

Cyroupaedeia
The Education of Cyrus
Xenophon 431-354 B.C.

Book I

Accordingly, Astyages, to carry on the jest, asked the little lad why he had forgotten to taste the wine though he had imitated Sacas in everything else. And the boy answered, "Truly, I was afraid there might be poison in the bowl. For when you gave your birthday feast to your friends I could see quite plainly that Sacas had put in poison for you all." "And how did you discover that, my boy?" asked the king. "Because I saw how your wits reeled and how you staggered; and you all began doing what you will not let us children do--you talked at the top of your voices, and none of you understood a single word the others said, and then you began singing in a way to make us laugh, and though you would not listen to the singer you swore that it was right nobly sung, and then each of you boasted of his own strength, and yet as soon as you got up to dance, so far from keeping time to the measure, you could barely keep your legs. And you seemed quite to have forgotten, grandfather, that you were king, and your subjects that you were their sovereign. Then at last I understood that you must be celebrating that 'free speech' we hear of; at any rate, you were never silent for an instant." [11] "Well, but, boy," said Astyages, "does your father never lose his head when he drinks?" "Certainly not," said the boy.

"Well," said Cyrus, "my first rule is to avoid over-feeding as most oppressive to the system, and my next to work off all that enters the body: that seems the best way to keep health and gain strength." "My son," Cambyses answered, "these are the principles you must apply to others." "What!" said Cyrus; "do you think it will be possible for the soldiers to diet and train themselves?" "Not only possible," said the father, "but essential. For surely an army, if it is to fulfil its function at all, must always be engaged in hurting the foe or helping itself. A single man is hard enough to support in idleness, a household is harder still, an army hardest of all. There are more mouths to be filled, less wealth to start with, and greater waste; and therefore an army should never be unemployed." [18] "If I take your

meaning," answered Cyrus, "you think an idle general as useless as an idle farmer. And here and now I answer for the working general, and promise on his behalf that with God's help he will show you that his troops have all they need and their bodies are all they ought to be. And I think," he added, "I know a way by which an officer might do much towards training his men in the various branches of war. Let him propose competitions of every kind and offer prizes; the standard of skill will rise, and he will soon have a body of troops ready to his hand for any service he requires." "Nothing could be better," answered the father. "Do this, and you may be sure you will watch your regiments at their manœuvres with as much delight as if they were a chorus in the dance."

BOOKVII

[48] Cyrus paused, and up rose Artabazus the Mede, who had claimed to be his kinsman, and said:

"You did well, Cyrus, to open this matter. Years ago, when you were still a boy, from the very first I longed to be your friend, but I saw you did not need me, and so I shrank from approaching you. [49] Then came a lucky moment when you did have need of me to be your good messenger among the Medes with the order from Cyaxares, and I said to myself that if I did the work well, if I really helped you, I might become your comrade and have the right to talk with you as often as I wished. [50] Well, the work was done, and done so as to win your praise. After that the Hyrcanians joined us, the first friends we made, when we were hungry and thirsty for allies, and we loved them so much we almost carried them about with us in our arms wherever we went. Then the enemy's camp was taken, and I scarcely think you had the leisure to trouble your head with me--oh, I quite forgave you. [51] The next thing was that Gobryas became your friend, and I had to take my leave, and after him Gadatas, and by that time it was a real task to get hold of you. Then came the alliances with the Sakians, and the Cadousians, and no doubt you had to pay them court; if they danced attendance on you, you must dance attendance on them. [52] So that

there I was, back again at my starting-point, and yet all the while, as I saw you busy with horses and chariots and artillery, I consoled myself by thinking, 'when he is done with this he will have a little leisure for me.' And then came the terrible news that the whole world was gathering in arms against us; I could not deny that these were important matters, but still I felt certain, if all went well, a time would come at last when you need not grudge me your company, and we should be together to my heart's content, you and I.

Book VIII

[12] "By Hera," said Hystaspas, "I am right glad I asked you. Only one thing puzzles me: how am I to show my joy at your success? Shall I clap my hands and laugh, or what shall I do?"

"Dance the Persian dance, of course," said Artabazus. And all the company laughed.

[13] And as the drinking deepened Cyrus put a question to Gobryas.

"Tell me, Gobryas, would you be better pleased to give your daughter to one of our company to-day than the day when you met us first?"

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[C. 7] Thus the years passed on, and Cyrus was now in a ripe old age, and he journeyed to Persia for the seventh time in his reign. His father and mother were long since dead in the course of nature, and Cyrus offered sacrifice according to the law, and led the sacred dance of his Persians after the manner of his forefathers, and gave gifts to every man according to his wont.

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