various methods they all employ to make and dissolve (voluntarily or under duress) their associations[11] with one another, noting which methods are proper and which are not; honours should be conferred upon those who comply with the laws, and specified penalties imposed on the disobedient. When the lawgiver comes to the final stages of organizing the entire life of the state, he must decide what honours should be accorded the dead and how the manner of burial should be varied.[12] His survey completed, the author of the legal code will appoint guardians (some of whom will have rational grounds for their actions, while others rely on "true opinion"),[13] so that all these regulations may be welded into a rational whole, demonstrably inspired by considerations of justice and self-restraint, not of wealth and ambition.' That is the sort of explanation, gentlemen, that I should have liked you to give, and still want now – an explanation of how all these conditions are met in the laws attributed to Zeus and the Pythian Apollo, which Minos and Lycurgus laid down. I wish you could have told me why the system on which they are arranged is obvious to someone with an expert technical – or even empirical – knowledge of law, while to laymen like ourselves it is entirely obscure.

CLEINIAS: Well then, sir, where do we go from here?

COURAGE AND PLEASURE

ATHENIAN: I think we ought to go back and start again. As before, we should consider first the activities that promote courage; then, if you like, we'll work through the other kinds of virtue, one by one. We'll take the way we deal with the first as a model, and try to while away the journey by discussing the others in the same way. Then after dealing with virtue

11. Social and political clubs of various kinds seem to be meant: see pp. 359–60, 453.

12. I.e. according to property-class: see p. 513.

13. A man with 'true opinion' cannot justify his (perfectly correct) actions on philosophical grounds. To do this a man needs 'knowledge' or 'wisdom' or 'reason'.

as a whole, we shall show, God willing, that the regulations we have just listed had this in view.

MEGILLUS: A splendid idea! Our friend here is an admirer 633
of Zeus, so try examining him, to start with.

ATHENIAN: I'll try to examine not only him, but you and myself as well – we all have a stake in the discussion. Tell me, then, you two: do we maintain that the common meals and gymnastic exercises have been invented by your legislator for the purpose of war?

MEGILLUS: Yes.

ATHENIAN: What about a third such institution, and a fourth? To make a full list like this will probably be the right procedure in the case of the other 'parts'[14] of virtue, too (or whatever the right terminology is: no matter, so long as one's meaning is clear).

MEGILLUS: I – and any Spartan, for that matter – would mention the legislator's invention of hunting as the third item.

ATHENIAN: Let's have a shot at adding a fourth, and a fifth too, if we can.

MEGILLUS: Well, I might try to add a fourth: the endurance of pain. This is a very conspicuous feature of Spartan life. You find it in our boxing matches, and also in our 'raids', which invariably lead to a severe whipping. There is also the 'Secret Service',[15] as it is called, which involves a great deal of hard work, and is a splendid exercise in endurance. In winter, its members go barefoot and sleep without bedclothes. They dispense with orderlies and look after themselves, ranging night and day over the whole country. Next, in the 'Naked Games', men display fantastic endurance, contending as they do with the full heat of summer. There are a great many other practices of the same kind, but if you produced a detailed list it would go on pretty well for ever.

ATHENIAN: You've put it all very well, my Spartan friend. But what is to be our *definition* of courage? Are we to define it simply in terms of a fight against fears and pains only, or

14. I.e. self-control, justice, good judgement.

15. An official organization of young Spartans, who had the job of keeping the Spartan slave class (helots) in subjection.

do we include desires and pleasures, which cajole and seduce us so effectively? They mould the heart like wax – even the hearts of those who loftily believe themselves superior to such influences.

MEGILLUS: Yes, I think so – the fight is against all these feelings.

ATHENIAN: Now, if we remember aright what was said earlier on, our friend from Cnossos spoke of a city and an individual as 'conquered by' themselves. Isn't that right?

CLEINIAS: Surely.

ATHENIAN: Well, shall we call 'bad' only the man who is 'conquered by' pains, or shall we include the victim of pleasures as well?

CLEINIAS: The term 'bad' we apply, I think, to the victim of pleasures even more than to the other. When we say that a man has been shamefully 'conquered by' himself, we are all, I fancy, much more likely to mean someone defeated by pleasures than by pains.

634 ATHENIAN: But the legal code of those lawgivers (inspired as they are by Zeus and Apollo) certainly did not envisage a courage with one hand tied behind its back, able to hit out on the left, but powerless in face of the cunning and seductive blandishments from the right. Surely it was supposed to resist in both directions?

CLEINIAS: Yes, both, I think.

ATHENIAN: We ought to mention next what practices exist in your two cities that give a man a taste of pleasure rather than teach him how to avoid it – you remember how a man could not avoid pains, but was surrounded by them, and then forced, or persuaded by awards of honour, to get the better of them.[16] Now where in your codes of law is the institution that does the same for pleasure? Could you say, please, what institution you have that makes one and the same body of citizens courageous in face of pains and of pleasures alike, so that they conquer where they ought to

16. I.e. in the Spartan 'Secret Service', 'Naked Games', etc. – see p. 57.

conquer and never fall victims to these their most intimate and dangerous enemies?

MEGILLUS: I was certainly able to point to a good many laws that were designed to counteract pains, stranger, but I doubt if I should find it so easy to give striking and clear examples in the case of pleasures. I might have some success, perhaps, in finding minor cases.

CLEINIAS: No more would I be able to find an obvious illustration of this sort of thing in the laws of Crete.

ATHENIAN: My dear sirs, this should not surprise us. (I hope, by the way, that if in his desire to discover goodness and truth any of us is led to criticize some legal detail in the homeland of either of his companions, we shall receive such criticism from each other tolerantly and without truculence.)

CLEINIAS: You have put it quite fairly, my Athenian friend. We must do as you say.

ATHENIAN: Truculence, Cleinias, would be hardly the thing for men of our age.

CLEINIAS: No indeed.

ATHENIAN: The criticisms people bring against the way Sparta and Crete are run may be right or wrong: that is another issue. At any rate, I am probably better able than either of you to report what most people generally say. However, granted that your codes of law have been composed with reasonable success, as indeed they have been, one of the best regulations you have is the one which forbids any young man to inquire into the relative merits of the laws; everyone has to agree, with one heart and voice, that they are all excellent and exist by divine *fiat*; if anyone says differently, the citizens must absolutely refuse to listen to him. If an old man has some point to make about your institutions, he must make such remarks to an official, or someone of his own age when no young man is present.

CLEINIAS: That's absolutely right, sir – you must be a wizard! You are far removed in time from the legislator who laid down these laws, but I think you have hit on his intentions 635 very nicely, and state them with perfect accuracy.

ATHENIAN: Well, there are no young men here now. In

view of our age, the legislator surely grants us the indulgence of having a private discussion on these topics without giving offence.

CLEINIAS: So be it: don't hesitate to criticize our laws. There is no disgrace in being told of some blemish – indeed, if one takes criticism in good part, without being ruffled by it, it commonly leads one to a remedy.

ATHENIAN: Splendid. But criticism of your laws is not what I propose: that can wait until we have scrutinized them exhaustively. I shall simply mention my difficulties. Among all the Greek and foreign peoples who have come to my knowledge, you are unique in that you have been instructed by your lawgiver to keep away from the most attractive entertainments and pleasures, and to refrain from tasting them. Yet when it came to pains and fears, your legislator reckoned that if a man ran away from them on every occasion from his earliest years and was then faced with hardships, pains and fears he could not avoid, he would likewise run away from any enemies who *had* received such a training, and become their slaves. I think this same lawgiver ought to have taken this same line in the case of pleasures too. He ought to have said to himself: 'If our citizens grow up without any experience of the keenest pleasures, and if they are not trained to stand firm when they encounter them, and to refuse to be pushed into any disgraceful action, their fondness for pleasure will bring them to the same bad end as those who capitulate to fear. Their slavery will be of a different kind, but it will be more humiliating: they will become the slaves of those who are able to stand firm against the onslaughts of pleasure and who are past-masters in the art of temptation – utter scoundrels, sometimes. Spiritually, our citizens will be part slave, part free, and only in a limited sense will they deserve to be called courageous and free.' Just consider this argument: do you think it has any relevance at all?

CLEINIAS: Yes, I think it has, at first blush. But it is a weighty business, and to jump to confident conclusions so quickly may well be childish and naïve.

ATHENIAN: Well then, Cleinias and our friend from Sparta,

let's turn to the next item we put on the agenda: after courage, let's discuss self-control. We found, in the case of war, that your two political systems were superior to those of states with a more haphazard mode of government. Where's the superiority in the case of self-control? 636

MEGILLUS: That's rather a difficult question. Still, I should think the common meals and the gymnastic exercises are institutions well calculated to promote both virtues.

ATHENIAN: Well, my friends, *I* should think the real difficulty is to make political systems reflect in practice the trouble-free perfection of theory. (The human body is probably a parallel. One cannot rigidly prescribe a given regimen for a given body, because any regimen will invariably turn out, in some respects, to injure our bodies at the same time as it helps them in others.) For instance, these gymnastic exercises and common meals, useful though they are to a state in many ways, are a danger in their encouragement of revolution – witness the example of the youth of Miletus, Boeotia and Thurii.[17] More especially, the very antiquity of these practices seems to have corrupted the natural pleasures of sex, which are common to man and beast. For these perversions, your two states may well be the first to be blamed, as well as any others that make a particular point of gymnastic exercises. Circumstances may make you treat this subject either light-heartedly or seriously; in either case you ought to bear in mind that when male and female come together in order to have a child, the pleasure they experience seems to arise entirely naturally. But homosexual intercourse and lesbianism seem to be unnatural crimes of the first rank, and are committed because men and women cannot control their desire for pleasure. It is the Cretans we all hold to blame for making up the story of Ganymede:[18] they were so firmly

17. The vagueness of this remark makes it difficult to tell whether the Athenian is in fact referring to the few episodes known to us which would fit this description: see Aristotle, *Politics*, V 7 (1307b6 ff.) and Plutarch, *On the Sign of Socrates*, 594c.

18. A handsome boy carried off to be Zeus' companion and cupbearer: see Homer, *Iliad* XX, 231 ff.

convinced that their laws came from Zeus that they saddled him with this fable, in order to have a divine 'precedent' when enjoying that particular pleasure. That story, however, we may dismiss, but not the fact that when men investigate legislation, they investigate almost exclusively pleasures and pains as they affect society and the character of the individual. Pleasure and pain, you see, flow like two springs released by nature. If a man draws the right amount from the right one at the right time, he lives a happy life; but if he draws unintelligently at the wrong time, his life will be rather different. State and individual and every living being are on the same footing here.

§2. DRINKING PARTIES AS AN EDUCATIONAL DEVICE

Spartan and Cretan laws, then, excel in making a man resist fear, but they fail when it comes to resisting the temptations of pleasure; they give a man courage, but not self-control. The smug remark of Megillus, that Sparta does not tolerate drunkenness, now gives the Athenian the opportunity to suggest – to the scandalized amazement of his companions – that a degree of inebriation may in fact be a valuable educational tool, in two ways: (1) *a man reveals his true character under the influence of wine;* (2) *just as Sparta and Crete trained their young men to be fearless by encouraging them to resist their fears in conditions in which they would be likely to be moderately afraid* (*e.g. various athletic and military exercises*), *so a man can be made to acquire self-control by being exposed to conditions in which he is likely to be particularly licentious – the drinking party. Being taught by encouragement and threats to resist temptation when mildly drunk is a valuable exercise in self-control. Drinking parties are therefore eminently 'educational', because education is essentially a training in* virtue (*not simply in a given trade or vocation*), *as the digression on the nature and purpose of education makes clear.*

The theme that Spartan and Cretan institutions are inadequate is not dropped, but develops into something more positive. Courage (*the resistance to fear*), *besides being harmful when overstressed, is not the only virtue necessary; self-control, which the Spartans and Cretans achieved, if at all, only by a total* repression *of the desire for pleasure, is more effectively cultivated by moderate indulgence.*

TEETOTALLERS MISGUIDED

MEGILLUS: Well, sir, I suppose that what you say is more or less right; at any rate, we're baffled to find an argument against it. But in spite of that I still think the legislator of Sparta is right to recommend a policy of avoiding pleasure (our friend here will come to the rescue of the laws of Cnossos,