us that you are somewhat distressed at not being able to get free from your public engagements. Now it is plain to almost everyone that the pleasantest thing in life is to attend to one's own business, especially when the business one chooses is such as yours; yet you ought also to bear in mind that no one of us exists for himself alone, but one share of our existence belongs to our country, another to our parents, a third to the rest of our friends, while a great part is given over to those needs of the hour with which our life is beset. And when our country itself calls us to public duties, it were surely improper not to hearken to the call; for to do so will involve the further consequence of leaving

room to worthless men who engage in public affairs from motives that are by no means the best. Enough, however, of this subject. We are looking after Echecrates now and we shall do so in the future also, for your sake and that of his father Phrynion, as well as for the sake of the youth himself.

XI

Plato to laodamas wishes well-doing.

I wrote to you before that in view of all that you say it is of great importance that you yourself should come to Athens. But since you say that this is impossible, the second best course would have been that I, if possible, or Socrates should go to you, as in fact you said in your letter. At present, however, Socrates is laid up with an attack of strangury; while if I were to go there, it would be humiliating if I failed to succeed in the task for which you are inviting me. But I myself have no great hopes of success (as to my reasons for this, another long letter would be required to explain them in full), and moreover, because of my age, I am not physically fit to go wandering about and to run such risks as one encounters both by sea and land; and at present there is nothing but danger for travellers everywhere. I am able, however, to give you and the settlers advice which may seem to be, as Hesiod says, "Trivial when uttered by me, but hard to be understood." For they are mistaken if they believe that a constitution could ever be well established by any kind of legislation whatsoever without the existence of some authority in the State which supervises the daily life both of slaves and freemen, to see that it is both temperate and manly. And this condition might be secured if you already possess men who are worthy of such authority. If, however, you require someone to train them, you do not, in my opinion, possess either the trainer or the pupils to be trained; so it only remains for you to pray to the gods. For, in truth, the earlier States also were mostly organized in this way; and they came to have a good constitution at a later date, as a result of their being confronted with grave troubles, either through war or other difficulties, whenever there arose in their midst at such a crisis a man of noble character in possession of great power. So it is both right and necessary that you should at first be eager for these results, but also that you should conceive of them in the way I suggest, and not be so foolish as to suppose that you will readily accomplish anything. Good-fortune attend you!

XIII

Plato to Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, wishes well-doing.

Let this greeting not only commence my letter but serve at the same time as a token that it is from me. Once when you were feasting the Locrian youths and were seated at a distance from me, you got up and came over to me and in a friendly spirit made some remark which I thought excellent, as also did my neighbor at the table, who was one of the beautiful youths. And he then said— “No doubt, Dionysius, you find Plato of great benefit as regards philosophy!” And you replied— “Yes, and in regard to much else; since from the very moment of my inviting him I derived benefit at once from the very fact that I had invited him.” This tone, then, should be carefully preserved, in order that the mutual benefit we derive from one another may always go on increasing. So by way of helping towards this end I am now sending you some of the Pythagorean works and of the “Divisions,” and also, as we arranged at that time, a man of whom you and Archytas — if Archytas has come to your court — may be able to make use. His name is Helicon, he is a native of Cyzicus, and he is a pupil of Eudoxus and exceedingly well versed in all his doctrine. Moreover, he has associated with one of the pupils of Isocrates and with Polyxenus, one of Bryson’s companions; and, what is rare in these cases, he is not without charm of address nor is he of a churlish disposition; rather he would seem to be gay and good-tempered. This, however, I say with trepidation, since I am uttering an opinion about a man, and man though not a worthless is an inconstant creature, save in very few instances and in few respects. For even in this man’s case my fears and suspicions were such that, when I met him, I observed him carefully myself and I made inquiry also from his fellow-citizens, and no one had anything bad to say of the man. But do you yourself also keep him under observation and be cautious. It were best, then, if you have any leisure at all, to take lessons from him in addition to your other studies in philosophy; but if not, get someone else thoroughly taught so that you may learn from him when you have leisure, and thereby make progress and gain glory, — that so the benefit you gain from me may still continue. So much, then, for this subject.

As regards the things you wrote to me to send you, I have had the Apollo made and Leptines is bringing it to you. It is by a young and good craftsman

named Leochares. He had at his shop another piece which was, as I thought, very artistic; so I bought it with the intention of presenting it to your wife, because she tended me both in health and sickness in a manner which did credit both to you and to me. So will you give it to her, unless you prefer to do otherwise. I am also sending twelve jars of sweet wine for the children and two of honey. We arrived too late for the stoling of the figs, and the myrtle-berries that were stored have rotted; but in future we shall take better care of them. About the plants Leptines will tell you. The money to meet these expenses — I mean for the purchases mentioned and for certain State taxes — I obtained from Leptines, telling him what I thought it best became us to tell him, it being also true, — that the sum of about sixteen minas which we spent on the Leucadian ship belonged to us; this, then, was the sum I obtained, and on obtaining it I used it myself and sent off these purchases to you. Next, let me tell you what your position is in regard to money, both what you have at Athens and my own. I shall make use of your money, as I told you previously, just as I do that of all my other friends; I use as little as I possibly can, only just so much as I and the man I get it from agree to be necessary or right or fitting. Now this is how I am situated at present. I have in my charge four daughters of those nieces of mine who died at the time when you bade me to wear a crown, and I refused; and of these one is of marriageable age, one eight years old, one a little over three years, and the fourth not yet a year old. To these girls I and my friends must give portions — to all of them, that is, whom I live to see married; as to the rest, they must look to themselves. Nor should I give portions to any whose fathers may get to be richer than I; though at present I am the wealthiest of them, and it was I who, with the help of Dion and others, gave their mothers their portions. Now the eldest one is marrying Speusippus, she being his sister's daughter. So for her I require no more than thirty minas, that being for us a reasonable dowry. Moreover, in case my own mother should die, no more than ten minas would be required for the building of her tomb. For such purposes, then, these are pretty well all my necessary requirements at the present time. And should any further expense, private or public, be incurred owing to my visit to your court, we must do as I said before: I must strive hard to keep the expense as low as possible, and if ever that is beyond my power, the charge must fall upon you. In the next place, as regards the spending of your own money at Athens, I have to tell you, first of

all, that, contrary to what we supposed, you have not a single friend who will advance money in case I am required to spend something on furnishing a chorus or the like; and further, if you yourself have some urgent affair on hand in which prompt expenditure is to your advantage, whereas it is to your disadvantage to have the expenditure deferred until the arrival of a messenger from you, such a state of affairs is not only awkward but reflects also on your honor. And in fact I discovered this myself when I sent Erastus to Andromedes the Aeginetan — from whom, as a friend of yours, you told me to borrow what I needed; as I wished to send you also some other valuable items which you had written for. He replied — naturally enough, as any man might — that when, on a previous occasion, he had advanced money on your father's account he had had difficulty in recovering it, and that he would now loan a small amount but no more. That was how I came to borrow from Leptines; and for this Leptines is deserving of praise, not that he gave it, but that he did so readily, and plainly showed his friendship and its quality in all else that he did or said regarding you. For it is surely right that I should report such actions, as well as the opposite kind, to show what I believe to be each man's attitude towards you. However, I will tell you candidly the position with regard to money matters; for it is right to do so, and, moreover, I shall be speaking from experience of your court. The agents who bring you the reports every time are unwilling to report anything which they think entails an expense, as being likely to bring them odium. Do you therefore accustom them and compel them to declare these matters as well as the rest; for it is right that you should know the whole state of affairs so far as you can and act as the judge, and not avoid this knowledge. For such a course will best serve to enhance your authority. For expenditure that is rightly laid out and rightly paid back is a good thing — as you yourself maintain and will maintain — not only for other purposes but also for the acquisition of money itself. Therefore, do not let those who profess to be devoted to you slander you before the world; for to have the reputation of being ill to deal with is neither good for your reputation nor honorable.

In the next place I shall speak about Dion. Other matters I cannot speak of as yet, until the letters from you arrive, as you said; with regard, however, to those matters which you forbade me to mention to him, I neither mentioned nor discussed them, but I did try to discover whether he would take their

occurrence hardly or calmly, and it seemed to me that if they occurred it would cause him no small vexation. As to all else Dion's attitude towards you seems to me to be reasonable both in word and deed.

To Cratinus the brother of Timotheus, and my own companion, let us present a hoplite's corslet, one of the soft kind for foot-soldiers; and to the daughters of Cebes three tunics of seven cubits, not made of the costly Amorgos stuff but of the Sicilian linen. The name of Cebes you probably know; for he is mentioned in writing in the Socratic discourses as conversing with Socrates, in company with Simmias, in the discourse concerning the Soul, he being an intimate and kindly friend of us all.

Concerning the sign which indicates which of my letters are seriously written and which not, I suppose that you remember it, but none the less bear it in mind and pay the utmost attention; for there are many bidding me to write, whom it is not easy to repulse openly. "God," then, is at the head of the serious letter, but "gods" of the less serious. The ambassadors requested me to write to you, and naturally so; for they are everywhere lauding both you and me with the utmost zeal; and not least Philagrus, who was then suffering with his hand. Philaides also, on his arrival from the Great King, was talking about you; and if it had not required a very long letter I would have told you in writing what he said; but as it is, ask Leptines to tell you. If you are sending the corslet or any of the other things I have written about, in case you have anyone you prefer yourself, give it to him, but if not, give it to Terillus; he is one of those who are constantly making the voyage, and he is a friend of ours who is skilled in philosophy as well as in other things. He is also a son-in-law of Teison who was city-steward at the time when we sailed away. Keep well and study philosophy and exhort thereto all the other young men; and greet for me your comrades at the game of ball; and charge Aristocritus, as well as the rest, that if any message or letter from me should come to your palace, he must take care that you are informed of it as soon as possible; and bid him remind you not to neglect the contents of my letters. So too now, do not neglect to repay Leptines his money, but pay it back as promptly as possible, in order that the others also, seeing how you deal with him, may be the more ready to assist us.

Iatrocles, the man whom I released on that occasion, along with Myronides, is now sailing with the things that I am sending: I ask you, then, to give him some paid post, as he is well-disposed towards you, and employ him for

whatever you wish. Preserve also this letter, either itself or a precis of it, and continue as you are.