Socrates: Come now, let me tell you another parable from the same school as that I have just told. Consider if each of the two lives, the temperate and the licentious, might be described by imagining that each of two men had a number of jars, and those of one man were sound and full, one of wine, another of honey, a third of milk, and various others of various things, and that the sources of each of these supplies were scanty and difficult and only available through much hard toil: well, one man, when he has taken his fill, neither draws off any more nor troubles himself a jot, but remains at ease on that score; whilst the other finds, like his fellow, that the sources are possible indeed, though difficult, but his vessels are leaky and he is compelled to fill them constantly, all night and day, or else suffer extreme distress. If such is the nature of each of the two lives, do you say that the licentious man has a happier one than the orderly? Do I, with this story of mine, induce you at all to concede that the orderly life is better than the licentious, or do I fail?

Callicles: You fail, Socrates. For that man who has taken his fill can have no pleasure any more; in fact it is what I just now called living like a stone, when one has filled up and no longer feels any joy or pain. But a pleasant life consists rather in the largest possible amount of inflow.

Socrates: Well then, if the inflow be large, must not that which runs away be of large amount also, and must not the holes for such outflow be of great size?

Callicles: Certainly.

Socrates: Then it is a plover's life you are describing this time, not that of a corpse or a stone. Now tell me, is the life you mean something like feeling hunger and eating when hungry?

Callicles: Yes, it is.

Socrates: And feeling thirst and drinking when thirsty?

Callicles: Yes, and having all the other desires, and being able to satisfy them, and so with these enjoyments leading a happy life.
Socrates: Bravo, my fine fellow! Do go on as you have begun, and mind you show no bashfulness about it. I too, it seems, must try not to be too bashful. First of all, tell me whether a man who has an itch and wants to scratch, and may scratch in all freedom, can pass his life happily in continual scratching.

Callicles: What an odd person you are, Socrates—a regular stump-orator!

Socrates: Why, of course, Callicles, that is how I upset Polus and Gorgias, and struck them with bashfulness; but you, I know, will never be upset or abashed; you are such a manly fellow. Come, just answer that.

Callicles: Then I say that the man also who scratches himself will thus spend a pleasant life.

Socrates: And if a pleasant one, a happy one also?

Callicles: Certainly.

Socrates: Is it so if he only wants to scratch his head? Or what more am I to ask you? See, Callicles, what your answer will be, if you are asked everything in succession that links on to that statement; and the culmination of the case, as stated—the life of catamites—is not that awful, shameful, and wretched? Or will you dare to assert that these are happy if they can freely indulge their wants?

Callicles: Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to lead the discussion into such topics?

Socrates: What, is it I who am leading it there, noble sir, or the person who says outright that those who enjoy themselves, with whatever kind of enjoyment, are happy, and draws no distinction between the good and bad sorts of pleasure? But come, try again now and tell me whether you say that pleasant and good are the same thing, or that there is some pleasure which is not good.

Callicles: Then, so that my statement may not be inconsistent through my saying they are different, I say they are the same.

Socrates: You are spoiling your first statements, Callicles, and you can no longer be a fit partner with me in probing the truth, if you are going to speak against your own convictions.