



# **ON SOPHISTICAL REFUTATIONS**

**ARISTOTLE**

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**ON  
SOPHISTICAL REFUTATIONS**

**BY  
ARISTOTLE**

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On Sophistical Refutations by Aristotle.

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by itself, has any meaning or no, and if so, whether it has the same meaning, or a different one; but they draw their conclusion straight away. Still it seems, inasmuch as the word is the same, to have the same meaning as well.

#### 14

We have said before what kind of thing 'solecism' is.' It is possible both to commit it, and to seem to do so without doing so, and to do so without seeming to do so. Suppose, as Protagoras used to say that *menis* ('wrath') and *pelex* ('helmet') are masculine: according to him a man who calls wrath a 'destructress' (*oulomenen*) commits a solecism, though he does not seem to do so to other people, where he who calls it a 'destructor' (*oulomenon*) commits no solecism though he seems to do so. It is clear, then, that any one could produce this effect by art as well: and for this reason many arguments seem to lead to solecism which do not really do so, as happens in the case of refutations.

Almost all apparent solecisms depend upon the word 'this' (*tode*), and upon occasions when the inflection denotes neither a masculine nor a feminine object but a neuter. For 'he' (*outos*) signifies a masculine, and 'she' (*aute*) feminine; but 'this' (*touto*), though meant to signify a neuter, often also signifies one or other of the former: e.g. 'What is this?' 'It is Calliope'; 'it is a log'; 'it is Coriscus'. Now in the masculine and feminine the inflections are all different, whereas in the neuter some are and some are not. Often, then, when 'this' (*touto*) has been granted, people reason as if 'him' (*touton*) had been said: and likewise also they substitute one inflection for another. The fallacy comes about because 'this' (*touto*) is a common form of several inflections: for 'this' signifies sometimes 'he' (*outos*) and sometimes 'him' (*touton*). It should signify them alternately; when combined with 'is' (*esti*) it should be 'he', while with 'being' it should be 'him': e.g. 'Coriscus (*Kopiskos*) is', but 'being Coriscus' (*Kopiskon*). It happens in the same way in the case of feminine nouns as well, and in the case of the so-called 'chattels' that have feminine or masculine designations. For only those names which end in *o* and *n*, have the designation proper to a chattel, e.g. *xulon* ('log'), *schoinion*

('rope'); those which do not end so have that of a masculine or feminine object, though some of them we apply to chattels: e.g. askos ('wineskin') is a masculine noun, and kline ('bed') a feminine. For this reason in cases of this kind as well there will be a difference of the same sort between a construction with 'is' (esti) or with 'being' (to einai). Also, Solecism resembles in a certain way those refutations which are said to depend on the like expression of unlike things. For, just as there we come upon a material solecism, so here we come upon a verbal: for 'man' is both a 'matter' for expression and also a 'word': and so is white'.

It is clear, then, that for solecisms we must try to construct our argument out of the aforesaid inflections. These, then, are the types of contentious arguments, and the subdivisions of those types, and the methods for conducting them aforesaid. But it makes no little difference if the materials for putting the question be arranged in a certain manner with a view to concealment, as in the case of dialectics. Following then upon what we have said, this must be discussed first.

## 15

With a view then to refutation, one resource is length-for it is difficult to keep several things in view at once; and to secure length the elementary rules that have been stated before' should be employed. One resource, on the other hand, is speed; for when people are left behind they look ahead less. Moreover, there is anger and contentiousness, for when agitated everybody is less able to take care of himself. Elementary rules for producing anger are to make a show of the wish to play foul, and to be altogether shameless. Moreover, there is the putting of one's questions alternately, whether one has more than one argument leading to the same conclusion, or whether one has arguments to show both that something is so, and that it is not so: for the result is that he has to be on his guard at the same time either against more than one line, or against contrary lines, of argument. In general, all the methods described before of producing concealment are useful also for purposes of contentious argument: for the

object of concealment is to avoid detection, and the object of this is to deceive.

To counter those who refuse to grant whatever they suppose to help one's argument, one should put the question negatively, as though desirous of the opposite answer, or at any rate as though one put the question without prejudice; for when it is obscure what answer one wants to secure, people are less refractory. Also when, in dealing with particulars, a man grants the individual case, when the induction is done you should often not put the universal as a question, but take it for granted and use it: for sometimes people themselves suppose that they have granted it, and also appear to the audience to have done so, for they remember the induction and assume that the questions could not have been put for nothing. In cases where there is no term to indicate the universal, still you should avail yourself of the resemblance of the particulars to suit your purpose; for resemblance often escapes detection. Also, with a view to obtaining your premiss, you ought to put it in your question side by side with its contrary. E.g. if it were necessary to secure the admission that 'A man should obey his father in everything', ask 'Should a man obey his parents in everything, or disobey them in everything?'; and to secure that 'A number multiplied by a large number is a large number', ask 'Should one agree that it is a large number or a small one?' For then, if compelled to choose, one will be more inclined to think it a large one: for the placing of their contraries close beside them makes things look big to men, both relatively and absolutely, and worse and better.

A strong appearance of having been refuted is often produced by the most highly sophistical of all the unfair tricks of questioners, when without proving anything, instead of putting their final proposition as a question, they state it as a conclusion, as though they had proved that 'Therefore so-and-so is not true'

It is also a sophistical trick, when a paradox has been laid down, first to propose at the start some view that is generally accepted, and then claim that the answerer shall answer what he thinks about it, and to put one's question on matters of that kind in the form 'Do you think that . . .?' For then, if the question be taken as one of the premisses of one's argument,

either a refutation or a paradox is bound to result; if he grants the view, a refutation; if he refuses to grant it or even to admit it as the received opinion, a paradox; if he refuses to grant it, but admits that it is the received opinion, something very like a refutation, results.

Moreover, just as in rhetorical discourses, so also in those aimed at refutation, you should examine the discrepancies of the answerer's position either with his own statements, or with those of persons whom he admits to say and do aright, moreover with those of people who are generally supposed to bear that kind of character, or who are like them, or with those of the majority or of all men. Also just as answerers, too, often, when they are in process of being confuted, draw a distinction, if their confutation is just about to take place, so questioners also should resort to this from time to time to counter objectors, pointing out, supposing that against one sense of the words the objection holds, but not against the other, that they have taken it in the latter sense, as e.g. Cleophon does in the *Mandrobulus*. They should also break off their argument and cut down their other lines of attack, while in answering, if a man perceives this being done beforehand, he should put in his objection and have his say first. One should also lead attacks sometimes against positions other than the one stated, on the understood condition that one cannot find lines of attack against the view laid down, as Lycophron did when ordered to deliver a eulogy upon the lyre. To counter those who demand 'Against what are you directing your effort?', since one is generally thought bound to state the charge made, while, on the other hand, some ways of stating it make the defence too easy, you should state as your aim only the general result that always happens in refutations, namely the contradiction of his thesis — viz. that your effort is to deny what he has affirmed, or to affirm what he denied: don't say that you are trying to show that the knowledge of contraries is, or is not, the same. One must not ask one's conclusion in the form of a premiss, while some conclusions should not even be put as questions at all; one should take and use it as granted.



We have now therefore dealt with the sources of questions, and the methods of questioning in contentious disputations: next we have to speak of answering, and of how solutions should be made, and of what requires them, and of what use is served by arguments of this kind.

The use of them, then, is, for philosophy, twofold. For in the first place, since for the most part they depend upon the expression, they put us in a better condition for seeing in how many senses any term is used, and what kind of resemblances and what kind of differences occur between things and between their names. In the second place they are useful for one's own personal researches; for the man who is easily committed to a fallacy by some one else, and does not perceive it, is likely to incur this fate of himself also on many occasions. Thirdly and lastly, they further contribute to one's reputation, viz. the reputation of being well trained in everything, and not inexperienced in anything: for that a party to arguments should find fault with them, if he cannot definitely point out their weakness, creates a suspicion, making it seem as though it were not the truth of the matter but merely inexperience that put him out of temper.

Answerers may clearly see how to meet arguments of this kind, if our previous account was right of the sources whence fallacies came, and also our distinctions adequate of the forms of dishonesty in putting questions. But it is not the same thing take an argument in one's hand and then to see and solve its faults, as it is to be able to meet it quickly while being subjected to questions: for what we know, we often do not know in a different context. Moreover, just as in other things speed is enhanced by training, so it is with arguments too, so that supposing we are unpractised, even though a point be clear to us, we are often too late for the right moment. Sometimes too it happens as with diagrams; for there we can sometimes analyse the figure, but not construct it again: so too in refutations, though we know the thing on which the connexion of the argument depends, we still are at a loss to split the argument apart.

First then, just as we say that we ought sometimes to choose to prove something in the general estimation rather than in truth, so also we have sometimes to solve arguments rather in the general estimation than according to the truth. For it is a general rule in fighting contentious persons, to treat them not as refuting, but as merely appearing to refute: for we say that they don't really prove their case, so that our object in correcting them must be to dispel the appearance of it. For if refutation be an unambiguous contradiction arrived at from certain views, there could be no need to draw distinctions against amphiboly and ambiguity: they do not effect a proof. The only motive for drawing further distinctions is that the conclusion reached looks like a refutation. What, then, we have to beware of, is not being refuted, but seeming to be, because of course the asking of amphibolies and of questions that turn upon ambiguity, and all the other tricks of that kind, conceal even a genuine refutation, and make it uncertain who is refuted and who is not. For since one has the right at the end, when the conclusion is drawn, to say that the only denial made of One's statement is ambiguous, no matter how precisely he may have addressed his argument to the very same point as oneself, it is not clear whether one has been refuted: for it is not clear whether at the moment one is speaking the truth. If, on the other hand, one had drawn a distinction, and questioned him on the ambiguous term or the amphiboly, the refutation would not have been a matter of uncertainty. Also what is incidentally the object of contentious arguers, though less so nowadays than formerly, would have been fulfilled, namely that the person questioned should answer either 'Yes' or 'No': whereas nowadays the improper forms in which questioners put their questions compel the party questioned to add something to his answer in correction of the faultiness of the proposition as put: for certainly, if the questioner distinguishes his meaning adequately, the answerer is bound to reply either 'Yes' or 'No'.

If any one is going to suppose that an argument which turns upon ambiguity is a refutation, it will be impossible for an answerer to escape being refuted in a sense: for in the case of visible objects one is bound of necessity to deny the term one has asserted, and to assert what one has denied. For the remedy which some people have for this is quite unavailing. They say, not that Coriscus is both musical and unmusical, but that this Coriscus is musical

and this Coriscus unmusical. But this will not do, for to say 'this Coriscus is unmusical', or 'musical', and to say 'this Coriscus' is so, is to use the same expression: and this he is both affirming and denying at once. 'But perhaps they do not mean the same.' Well, nor did the simple name in the former case: so where is the difference? If, however, he is to ascribe to the one person the simple title 'Coriscus', while to the other he is to add the prefix 'one' or 'this', he commits an absurdity: for the latter is no more applicable to the one than to the other: for to whichever he adds it, it makes no difference.

All the same, since if a man does not distinguish the senses of an amphiboly, it is not clear whether he has been confuted or has not been confuted, and since in arguments the right to distinguish them is granted, it is evident that to grant the question simply without drawing any distinction is a mistake, so that, even if not the man himself, at any rate his argument looks as though it had been refuted. It often happens, however, that, though they see the amphiboly, people hesitate to draw such distinctions, because of the dense crowd of persons who propose questions of the kind, in order that they may not be thought to be obstructionists at every turn: then, though they would never have supposed that that was the point on which the argument turned, they often find themselves faced by a paradox. Accordingly, since the right of drawing the distinction is granted, one should not hesitate, as has been said before.

If people never made two questions into one question, the fallacy that turns upon ambiguity and amphiboly would not have existed either, but either genuine refutation or none. For what is the difference between asking 'Are Callias and Themistocles musical?' and what one might have asked if they, being different, had had one name? For if the term applied means more than one thing, he has asked more than one question. If then it be not right to demand simply to be given a single answer to two questions, it is evident that it is not proper to give a simple answer to any ambiguous question, not even if the predicate be true of all the subjects, as some claim that one should. For this is exactly as though he had asked 'Are Coriscus and Callias at home or not at home?', supposing them to be both in or both out: for in both cases there is a number of propositions: for though the simple answer

be true, that does not make the question one. For it is possible for it to be true to answer even countless different questions when put to one, all together with either a 'Yes' or a 'No': but still one should not answer them with a single answer: for that is the death of discussion. Rather, the case is like as though different things has actually had the same name applied to them. If then, one should not give a single answer to two questions, it is evident that we should not say simply 'Yes' or 'No' in the case of ambiguous terms either: for the remark is simply a remark, not an answer at all, although among disputants such remarks are loosely deemed to be answers, because they do not see what the consequence is.

As we said, then, inasmuch as certain refutations are generally taken for such, though not such really, in the same way also certain solutions will be generally taken for solutions, though not really such. Now these, we say, must sometimes be advanced rather than the true solutions in contentious reasonings and in the encounter with ambiguity. The proper answer in saying what one thinks is to say 'Granted'; for in that way the likelihood of being refuted on a side issue is minimized. If, on the other hand, one is compelled to say something paradoxical, one should then be most careful to add that 'it seems' so: for in that way one avoids the impression of being either refuted or paradoxical. Since it is clear what is meant by 'begging the original question', and people think that they must at all costs overthrow the premisses that lie near the conclusion, and plead in excuse for refusing to grant him some of them that he is begging the original question, so whenever any one claims from us a point such as is bound to follow as a consequence from our thesis, but is false or paradoxical, we must plead the same: for the necessary consequences are generally held to be a part of the thesis itself. Moreover, whenever the universal has been secured not under a definite name, but by a comparison of instances, one should say that the questioner assumes it not in the sense in which it was granted nor in which he proposed it in the premiss: for this too is a point upon which a refutation often depends.

If one is debarred from these defences one must pass to the argument that the conclusion has not been properly shown, approaching it in the light of the aforesaid distinction between the different kinds of fallacy.

In the case, then, of names that are used literally one is bound to answer either simply or by drawing a distinction: the tacit understandings implied in our statements, e.g. in answer to questions that are not put clearly but elliptically-it is upon this that the consequent refutation depends. For example, 'Is what belongs to Athenians the property of Athenians?' Yes. 'And so it is likewise in other cases. But observe; man belongs to the animal kingdom, doesn't he?' Yes. 'Then man is the property of the animal kingdom.' But this is a fallacy: for we say that man 'belongs to' the animal kingdom because he is an animal, just as we say that Lysander 'belongs to' the Spartans, because he is a Spartan. It is evident, then, that where the premiss put forward is not clear, one must not grant it simply.

Whenever of two things it is generally thought that if the one is true the other is true of necessity, whereas, if the other is true, the first is not true of necessity, one should, if asked which of them is true, grant the smaller one: for the larger the number of premisses, the harder it is to draw a conclusion from them. If, again, the sophist tries to secure that has a contrary while B has not, suppose what he says is true, you should say that each has a contrary, only for the one there is no established name.

Since, again, in regard to some of the views they express, most people would say that any one who did not admit them was telling a falsehood, while they would not say this in regard to some, e.g. to any matters whereon opinion is divided (for most people have no distinct view whether the soul of animals is destructible or immortal), accordingly (1) it is uncertain in which of two senses the premiss proposed is usually meant-whether as maxims are (for people call by the name of 'maxims' both true opinions and general assertions) or like the doctrine 'the diagonal of a square is incommensurate with its side': and moreover (2) whenever opinions are divided as to the truth, we then have subjects of which it is very easy to change the terminology undetected. For because of the uncertainty in which of the two senses the premiss contains the truth, one will not be thought to be playing any trick, while because of the division of opinion, one will not be thought to be telling a falsehood. Change the terminology therefore, for the change will make the position irrefutable.

Moreover, whenever one foresees any question coming, one should put in one's objection and have one's say beforehand: for by doing so one is likely to embarrass the questioner most effectually.

## 18

Inasmuch as a proper solution is an exposure of false reasoning, showing on what kind of question the falsity depends, and whereas 'false reasoning' has a double meaning-for it is used either if a false conclusion has been proved, or if there is only an apparent proof and no real one-there must be both the kind of solution just described,' and also the correction of a merely apparent proof, so as to show upon which of the questions the appearance depends. Thus it comes about that one solves arguments that are properly reasoned by demolishing them, whereas one solves merely apparent arguments by drawing distinctions. Again, inasmuch as of arguments that are properly reasoned some have a true and others a false conclusion, those that are false in respect of their conclusion it is possible to solve in two ways; for it is possible both by demolishing one of the premisses asked, and by showing that the conclusion is not the real state of the case: those, on the other hand, that are false in respect of the premisses can be solved only by a demolition of one of them; for the conclusion is true. So that those who wish to solve an argument should in the first place look and see if it is properly reasoned, or is unreasoned; and next, whether the conclusion be true or false, in order that we may effect the solution either by drawing some distinction or by demolishing something, and demolishing it either in this way or in that, as was laid down before. There is a very great deal of difference between solving an argument when being subjected to questions and when not: for to foresee traps is difficult, whereas to see them at one's leisure is easier.

## 19

Of the refutations, then, that depend upon ambiguity and amphiboly some contain some question with more than one meaning, while others contain a

conclusion bearing a number of senses: e.g. in the proof that 'speaking of the silent' is possible, the conclusion has a double meaning, while in the proof that 'he who knows does not understand what he knows' one of the questions contains an amphiboly. Also the double-edged saying is true in one context but not in another: it means something that is and something that is not.

Whenever, then, the many senses lie in the conclusion no refutation takes place unless the sophist secures as well the contradiction of the conclusion he means to prove; e.g. in the proof that 'seeing of the blind' is possible: for without the contradiction there was no refutation. Whenever, on the other hand, the many senses lie in the questions, there is no necessity to begin by denying the double-edged premiss: for this was not the goal of the argument but only its support. At the start, then, one should reply with regard to an ambiguity, whether of a term or of a phrase, in this manner, that 'in one sense it is so, and in another not so', as e.g. that 'speaking of the silent' is in one sense possible but in another not possible: also that in one sense 'one should do what must needs be done', but not in another: for 'what must needs be' bears a number of senses. If, however, the ambiguity escapes one, one should correct it at the end by making an addition to the question: 'Is speaking of the silent possible?' 'No, but to speak of while he is silent is possible.' Also, in cases which contain the ambiguity in their premisses, one should reply in like manner: 'Do people-then not understand what they know?' 'Yes, but not those who know it in the manner described': for it is not the same thing to say that 'those who know cannot understand what they know', and to say that 'those who know something in this particular manner cannot do so'. In general, too, even though he draws his conclusion in a quite unambiguous manner, one should contend that what he has negated is not the fact which one has asserted but only its name; and that therefore there is no refutation.

## 20

It is evident also how one should solve those refutations that depend upon the division and combination of words: for if the expression means

something different when divided and when combined, as soon as one's opponent draws his conclusion one should take the expression in the contrary way. All such expressions as the following depend upon the combination or division of the words: 'Was X being beaten with that with which you saw him being beaten?' and 'Did you see him being beaten with that with which he was being beaten?' This fallacy has also in it an element of amphiboly in the questions, but it really depends upon combination. For the meaning that depends upon the division of the words is not really a double meaning (for the expression when divided is not the same), unless also the word that is pronounced, according to its breathing, as *eros* and *eros* is a case of double meaning. (In writing, indeed, a word is the same whenever it is written of the same letters and in the same manner — and even there people nowadays put marks at the side to show the pronunciation — but the spoken words are not the same.) Accordingly an expression that depends upon division is not an ambiguous one. It is evident also that not all refutations depend upon ambiguity as some people say they do.

The answerer, then, must divide the expression: for 'I-saw-a-man-being-beaten-with-my-eyes' is not the same as to say 'I saw a man being-beaten-with-my-eyes'. Also there is the argument of Euthydemus proving 'Then you know now in Sicily that there are triremes in Piraeus': and again, 'Can a good man who is a cobbler be bad?' 'No.' 'But a good man may be a bad cobbler: therefore a good cobbler will be bad.' Again, 'Things the knowledge of which is good, are good things to learn, aren't they?' 'Yes.' 'The knowledge, however, of evil is good: therefore evil is a good thing to know.' 'Yes. But, you see, evil is both evil and a thing-to-learn, so that evil is an evil-thing-to-learn, although the knowledge of evils is good.' Again, 'Is it true to say in the present moment that you are born?' 'Yes.' 'Then you are born in the present moment.' 'No; the expression as divided has a different meaning: for it is true to say-in-the-present-moment that "you are born", but not "You are born-in-the-present-moment".' Again, 'Could you do what you can, and as you can?' 'Yes.' 'But when not harping, you have the power to harp: and therefore you could harp when not harping.' 'No: he has not the power to harp-while-not-harping; merely, when he is not doing it, he has the power to do it.' Some people solve this last refutation in another way as well. For,



they say, if he has granted that he can do anything in the way he can, still it does not follow that he can harp when not harping: for it has not been granted that he will do anything in every way in which he can; and it is not the same thing 'to do a thing in the way he can' and 'to do it in every way in which he can'. But evidently they do not solve it properly: for of arguments that depend upon the same point the solution is the same, whereas this will not fit all cases of the kind nor yet all ways of putting the questions: it is valid against the questioner, but not against his argument.

## 21

Accentuation gives rise to no fallacious arguments, either as written or as spoken, except perhaps some few that might be made up; e.g. the following argument. 'Is ou katalueis a house?' 'Yes.' 'Is then ou katalueis the negation of katalueis?' 'Yes.' 'But you said that ou katalueis is a house: therefore the house is a negation.' How one should solve this, is clear: for the word does not mean the same when spoken with an acuter and when spoken with a graver accent.

## 22

It is clear also how one must meet those fallacies that depend on the identical expressions of things that are not identical, seeing that we are in possession of the kinds of predications. For the one man, say, has granted, when asked, that a term denoting a substance does not belong as an attribute, while the other has shown that some attribute belongs which is in the Category of Relation or of Quantity, but is usually thought to denote a substance because of its expression; e.g. in the following argument: 'Is it possible to be doing and to have done the same thing at the same time?' 'No.' 'But, you see, it is surely possible to be seeing and to have seen the same thing at the same time, and in the same aspect.' Again, 'Is any mode of passivity a mode of activity?' 'No.' 'Then "he is cut", "he is burnt", "he is struck by some sensible object" are alike in expression and all denote some form of passivity, while again "to say", "to run", "to see" are like one like

one another in expression: but, you see, “to see” is surely a form of being struck by a sensible object; therefore it is at the same time a form of passivity and of activity.’ Suppose, however, that in that case any one, after granting that it is not possible to do and to have done the same thing in the same time, were to say that it is possible to see and to have seen it, still he has not yet been refuted, suppose him to say that ‘to see’ is not a form of ‘doing’ (activity) but of ‘passivity’: for this question is required as well, though he is supposed by the listener to have already granted it, when he granted that ‘to cut’ is a form of present, and ‘to have cut’ a form of past, activity, and so on with the other things that have a like expression. For the listener adds the rest by himself, thinking the meaning to be alike: whereas really the meaning is not alike, though it appears to be so because of the expression. The same thing happens here as happens in cases of ambiguity: for in dealing with ambiguous expressions the tyro in argument supposes the sophist to have negated the fact which he (the tyro) affirmed, and not merely the name: whereas there still wants the question whether in using the ambiguous term he had a single meaning in view: for if he grants that that was so, the refutation will be effected.

Like the above are also the following arguments. It is asked if a man has lost what he once had and afterwards has not: for a man will no longer have ten dice even though he has only lost one die. No: rather it is that he has lost what he had before and has not now; but there is no necessity for him to have lost as much or as many things as he has not now. So then, he asks the questions as to what he has, and draws the conclusion as to the whole number that he has: for ten is a number. If then he had asked to begin with, whether a man no longer having the number of things he once had has lost the whole number, no one would have granted it, but would have said ‘Either the whole number or one of them’. Also there is the argument that ‘a man may give what he has not got’: for he has not got only one die. No: rather it is that he has given not what he had not got, but in a manner in which he had not got it, viz. just the one. For the word ‘only’ does not signify a particular substance or quality or number, but a manner relation, e.g. that it is not coupled with any other. It is therefore just as if he had asked ‘Could a man give what he has not got?’ and, on being given the answer ‘No’, were to ask if a man could give a thing quickly when he had not got it quickly, and,

on this being granted, were to conclude that 'a man could give what he had not got'. It is quite evident that he has not proved his point: for to 'give quickly' is not to give a thing, but to give in a certain manner; and a man could certainly give a thing in a manner in which he has not got it, e.g. he might have got it with pleasure and give it with pain.

Like these are also all arguments of the following kind: 'Could a man strike a blow with a hand which he has not got, or see with an eye which he has not got?' For he has not got only one eye. Some people solve this case, where a man has more than one eye, or more than one of anything else, by saying also that he has only one. Others also solve it as they solve the refutation of the view that 'what a man has, he has received': for A gave only one vote; and certainly B, they say, has only one vote from A. Others, again, proceed by demolishing straight away the proposition asked, and admitting that it is quite possible to have what one has not received; e.g. to have received sweet wine, but then, owing to its going bad in the course of receipt, to have it sour. But, as was said also above,' all these persons direct their solutions against the man, not against his argument. For if this were a genuine solution, then, suppose any one to grant the opposite, he could find no solution, just as happens in other cases; e.g. suppose the true solution to be 'So-and-so is partly true and partly not', then, if the answerer grants the expression without any qualification, the sophist's conclusion follows. If, on the other hand, the conclusion does not follow, then that could not be the true solution: and what we say in regard to the foregoing examples is that, even if all the sophist's premisses be granted, still no proof is effected.

Moreover, the following too belong to this group of arguments. 'If something be in writing did some one write it?' 'Yes.' 'But it is now in writing that you are seated-a false statement, though it was true at the time when it was written: therefore the statement that was written is at the same time false and true.' But this is fallacious, for the falsity or truth of a statement or opinion indicates not a substance but a quality: for the same account applies to the case of an opinion as well. Again, 'Is what a learner learns what he learns?' 'Yes.' 'But suppose some one learns "slow" quick'. Then his (the sophist's) words denote not what the learner learns but how he learns it. Also, 'Does a man tread upon what he walks through?' 'Yes.' 'But X walks

through a whole day.' No, rather the words denote not what he walks through, but when he walks; just as when any one uses the words 'to drink the cup' he denotes not what he drinks, but the vessel out of which he drinks. Also, 'Is it either by learning or by discovery that a man knows what he knows?' 'Yes.' 'But suppose that of a pair of things he has discovered one and learned the other, the pair is not known to him by either method.' No: 'what' he knows, means 'every single thing' he knows, individually; but this does not mean 'all the things' he knows, collectively. Again, there is the proof that there is a 'third man' distinct from Man and from individual men. But that is a fallacy, for 'Man', and indeed every general predicate, denotes not an individual substance, but a particular quality, or the being related to something in a particular manner, or something of that sort. Likewise also in the case of 'Coriscus' and 'Coriscus the musician' there is the problem, Are they the same or different?' For the one denotes an individual substance and the other a quality, so that it cannot be isolated; though it is not the isolation which creates the 'third man', but the admission that it is an individual substance. For 'Man' cannot be an individual substance, as Callias is. Nor is the case improved one whit even if one were to call the clement he has isolated not an individual substance but a quality: for there will still be the one beside the many, just as 'Man' was. It is evident then that one must not grant that what is a common predicate applying to a class universally is an individual substance, but must say that denotes either a quality, or a relation, or a quantity, or something of that kind.

### 23

It is a general rule in dealing with arguments that depend on language that the solution always follows the opposite of the point on which the argument turns: e.g. if the argument depends upon combination, then the solution consists in division; if upon division, then in combination. Again, if it depends on an acute accent, the solution is a grave accent; if on a grave accent, it is an acute. If it depends on ambiguity, one can solve it by using the opposite term; e.g. if you find yourself calling something inanimate, despite your previous denial that it was so, show in what sense it is alive: if, on the other hand, one has declared it to be inanimate and the sophist has

proved it to be animate, say how it is inanimate. Likewise also in a case of amphiboly. If the argument depends on likeness of expression, the opposite will be the solution. 'Could a man give what he has not got? 'No, not what he has not got; but he could give it in a way in which he has not got it, e.g. one die by itself.' Does a man know either by learning or by discovery each thing that he knows, singly? but not the things that he knows, collectively.' Also a man treads, perhaps, on any thing he walks through, but not on the time he walks through. Likewise also in the case of the other examples.

## 24

In dealing with arguments that depend on Accident, one and the same solution meets all cases. For since it is indeterminate when an attribute should be ascribed to a thing, in cases where it belongs to the accident of the thing, and since in some cases it is generally agreed and people admit that it belongs, while in others they deny that it need belong, we should therefore, as soon as the conclusion has been drawn, say in answer to them all alike, that there is no need for such an attribute to belong. One must, however, be prepared to adduce an example of the kind of attribute meant. All arguments such as the following depend upon Accident. 'Do you know what I am going to ask you? you know the man who is approaching', or 'the man in the mask'? 'Is the statue your work of art?' or 'Is the dog your father?' 'Is the product of a small number with a small number a small number?' For it is evident in all these cases that there is no necessity for the attribute which is true of the thing's accident to be true of the thing as well. For only to things that are indistinguishable and one in essence is it generally agreed that all the same attributes belong; whereas in the case of a good thing, to be good is not the same as to be going to be the subject of a question; nor in the case of a man approaching, or wearing a mask, is 'to be approaching' the same thing as 'to be Coriscus', so that suppose I know Coriscus, but do not know the man who is approaching, it still isn't the case that I both know and do not know the same man; nor, again, if this is mine and is also a work of art, is it therefore my work of art, but my property or thing or something else. (The solution is after the same manner in the other cases as well.)

Some solve these refutations by demolishing the original proposition asked: for they say that it is possible to know and not to know the same thing, only not in the same respect: accordingly, when they don't know the man who is coming towards them, but do know Corsicus, they assert that they do know and don't know the same object, but not in the same respect. Yet, as we have already remarked, the correction of arguments that depend upon the same point ought to be the same, whereas this one will not stand if one adopts the same principle in regard not to knowing something, but to being, or to being is a in a certain state, e.g. suppose that X is father, and is also yours: for if in some cases this is true and it is possible to know and not to know the same thing, yet with that case the solution stated has nothing to do. Certainly there is nothing to prevent the same argument from having a number of flaws; but it is not the exposition of any and every fault that constitutes a solution: for it is possible for a man to show that a false conclusion has been proved, but not to show on what it depends, e.g. in the case of Zeno's argument to prove that motion is impossible. So that even if any one were to try to establish that this doctrine is an impossible one, he still is mistaken, and even if he proved his case ten thousand times over, still this is no solution of Zeno's argument: for the solution was all along an exposition of false reasoning, showing on what its falsity depends. If then he has not proved his case, or is trying to establish even a true proposition, or a false one, in a false manner, to point this out is a true solution. Possibly, indeed, the present suggestion may very well apply in some cases: but in these cases, at any rate, not even this would be generally agreed: for he knows both that Corsicus is Corsicus and that the approaching figure is approaching. To know and not to know the same thing is generally thought to be possible, when e.g. one knows that X is white, but does not realize that he is musical: for in that way he does know and not know the same thing, though not in the same respect. But as to the approaching figure and Corsicus he knows both that it is approaching and that he is Corsicus.

A like mistake to that of those whom we have mentioned is that of those who solve the proof that every number is a small number: for if, when the conclusion is not proved, they pass this over and say that a conclusion has been proved and is true, on the ground that every number is both great and small, they make a mistake.

Some people also use the principle of ambiguity to solve the aforesaid reasonings, e.g. the proof that 'X is your father', or 'son', or 'slave'. Yet it is evident that if the appearance a proof depends upon a plurality of meanings, the term, or the expression in question, ought to bear a number of literal senses, whereas no one speaks of A as being 'B's child' in the literal sense, if B is the child's master, but the combination depends upon Accident. 'Is A yours?' 'Yes.' 'And is A a child?' 'Yes.' 'Then the child A is yours,' because he happens to be both yours and a child; but he is not 'your child'.

There is also the proof that 'something "of evils" is good'; for wisdom is a 'knowledge "of evils"'. But the expression that this is 'of so and-so' (= 'so-and-so's') has not a number of meanings: it means that it is 'so-and-so's property'. We may suppose of course, on the other hand, that it has a number of meanings-for we also say that man is 'of the animals', though not their property; and also that any term related to 'evils' in a way expressed by a genitive case is on that account a so-and-so 'of evils', though it is not one of the evils-but in that case the apparently different meanings seem to depend on whether the term is used relatively or absolutely. 'Yet it is conceivably possible to find a real ambiguity in the phrase "Something of evils is good".' Perhaps, but not with regard to the phrase in question. It would occur more nearly, suppose that 'A servant is good of the wicked'; though perhaps it is not quite found even there: for a thing may be 'good' and be 'X's' without being at the same time 'X's good'. Nor is the saying that 'Man is of the animals' a phrase with a number of meanings: for a phrase does not become possessed of a number of meanings merely suppose we express it elliptically: for we express 'Give me the Iliad' by quoting half a line of it, e.g. 'Give me "Sing, goddess, of the wrath . . ."'

## 25

Those arguments which depend upon an expression that is valid of a particular thing, or in a particular respect, or place, or manner, or relation, and not valid absolutely, should be solved by considering the conclusion in relation to its contradictory, to see if any of these things can possibly have

happened to it. For it is impossible for contraries and opposites and an affirmative and a negative to belong to the same thing absolutely; there is, however, nothing to prevent each from belonging in a particular respect or relation or manner, or to prevent one of them from belonging in a particular respect and the other absolutely. So that if this one belongs absolutely and that one in a particular respect, there is as yet no refutation. This is a feature one has to find in the conclusion by examining it in comparison with its contradictory.

All arguments of the following kind have this feature: 'Is it possible for what is-not to be? "No." But, you see, it is something, despite its not being.' Likewise also, Being will not be; for it will not be some particular form of being. Is it possible for the same man at the same time to be a keeper and a breaker of his oath?' 'Can the same man at the same time both obey and disobey the same man?' Or isn't it the case that being something in particular and Being are not the same? On the other hand, Not-being, even if it be something, need not also have absolute 'being' as well. Nor if a man keeps his oath in this particular instance or in this particular respect, is he bound also to be a keeper of oaths absolutely, but he who swears that he will break his oath, and then breaks it, keeps this particular oath only; he is not a keeper of his oath: nor is the disobedient man 'obedient', though he obeys one particular command. The argument is similar, also, as regards the problem whether the same man can at the same time say what is both false and true: but it appears to be a troublesome question because it is not easy to see in which of the two connexions the word 'absolutely' is to be rendered-with 'true' or with 'false'. There is, however, nothing to prevent it from being false absolutely, though true in some particular respect or relation, i.e. being true in some things, though not 'true' absolutely. Likewise also in cases of some particular relation and place and time. For all arguments of the following kind depend upon this.' Is health, or wealth, a good thing?' 'Yes.' 'But to the fool who does not use it aright it is not a good thing: therefore it is both good and not good.' 'Is health, or political power, a good thing?' 'Yes. "But sometimes it is not particularly good: therefore the same thing is both good and not good to the same man.' Or rather there is nothing to prevent a thing, though good absolutely, being not good to a particular man, or being good to a particular man, and yet not good or here.



‘Is that which the prudent man would not wish, an evil?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘But to get rid of, he would not wish the good: therefore the good is an evil.’ But that is a mistake; for it is not the same thing to say ‘The good is an evil’ and ‘to get rid of the good is an evil’. Likewise also the argument of the thief is mistaken. For it is not the case that if the thief is an evil thing, acquiring things is also evil: what he wishes, therefore, is not what is evil but what is good; for to acquire something good is good. Also, disease is an evil thing, but not to get rid of disease. ‘Is the just preferable to the unjust, and what takes place justly to what takes place unjustly?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘But to to be put to death unjustly is preferable.’ ‘Is it just that each should have his own?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘But whatever decisions a man comes to on the strength of his personal opinion, even if it be a false opinion, are valid in law: therefore the same result is both just and unjust.’ Also, should one decide in favour of him who says what is unjust?’ ‘The former.’ ‘But you see, it is just for the injured party to say fully the things he has suffered; and these are fallacies. For because to suffer a thing unjustly is preferable, unjust ways are not therefore preferable, though in this particular case the unjust may very well be better than the just. Also, to have one’s own is just, while to have what is another’s is not just: all the same, the decision in question may very well be a just decision, whatever it be that the opinion of the man who gave the decision supports: for because it is just in this particular case or in this particular manner, it is not also just absolutely. Likewise also, though things are unjust, there is nothing to prevent the speaking of them being just: for because to speak of things is just, there is no necessity that the things should be just, any more than because to speak of things be of use, the things need be of use. Likewise also in the case of what is just. So that it is not the case that because the things spoken of are unjust, the victory goes to him who speaks unjust things: for he speaks of things that are just to speak of, though absolutely, i.e. to suffer, they are unjust.

## 26

Refutations that depend on the definition of a refutation must, according to the plan sketched above, be met by comparing together the conclusion with its contradictory, and seeing that it shall involve the same attribute in the

same respect and relation and manner and time. If this additional question be put at the start, you should not admit that it is impossible for the same thing to be both double and not double, but grant that it is possible, only not in such a way as was agreed to constitute a refutation of your case. All the following arguments depend upon a point of that kind. 'Does a man who knows A to be A, know the thing called A?' and in the same way, 'is one who is ignorant that A is A ignorant of the thing called A?' 'Yes.' 'But one who knows that Coriscus is Coriscus might be ignorant of the fact that he is musical, so that he both knows and is ignorant of the same thing.' Is a thing four cubits long greater than a thing three cubits long?' 'Yes.' 'But a thing might grow from three to four cubits in length; 'now what is 'greater' is greater than a 'less': accordingly the thing in question will be both greater and less than itself in the same respect.

## 27

As to refutations that depend on begging and assuming the original point to be proved, suppose the nature of the question to be obvious, one should not grant it, even though it be a view generally held, but should tell him the truth. Suppose, however, that it escapes one, then, thanks to the badness of arguments of that kind, one should make one's error recoil upon the questioner, and say that he has brought no argument: for a refutation must be proved independently of the original point. Secondly, one should say that the point was granted under the impression that he intended not to use it as a premiss, but to reason against it, in the opposite way from that adopted in refutations on side issues.

## 28

Also, those refutations that bring one to their conclusion through the consequent you should show up in the course of the argument itself. The mode in which consequences follow is twofold. For the argument either is that as the universal follows on its particular-as (e.g.) 'animal' follows from 'man'-so does the particular on its universal: for the claim is made that if A is

always found with B, then B also is always found with A. Or else it proceeds by way of the opposites of the terms involved: for if A follows B, it is claimed that A's opposite will follow B's opposite. On this latter claim the argument of Melissus also depends: for he claims that because that which has come to be has a beginning, that which has not come to be has none, so that if the heaven has not come to be, it is also eternal. But that is not so; for the sequence is vice versa.

### 29

In the case of any refutations whose reasoning depends on some addition, look and see if upon its subtraction the absurdity follows none the less: and then if so, the answerer should point this out, and say that he granted the addition not because he really thought it, but for the sake of the argument, whereas the questioner has not used it for the purpose of his argument at all.

### 30

To meet those refutations which make several questions into one, one should draw a distinction between them straight away at the start. For a question must be single to which there is a single answer, so that one must not affirm or deny several things of one thing, nor one thing of many, but one of one. But just as in the case of ambiguous terms, an attribute belongs to a term sometimes in both its senses, and sometimes in neither, so that a simple answer does one, as it happens, no harm despite the fact that the question is not simple, so it is in these cases of double questions too. Whenever, then, the several attributes belong to the one subject, or the one to the many, the man who gives a simple answer encounters no obstacle even though he has committed this mistake: but whenever an attribute belongs to one subject but not to the other, or there is a question of a number of attributes belonging to a number of subjects and in one sense both belong to both, while in another sense, again, they do not, then there is trouble, so that one must beware of this. Thus (e.g.) in the following

arguments: Supposing to be good and B evil, you will, if you give a single answer about both, be compelled to say that it is true to call these good, and that it is true to call them evil and likewise to call them neither good nor evil (for each of them has not each character), so that the same thing will be both good and evil and neither good nor evil. Also, since everything is the same as itself and different from anything else, inasmuch as the man who answers double questions simply can be made to say that several things are 'the same' not as other things but 'as themselves', and also that they are different from themselves, it follows that the same things must be both the same as and different from themselves. Moreover, if what is good becomes evil while what is evil is good, then they must both become two. So of two unequal things each being equal to itself, it will follow that they are both equal and unequal to themselves.

Now these refutations fall into the province of other solutions as well: for 'both' and 'all' have more than one meaning, so that the resulting affirmation and denial of the same thing does not occur, except verbally: and this is not what we meant by a refutation. But it is clear that if there be not put a single question on a number of points, but the answerer has affirmed or denied one attribute only of one subject only, the absurdity will not come to pass.

### 31

With regard to those who draw one into repeating the same thing a number of times, it is clear that one must not grant that predications of relative terms have any meaning in abstraction by themselves, e.g. that 'double' is a significant term apart from the whole phrase 'double of half' merely on the ground that it figures in it. For ten figures in 'ten minus one' and in 'not do', and generally the affirmation in the negation; but for all that, suppose any one were to say, 'This is not white', he does not say that it is white. The bare word 'double', one may perhaps say, has not even any meaning at all, any more than has 'the' in 'the half': and even if it has a meaning, yet it has not the same meaning as in the combination. Nor is 'knowledge' the same thing in a specific branch of it (suppose it, e.g. to be 'medical knowledge') as it is

in general: for in general it was the 'knowledge of the knowable'. In the case of terms that are predicated of the terms through which they are defined, you should say the same thing, that the term defined is not the same in abstraction as it is in the whole phrase. For 'concave' has a general meaning which is the same in the case of a snub nose, and of a bandy leg, but when added to either substantive nothing prevents it from differentiating its meaning; in fact it bears one sense as applied to the nose, and another as applied to the leg: for in the former connexion it means 'snub' and in the latter 'bandy-shaped'; i.e. it makes no difference whether you say 'a snub nose' or 'a concave nose'. Moreover, the expression must not be granted in the nominative case: for it is a falsehood. For snubness is not a concave nose but something (e.g. an affection) belonging to a nose: hence, there is no absurdity in supposing that the snub nose is a nose possessing the concavity that belongs to a nose.

## 32

With regard to solecisms, we have previously said what it is that appears to bring them about; the method of their solution will be clear in the course of the arguments themselves. Solecism is the result aimed at in all arguments of the following kind: 'Is a thing truly that which you truly call it?' 'Yes'. 'But, speaking of a stone, you call him real: therefore of a stone it follows that "him is real".' No: rather, talking of a stone means not saying which' but 'whom', and not 'that' but 'him'. If, then, any one were to ask, 'Is a stone him whom you truly call him?' he would be generally thought not to be speaking good Greek, any more than if he were to ask, 'Is he what you call her?' Speak in this way of a 'stick' or any neuter word, and the difference does not break out. For this reason, also, no solecism is incurred, suppose any one asks, 'Is a thing what you say it to be?' 'Yes'. 'But, speaking of a stick, you call it real: therefore, of a stick it follows that it is real.' 'Stone', however, and 'he' have masculine designations. Now suppose some one were to ask, 'Can "he" be a she" (a female)?', and then again, 'Well, but is not he Coriscus?' and then were to say, 'Then he is a "she",' he has not proved the solecism, even if the name 'Coriscus' does signify a 'she', if, on the other hand, the answerer does not grant this: this point must be put as

an additional question: while if neither is it the fact nor does he grant it, then the sophist has not proved his case either in fact or as against the person he has been questioning. In like manner, then, in the above instance as well it must be definitely put that 'he' means the stone. If, however, this neither is so nor is granted, the conclusion must not be stated: though it follows apparently, because the case (the accusative), that is really unlike, appears to be like the nominative. 'Is it true to say that this object is what you call it by name?' 'Yes'. 'But you call it by the name of a shield: this object therefore is "of a shield".' No: not necessarily, because the meaning of 'this object' is not 'of a shield' but 'a shield': 'of a shield' would be the meaning of 'this object's'. Nor again if 'He is what you call him by name', while 'the name you call him by is Cleon's', is he therefore 'Cleon's': for he is not 'Cleon's', for what was said was that 'He, not his, is what I call him by name'. For the question, if put in the latter way, would not even be Greek. 'Do you know this?' 'Yes.' 'But this is he: therefore you know he'. No: rather 'this' has not the same meaning in 'Do you know this?' as in 'This is a stone'; in the first it stands for an accusative, in the second for a nominative case. 'When you have understanding of anything, do you understand it?' 'Yes.' 'But you have understanding of a stone: therefore you understand of a stone.' No: the one phrase is in the genitive, 'of a stone', while the other is in the accusative, 'a stone': and what was granted was that 'you understand that, not of that, of which you have understanding', so that you understand not 'of a stone', but 'the stone'.

Thus that arguments of this kind do not prove solecism but merely appear to do so, and both why they so appear and how you should meet them, is clear from what has been said.

### 33

We must also observe that of all the arguments aforesaid it is easier with some to see why and where the reasoning leads the hearer astray, while with others it is more difficult, though often they are the same arguments as the former. For we must call an argument the same if it depends upon the same point; but the same argument is apt to be thought by some to depend

on diction, by others on accident, and by others on something else, because each of them, when worked with different terms, is not so clear as it was. Accordingly, just as in fallacies that depend on ambiguity, which are generally thought to be the silliest form of fallacy, some are clear even to the man in the street (for humorous phrases nearly all depend on diction; e.g. 'The man got the cart down from the stand'; and 'Where are you bound?' 'To the yard arm'; and 'Which cow will calve afore?' 'Neither, but both behind;'; and 'Is the North wind clear?' 'No, indeed; for it has murdered the beggar and the merchant.'" Is he a Good enough-King?' 'No, indeed; a Rob-son': and so with the great majority of the rest as well), while others appear to elude the most expert (and it is a symptom of this that they often fight about their terms, e.g. whether the meaning of 'Being' and 'One' is the same in all their applications or different; for some think that 'Being' and 'One' mean the same; while others solve the argument of Zeno and Parmenides by asserting that 'One' and 'Being' are used in a number of senses), likewise also as regards fallacies of Accident and each of the other types, some of the arguments will be easier to see while others are more difficult; also to grasp to which class a fallacy belongs, and whether it is a refutation or not a refutation, is not equally easy in all cases.

An incisive argument is one which produces the greatest perplexity: for this is the one with the sharpest fang. Now perplexity is twofold, one which occurs in reasoned arguments, respecting which of the propositions asked one is to demolish, and the other in contentious arguments, respecting the manner in which one is to assent to what is propounded. Therefore it is in syllogistic arguments that the more incisive ones produce the keenest heart-searching. Now a syllogistic argument is most incisive if from premisses that are as generally accepted as possible it demolishes a conclusion that is accepted as generally as possible. For the one argument, if the contradictory is changed about, makes all the resulting syllogisms alike in character: for always from premisses that are generally accepted it will prove a conclusion, negative or positive as the case may be, that is just as generally accepted; and therefore one is bound to feel perplexed. An argument, then, of this kind is the most incisive, viz. the one that puts its conclusion on all fours with the propositions asked; and second comes the one that argues from premisses, all of which are equally convincing: for this will produce an equal

perplexity as to what kind of premiss, of those asked, one should demolish. Herein is a difficulty: for one must demolish something, but what one must demolish is uncertain. Of contentious arguments, on the other hand, the most incisive is the one which, in the first place, is characterized by an initial uncertainty whether it has been properly reasoned or not; and also whether the solution depends on a false premiss or on the drawing of a distinction; while, of the rest, the second place is held by that whose solution clearly depends upon a distinction or a demolition, and yet it does not reveal clearly which it is of the premisses asked, whose demolition, or the drawing of a distinction within it, will bring the solution about, but even leaves it vague whether it is on the conclusion or on one of the premisses that the deception depends.

Now sometimes an argument which has not been properly reasoned is silly, supposing the assumptions required to be extremely contrary to the general view or false; but sometimes it ought not to be held in contempt. For whenever some question is left out, of the kind that concerns both the subject and the nerve of the argument, the reasoning that has both failed to secure this as well, and also failed to reason properly, is silly; but when what is omitted is some extraneous question, then it is by no means to be lightly despised, but the argument is quite respectable, though the questioner has not put his questions well.

Just as it is possible to bring a solution sometimes against the argument, at others against the questioner and his mode of questioning, and at others against neither of these, likewise also it is possible to marshal one's questions and reasoning both against the thesis, and against the answerer and against the time, whenever the solution requires a longer time to examine than the period available.

### 34

As to the number, then, and kind of sources whence fallacies arise in discussion, and how we are to show that our opponent is committing a fallacy and make him utter paradoxes; moreover, by the use of what materials solecism is brought about, and how to question and what is the



way to arrange the questions; moreover, as to the question what use is served by all arguments of this kind, and concerning the answerer's part, both as a whole in general, and in particular how to solve arguments and solecisms-on all these things let the foregoing discussion suffice. It remains to recall our original proposal and to bring our discussion to a close with a few words upon it.

Our programme was, then, to discover some faculty of reasoning about any theme put before us from the most generally accepted premisses that there are. For that is the essential task of the art of discussion (dialectic) and of examination (peirastic). Inasmuch, however, as it is annexed to it, on account of the near presence of the art of sophistry (sophistic), not only to be able to conduct an examination dialectically but also with a show of knowledge, we therefore proposed for our treatise not only the aforesaid aim of being able to exact an account of any view, but also the aim of ensuring that in standing up to an argument we shall defend our thesis in the same manner by means of views as generally held as possible. The reason of this we have explained; for this, too, was why Socrates used to ask questions and not to answer them; for he used to confess that he did not know. We have made clear, in the course of what precedes, the number both of the points with reference to which, and of the materials from which, this will be accomplished, and also from what sources we can become well supplied with these: we have shown, moreover, how to question or arrange the questioning as a whole, and the problems concerning the answers and solutions to be used against the reasonings of the questioner. We have also cleared up the problems concerning all other matters that belong to the same inquiry into arguments. In addition to this we have been through the subject of Fallacies, as we have already stated above.

That our programme, then, has been adequately completed is clear. But we must not omit to notice what has happened in regard to this inquiry. For in the case of all discoveries the results of previous labours that have been handed down from others have been advanced bit by bit by those who have taken them on, whereas the original discoveries generally make advance that is small at first though much more useful than the development which later springs out of them. For it may be that in everything, as the saying is,

‘the first start is the main part’: and for this reason also it is the most difficult; for in proportion as it is most potent in its influence, so it is smallest in its compass and therefore most difficult to see: whereas when this is once discovered, it is easier to add and develop the remainder in connexion with it. This is in fact what has happened in regard to rhetorical speeches and to practically all the other arts: for those who discovered the beginnings of them advanced them in all only a little way, whereas the celebrities of to-day are the heirs (so to speak) of a long succession of men who have advanced them bit by bit, and so have developed them to their present form, Tisias coming next after the first founders, then Thrasymachus after Tisias, and Theodorus next to him, while several people have made their several contributions to it: and therefore it is not to be wondered at that the art has attained considerable dimensions. Of this inquiry, on the other hand, it was not the case that part of the work had been thoroughly done before, while part had not. Nothing existed at all. For the training given by the paid professors of contentious arguments was like the treatment of the matter by Gorgias. For they used to hand out speeches to be learned by heart, some rhetorical, others in the form of question and answer, each side supposing that their arguments on either side generally fall among them.

And therefore the teaching they gave their pupils was ready but rough. For they used to suppose that they trained people by imparting to them not the art but its products, as though any one professing that he would impart a form of knowledge to obviate any pain in the feet, were then not to teach a man the art of shoe-making or the sources whence he can acquire anything of the kind, but were to present him with several kinds of shoes of all sorts: for he has helped him to meet his need, but has not imparted an art to him. Moreover, on the subject of Rhetoric there exists much that has been said long ago, whereas on the subject of reasoning we had nothing else of an earlier date to speak of at all, but were kept at work for a long time in experimental researches.

If, then, it seems to you after inspection that, such being the situation as it existed at the start, our investigation is in a satisfactory condition compared with the other inquiries that have been developed by tradition, there must remain for all of you, or for our students, the task of extending us your

pardon for the shortcomings of the inquiry, and for the discoveries thereof  
your warm thanks.

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