

out their mattresses and rugs and took their sleep in the cool; thus they waited to see if he would go on standing all night too. He stood till dawn came and the sun rose; then walked away, after offering a prayer to the Sun.

"Then, if you care to hear of him in battle—for there also he must have his due— . . . let me tell you, gentlemen, what a notable figure he made when the army was retiring in flight from Delium: I happened to be there on horseback, while he marched under arms. The troops were in utter disorder, and he was retreating along with Laches, when I chanced to come up with them. . . . I noticed, first, how far he outdid Laches in collectedness, and next I felt—to use a phrase of yours, Aristophanes—how there he stepped along, as his wont is in our streets, 'strutting like a proud marsh-goose, with ever a sidelong glance,' turning a calm sidelong look on friend and foe alike, and convincing anyone even from afar that whoever cares to touch this person will find he can put up a stout enough defence. . . ."

[When Alcibiades had finished his speech] a great crowd of revellers arrived at the door. . . . [Soon] the whole place was in an uproar and, losing all order, they were forced to drink a vast amount of wine. Then, as Aristodemus related, Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and some others took their leave and departed; while he himself fell asleep, and slumbered a great while, for the nights were long. He awoke towards dawn, as the cocks were crowing; and immediately he saw that all the company were either sleeping or gone, except Agathon, Aristophanes, and Socrates, who alone remained awake and were drinking out of a large vessel, from left to right; and Socrates was arguing with them. As to most of the talk, Aristodemus had no recollection, for he had missed the beginning and was also rather drowsy; but the substance of it was, he said, that Socrates was driving them to the admission that the same man could have the knowledge required for writing comedy and tragedy—that the fully skilled tragedian could be a comedian as well. While they were being driven to this, and were but feebly following it, they began to nod; first Aristophanes dropped into a slumber, and then, as day began to dawn, Agathon also. When Socrates had seen them comfortable, he rose and went away . . . ; on arriving at the Lyceum, he washed himself, and then spent the rest of the day in his ordinary fashion; and so, when the day was done, he went home for the evening and reposed.³

SOCRATES' TRIAL

Though Socrates was extravagantly admired by a group of bright young men who enjoyed watching him trap their elders in contradictions, such a character was inevitably disliked and misunderstood by the general public. He set up his own moral convictions in opposition to those of the public—he was indifferent to "public opinion," in a democracy a most dangerous practice. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that he should have been brought to trial. One of the principal charges was atheism. The evidence the prosecution could present was convincing to an Athenian jury, for Socrates certainly did not believe in the gods in the sense in which his accusers did. But one of the motives underlying the indictment was surely a political animus. We have already seen that the

defense of democracy and of religion. Socrates had offended not only by being a friend and mentor, with oligarchical hatred of the enemies of democracy, but also by convincing his judges to condemn him to death.

Moreover, Socrates made no attempt to stoop to defend himself in the ordinary way of throwing himself on the court's mercy. For his wife and children, he lectured the jury that he believed in the gods in a far more rational defense, as Plato reported it, was dis-

How you, men of Athens, know; but I, for my part, do not know; and yet there they talk; and yet there they say. . . .

Well then, men of Athens, Meletus's indictment, seems to me to be a hatred that has arisen against me, and it is which will cause my condemnation. Anytus, but the prejudice and the other good men, and I think stop with me. . . .

To fear death, gentlemen, is no one's business; for it is thinking of death as if one knows whether death be not the best of things. They fear it as if they knew the most reprehensible form of death. One does not know? Perhaps, gentlemen, in this way, and if I were in this, that not knowing what I know. But I do know that I disobey him who is better than I live and am able to continue exhorting you and pointing out the truth, saying in my accustomed way, a citizen of Athens, the greatest and power, not ashamed to call attention to truth and honour, when you are in the truth and the perfection of it. I meet, young and old, for

³ See p. 64.

⁴ The following passages from the *Apology*, *Phaedrus*, and *Phaedo*, should be read not merely for the ethical doctrines of Plato (see pp. 112-113) but also for the last days are an account of Plato's ideal.

defense of democracy and of religious superstition went hand in hand,³ and Socrates had offended not only by exploding ancient beliefs but by associating, as friend and mentor, with oligarchs like Critias and traitors like Alcibiades. Hatred of the enemies of democracy, as well as religious piety, must have moved his judges to condemn him to death.

Moreover, Socrates made no attempt to defend himself. Or rather, he refused to stoop to defend himself in the only way Athenian juries understood. Instead of throwing himself on the court's mercy and painting a pathetic picture of his wife and children, he lectured the jury on its ignorance, tactlessly informing it that he believed in the gods in a far nobler sense than it did. Indeed, his real defense, as Plato reported it, was directed to future generations.⁴

How you, men of Athens, have been affected by my accusers, I do not know; but I, for my part, almost forgot my own identity, so persuasively did they talk; and yet there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said. . . .

Well then, men of Athens, that I am not a wrong-doer according to Meletus's indictment, seems to me not to need much of a defence. . . . Great hatred has arisen against me and in the minds of many persons. And this it is which will cause my condemnation, if it is to cause it, not Meletus or Anytus, but the prejudice and dislike of the many. This has condemned many other good men, and I think will do so; and there is no danger that it will stop with me. . . .

To fear death, gentlemen, is nothing else than to think one is wise when one is not; for it is thinking one knows what one does not know. For no one knows whether death be not even the greatest of all blessings to man, but they fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils. And is not this the most reprehensible form of ignorance, that of thinking one knows what one does not know? Perhaps, gentlemen, in this matter also I differ from other men in this way, and if I were to say that I am wiser in anything, it would be in this, that not knowing very much about the other world, I do not think I know. But I do know that it is evil and disgraceful to do wrong and to disobey him who is better than I, whether he be god or man. . . . While I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up philosophy or stop exhorting you and pointing out the truth to any one of you whom I may meet, saying in my accustomed way: "Most excellent man, are you who are a citizen of Athens, the greatest of cities and the most famous for wisdom and power, not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honour, when you neither care nor take thought for wisdom and truth and the perfection of your soul?" . . . This I shall do to whomever I meet, young and old, foreigner and citizen, but most to the citizens,

³ See p. 64.

⁴ The following passages from the *Apology*, the *Crito*, and the *Phaedo*, describing Socrates' trial and death, should be read not merely for their biographical interest but for the light they throw on the ethical doctrines of Plato (see pp. 153-74). Taken together these descriptions of Socrates' last days are an account of Plato's ideal of human nature.

inasmuch as you are more nearly related to me. For know that the god commands me to do this, and I believe that no greater good ever came to pass in the city than my service to the god. For I go about doing nothing else than urging you, young and old, not to care for your persons or your property more than for the perfection of your souls, or even so much; and I tell you that virtue does not come from money, but from virtue comes money and all other good things to man, both to the individual and to the state. . . . Therefore I say to you, men of Athens, either do as Anytus tells you, or not, and either acquit me, or not, knowing that I shall not change my conduct even if I am to die many times over. . . .

Perhaps it may seem strange that I go about and interfere in other people's affairs to give this advice in private, but do not venture to come before your assembly and advise the state. But the reason for this, as you have heard me say at many times and places, is that something divine and spiritual comes to me, the very thing which Meletus ridiculed in his indictment. I have had this from my childhood; it is a sort of voice that comes to me, and when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward. This it is which opposes my engaging in politics. And I think this opposition is a very good thing; for you may be quite sure, men of Athens, that if I had undertaken to go into politics, I should have been put to death long ago and should have done no good to you or to myself. And do not be angry with me for speaking the truth; the fact is that no man will save his life who nobly opposes you or any other populace and prevents many unjust and illegal things from happening in the state. A man who really fights for the right, if he is to preserve his life for even a little while, must be a private citizen, not a public man. . . .^b

SOCRATES IN PRISON

Socrates was convicted and sentenced to death. While he was in prison awaiting execution his friends were busy arranging for his escape. But Socrates refused to flee. Note how, in the following passage, he makes short work of his friend Crito's emotional appeals. Note too that Socrates and Crito both assume that values are objective—that there is something that it is *right* to do in this situation. Further, they assume that these objective values can be ascertained by a process of reasoning. Finally, they assume that when these values have been discovered, all reasonable men will act accordingly.

CRITO. My dear Socrates, even now listen to me and save yourself. Since, if you die, it will be no mere single misfortune to me, but I shall lose a friend such as I can never find again, and besides, many persons who do not know you and me well will think I could have saved you if I had been willing to spend money, but that I would not take the trouble. . . .

SOCRATES. But, my dear Crito, why do we care so much for what most people think? . . .

CRITO. That may well be. But, Socrates, tell me this: you are not considering

me and your other friends, are will make trouble for us by being forced to lose either all our property in some other way besides? . . .

SOCRATES. I am considering

CRITO. Well, do not fear this we should pay to some men from here. . . . And moreover too, for . . . they will probably to orphans in their destitution.

SOCRATES. My dear Crito, ought to do this or not; for I am nothing but the reasoning which how could we examine the matter you say about opinions and am used to say . . . that we ought some and not others, and not you think? Is not this true?

CRITO. It is.

SOCRATES. Then we ought ones?

CRITO. Yes.

SOCRATES. And the good or of the foolish?

CRITO. Of course.

SOCRATES. Come then, who athlete and makes that his praise and blame and opinion or a trainer?

CRITO. To those of one man.

SOCRATES. Then, most excellent the many will say of us, but the one man, and truth herself.

The question is whether it is the permission of the Athenians let us try it, and if not, let us about spending money, and are really, Crito, the reflective.

Let us, my good friend, in anything I say, do so, and I, my dear friend, stop at once that I ought to go away from for I am anxious to act in the to your wishes. Now see if I and try to reply to my question.

CRITO. I will try.

SOCRATES. Ought we in do wrong in some ways but