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The Symposium

Apollodorus tells his Companions how he heard about the Banquet

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Ap. I believe I have got the story you inquire of pretty well by heart. The day before yesterday I chanced to be going up to town from my house in Phalerum, when one of my acquaintance caught sight of me from behind, some way off, and called in a bantering tone

"Hullo, Phalerian! I say, Apollodorus, wait a moment." So I stopped and waited. Then,

"Apollodorus," he said,

"do you know, I have just been looking for you, as I want to hear all about the banquet that brought together Agathon and Socrates and Alcibiades and the rest of that party, and what were the speeches they delivered upon love. For somebody else was relating to me the account he had from Phoenix, [1] son of Philip, and he mentioned that you knew it too. But he could not tell it at all clearly so you must give me the whole story, for you are the most proper reporter of your dear friend's discourses. But first tell me this," he went on;

"were you at that party yourself, or not?" To which my answer was:

"You have had anything but a clear account from your informant, if you suppose the party you are asking about to have been such a recent affair that I could be included."

"So I did suppose," he said.

"How so, Glaucon [2]?" said I.

"You must know it is many a year that Agathon has been away from

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[1] Nothing is known of this man.

[2] Probably Plato's brother (Rep. *368A*).

home and country, and not yet three years that I have been consorting with Socrates and making it my daily care to know whatever he says or does."

Ap.

"Before that time, what with running about at random and thinking I did things, I was the wretchedest man alive; just as you are at present, thinking philosophy is none of your business."

"Instead of jeering at me," he said,

"tell me when it was that this party took place."

"When you and I were only children," I told him;

"on the occasion of Agathon's victory with his first tragedy: the day after that of the dedicatory feast which he and his players held for its celebration."

"Ah, quite a long while ago, it would seem," said he;

"but who gave you the account of it? Socrates himself?"

"Goodness, no!" I answered.

"It was the person who told Phoenix—Aristodemus of Cydathenaeum, a little man, who went always barefoot. He was of the company there, being one of the chief among Socrates' lovers at that time, I believe. But all the same, I have since questioned Socrates on some details of the story I had from his friend, and he acknowledged them to be in accordance with his account."

"Come then," he said,

"let me have it now; and in fact the road up to town is well suited for telling and hearing as we go along." So on we went, discoursing the while of this affair; and hence, as I began by saying, I have it pretty well by heart. So, friends, if you too must hear the whole story, I had better tell it. For my own part, indeed, I commonly find that, setting aside the benefit I conceive they do me, I take an immense delight in philosophic discourses, whether I speak them myself or hear them from others: whereas in the case of other sorts of talk—especially that of your wealthy, money-bag friends—I am not only annoyed myself but sorry for dear intimates like you, who think you are doing a great deal when you really do nothing at all. From your point of view, I daresay, I seem a hapless creature, and I think your thought is true. I, however, do not think it of you: I know it for sure.

Comp. You are the same as ever, Apollodorus,—always defaming your self and every one else! Your view, I take it, is that all men alike are miserable, save Socrates, and that your own plight is the worst. How you may have come by your title of "crazy,"[3] I do not know:

though, of course, you are always like that in your way of speech—raging against yourself and everybody except Socrates.

Ap. My dear sir, obviously it must be a mere crazy aberration in me, to hold this opinion of myself and of you all!

Comp. It is waste of time, Apollodorus, to wrangle about such matters now. Come, without more ado, comply with our request and relate how the speeches went.

Ap. Well then, they were somewhat as follows,—but stay, I must try and tell you all in order from the beginning, just as my friend told it to me.

How Aristodemus fell in with Socrates and came to the Banquet

He said that he met with Socrates fresh from the bath and wearing his best pair of slippers—quite rare events with him—and asked him whither he was bound in such fine trim.

"To dinner at Agathon's," he answered.

"I evaded him and his celebrations yesterday, fearing the crowd; but I agreed to be present today. So I got myself up in this handsome style in order to be a match for my handsome host. Now tell me," said he,

"do you feel in the mood for going unasked to dinner?"

"For anything," he said he replied,

"that you may bid me do."

"Come along then," he said;

"let us corrupt the proverb with a new version: "What if they go of their own accord,The good men to our Goodman's [4] board?" Though indeed Homer [5] may be said to have not merely corrupted the adage, but debauched it: for after setting forth Agamemnon as a man eminently good at warfare, and Menelaus as only "a spearman spiritless," [6] he makes the latter come unbidden to the banquet of the former, who was offering sacrifice and holding a feast; so the worse

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[3]His friend means: "I expect you quite deserve your name of crazy fanatic (for your general absorption in philosophy), because your vehement censure of yourself and others suggests it to me".

[4]The name Agathon resembles the Greek for good men's in the proverb, which seems to have been: *αὐτόματοι δ' ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ δαῖτας ἴασι* (Athen. i. 8A; *Bacchyl. fr. 33*). The "corruption" consists in putting the dative *Ἀγάθων(ι)* for *ἀγαθῶν*; though perhaps the reference is to another form of the proverb which had *δειλῶν* (cravens') instead of *ἀγαθῶν*.

[5]*Hom. Il. 17.587Μενέλαον ὑπετρέσας, ὃ τὸ πάρος γε μαλθακὸς αἰχμητής*, and *Hom. Il. 2.408 αὐτόματος δέ οἱ ἦλθε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος.*

[6]*Hom. Il. 17.587*

man was the guest of the better." To this my friend's answer, as he told me, was:

"I am afraid mine, most likely, is a case that fits not your version, Socrates, but Homer's—a dolt coming unbidden to the banquet of a scholar. Be sure, then, to have your excuse quite ready when you bring me; for I shall not own to coming unasked, but only on your invitation."

""If two go along together,"" he remarked,

""there's one before another" [7] in devising what we are to say. Well, off we go."After some such conversation, he told me, they started off. Then Socrates, becoming absorbed in his own thoughts by the way, fell behind him as they went; and when my friend began to wait for him he bade him go on ahead. So he came to Agathon's house, and found the door open; where he found himself in a rather ridiculous position. For he was met immediately by a servant from within, who took him where the company was reclining, and he found them just about to dine. However, as soon as Agathon saw him

"Ha, Aristodemus," he cried,

"right welcome to a place at table with us! If you came on some other errand, put it off to another time: only yesterday I went round to invite you, but failed to see you. But how is it you do not bring us Socrates?" At that I turned back for Socrates, he said, but saw no sign of him coming after me: so I told them how I myself had come along with Socrates, since he had asked me to dine with them.

"Very good of you to come," he said,

"but where is the man?"

"He was coming in just now behind me: I am wondering myself where he can be."

"Go at once," said Agathon to the servant,

"and see if you can fetch in Socrates. You, Aristodemus, take a place by Eryximachus." So the attendant washed him and made him ready for reclining, when another of the servants came in with the news that our good Socrates had retreated into their neighbors' porch; there he was standing, and when bidden to come in, he refused.

"How strange!" said Agathon,

"you must go on bidding him, and by no means let him go." But this Aristodemus forbade:

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[7] Cf. *Hom. Il. 10.224 σύν τε δύ' ἐρχομένω, καί τε πρὸ ὃ τοῦ ἐνόησεν ὅππως κέρδος ἔῃι*, "if two go along together, there's one to espy before another how a profit may be had."

"No," said he,

"let him alone; it is a habit he has. Occasionally he turns aside, anywhere at random, and there he stands. He will be here presently, I expect. So do not disturb him; let him be."

"Very well then," said Agathon,

"as you judge best. Come, boys," he called to the servants,

"serve the feast for the rest of us. You are to set on just whatever you please, now that you have no one to direct you (a method I have never tried before). [8] Today you are to imagine that I and all the company here have come on your invitation so look after us, and earn our compliments." Thereupon, he said, they all began dinner, but Socrates did not arrive; and though Agathon ever and anon gave orders that they should go and fetch him, my friend would not allow it. When he did come, it was after what, for him, was no great delay, as they were only about halfway through dinner. Then Agathon, who happened to be sitting alone in the lowest place, said:

"Here, Socrates, come sit by me, so that by contact with you I may have some benefit from that piece of wisdom that occurred to you there in the porch. Clearly you have made the discovery and got hold of it for you would not have come away before." Then Socrates sat down, and

"How fine it would be, Agathon," he said,

"if wisdom were a sort of thing that could flow out of the one of us who is fuller into him who is emptier, by our mere contact with each other, as water will flow through wool from the fuller cup into the emptier. If such is indeed the case with wisdom, I set a great value on my sitting next to you: I look to be filled with excellent wisdom drawn in abundance out of you. My own is but meagre, as disputable as a dream; but yours is bright and expansive, as the other day we saw it shining forth from your youth, strong and splendid, in the eyes of more than thirty thousand Greeks."

"You rude mocker, Socrates!" said Agathon.

"A little later on you and I shall go to law on this matter of our wisdom, and Dionysus shall be our judge. For the present, let the dinner be your first concern."

After this, it seems, when Socrates had taken his place and had dined with the rest, they made libation and sang a chant to the god and

[8] This clause is probably an "aside"to his guests.

so forth, as custom bids, till they betook them to drinking. Then Pausanias opened a conversation after this manner:

"Well, gentlemen, what mode of drinking will suit us best? For my part, to tell the truth, I am in very poor form as a result of yesterday's bout, and I claim a little relief; it is so, I believe, with most of you, for you were at yesterday's party: so consider what method of drinking would suit us best." On this Aristophanes observed:

"Now that, Pausanias, is a good suggestion of yours, that we make a point of consulting our comfort in our cups: for I myself am one of those who got such a soaking yesterday."When Eryximachus, son of Acumenus, heard this;

"You are quite right, sirs," he said;

"and there is yet one other question on which I request your opinion, as to what sort of condition Agathon finds himself in for drinking."

"No, no," said Agathon,

"I am not in good condition for it either."

"It would be a piece of luck for us, I take it," the other went on,

"that is, for me, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, and our friends here, if you who are the stoutest drinkers are now feeling exhausted. We, of course, are known weaklings. Socrates I do not count in the matter: he is fit either way, and will be content with whichever choice we make. Now as it appears that nobody here present is eager for copious draughts, perhaps it will be the less irksome to you if I speak of intoxication, and tell you truly what it is. The practice of medicine, I find, has made this clear to me—that drunkenness is harmful to mankind; and neither would I myself agree, if I could help it, to an excess of drinking, nor would I recommend it to another, especially when his head is still heavy from a bout of the day before." Here Phaedrus of Myrrhinus interrupted him, saying:

"Why, you know I always obey you, above all in medical matters; and so now will the rest of us, if they are well advised." Then all of them, on hearing this, consented not to make their present meeting a tipsy affair, but to drink just as it might serve their pleasure.

"Since it has been resolved, then," said Eryximachus,

"that we are to drink only so much as each desires, with no constraint on any, I next propose that the flute-girl who came in just now be dismissed: let her pipe to herself or, if she likes, to the women-folk within, but let us seek our entertainment today in conversation. I am ready, if you so desire, to suggest what sort of discussion it should be."

Eryximachus proposes the Theme of Love

They all said they did so desire, and bade him make his proposal. So Eryximachus proceeded:

"The beginning of what I have to say is in the words of Euripides' Melanippe, for "not mine the tale" [9] that I intend to tell; it comes from Phaedrus here. He is constantly complaining to me and saying,—Is it not a curious thing, Eryximachus, that while other gods have hymns and psalms indited in their honor by the poets, the god of Love, so ancient and so great, has had no song of praise composed for him by a single one of all the many poets that ever have been? And again, pray consider our worthy professors, and the eulogies they frame of Hercules and others in prose,—for example, the excellent Prodicus. [10] This indeed is not so surprising but I recollect coming across a book by somebody, in which I found Salt superbly lauded for its usefulness, and many more such matters I could show you celebrated there. To think of all this bustle about such trifles, and not a single man ever essaying till this day to make a fitting hymn to Love! So great a god, and so neglected! Now I think Phaedrus's protest a very proper one. Accordingly I am not only desirous of obliging him with a contribution of my own, but I also pronounce the present to be a fitting occasion for us here assembled to honor the god. So if you on your part approve, we might pass the time well enough in discourses; for my opinion is that we ought each of us to make a speech in turn, from left to right, praising Love as beautifully as he can. Phaedrus shall open first; for he has the topmost place at table, and besides is father of our debate."

"No one, Eryximachus," said Socrates,

"will vote against you: I do not see how I could myself decline, when I set up to understand nothing but love-matters; nor could Agathon and Pausanias either, nor yet Aristophanes, who divides his time between Dionysus and Aphrodite; nor could any other of the persons I see before me. To be sure, we who sit at the bottom do not get a fair chance: but if the earlier speakers rise nobly to the occasion, we shall be quite content. So now let Phaedrus, with our best wishes, make a beginning and give us a eulogy of Love." To this they assented one and all, bidding him do as Socrates said. Now the entire speech in each case was beyond Aristodemus's recollection, and so too the whole of what he told me is beyond mine: but those parts which, on account also of

[9] Eurip. fr. 488 *οὐκ ἐμὸς ὁ μῦθος, ἀλλ' ἐμῆς μητρὸς ἐμῆς μητρὸς πάρα*, "not mine the tale; my mother taught it me."

[10] The moralizing sophist, famous for his parable of *The Choice of Heracles* (*Xen. Mem. 2.1.21*), where the appeal of Virtue prevails over that of Vice.

the speakers, I deemed most memorable, I will tell you successively as they were delivered.

The Speech of Phaedrus

First then, as I said, he told me that the speech of Phaedrus began with points of this sort—that Love was a great god, among men and gods a marvel; and this appeared in many ways, but notably in his birth. Of the most venerable are the honors of this god, and the proof of it is this: parents of Love there are none, nor are any recorded in either prose or verse. Hesiod says that Chaos came first into being—"and thereafter roseBroad-breasted Earth, sure seat of all for aye,And Love."[11] Acusilaus [12] also agrees with Hesiod, saying that after Chaos were born these two, Earth and Love. Parmenides says of Birth that she "invented Love before all other gods." [13] Thus Love is by various authorities allowed to be of most venerable standing; and as most venerable, he is the cause of all our highest blessings. I for my part am at a loss to say what greater blessing a man can have in earliest youth than an honorable lover, or a lover than an honorable favorite. For the guiding principle we should choose for all our days, if we are minded to live a comely life, cannot be acquired either by kinship or office or wealth or anything so well as by Love. What shall I call this power? The shame that we feel for shameful things, and ambition for what is noble; without which it is impossible for city or person to perform any high and noble deeds. Let me then say that a man in love, should he be detected in some shameful act or in a cowardly submission to shameful treatment at another's hands, would not feel half so much distress at anyone observing it, whether father or comrade or anyone in the world, as when his favorite did; and in the selfsame way we see how the beloved is especially ashamed before his lovers when he is observed to be about some shameful business. So that if we could somewise contrive to have a city or an army composed of lovers and their favorites,[14] they could not be better citizens of their country than by thus refraining from all that is base in a mutual rivalry for honor; and such men as these, when fighting side by side, one might almost consider able to make even a little band victorious over all the world. For a man in love would surely choose to have all the rest of the host rather than his favorite see him forsaking his station or flinging away

[11] *Hes. Theog. 116*

[12] An Argive compiler of genealogies in the first part of the fifth century B.C.

[13] *Parmenides fr. 132*; Cf. *Aristot. Met. 1.984b.*

[14] There was such a "sacred band" (ἱερὸς λόχος) at Thebes, which distinguished itself at Leuctra (371 B.C.).

his arms; sooner than this, he would prefer to die many deaths: while, as for leaving his favorite in the lurch, or not succoring him in his peril, no man is such a craven that Love's own influence cannot inspire him with a valor that makes him equal to the bravest born; and without doubt what Homer calls a "fury inspired" [15] by a god in certain heroes is the effect produced on lovers by Love's peculiar power. Furthermore, only such as are in love will consent to die for others; not merely men will do it, but women too. Sufficient witness is borne to this statement before the people of Greece by Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, who alone was willing to die for her husband, though he had both father and mother. So high did her love exalt her over them in kindness, that they were proved alien to their son and but nominal relations; and when she achieved this deed, it was judged so noble by gods as well as men that, although among all the many doers of noble deeds they are few and soon counted to whom the gods have granted the privilege of having their souls sent up again from Hades, hers they thus restored in admiration of her act. In this manner even the gods give special honor to zeal and courage in concerns of love. But Orpheus, son of Oeagrus, they sent back with failure from Hades, showing him only a wraith of the woman for whom he came; her real self they would not bestow, for he was accounted to have gone upon a coward's quest, too like the minstrel that he was, and to have lacked the spirit to die as Alcestis did for the sake of love, when he contrived the means of entering Hades alive. Wherefore they laid upon him the penalty he deserved, and caused him to meet his death at the hands of women: whereas Achilles, son of Thetis, they honored and sent to his place in the Isles of the Blest,[16] because having learnt from his mother that he would die as surely as he slew Hector,[17] but if he slew him not, would return home and end his days an aged man, he bravely chose to go and rescue his lover Patroclus, avenged him, and sought death not merely in his behalf but in haste to be joined with him whom death had taken. For this the gods so highly admired him that they gave him distinguished honor, since he set so great a value on his lover.

And Aeschylus [18] talks nonsense when he says that it was Achilles who was in love with Patroclus; for he excelled in beauty not Patroclus alone but assuredly all the other heroes, being still beardless and, moreover, much the younger, by Homer's account. [19] For in truth there is no

[15] *Hom. Il. 10.482; Hom. Il. 15.262*

[16] *Pindar O. 2.78ff.* (*Hom. Od. 11.467ff.*, places him in Hades).

[17] *Hom. Il. 18.96.*

[18] Aesch. *Myrm.* fr. 135-136.

sort of valor more respected by the gods than this which comes of love; yet they are even more admiring and delighted and beneficent when the beloved is fond of his lover than when the lover is fond of his favorite; since a lover, filled as he is with a god, surpasses his favorite in divinity. This is the reason why they honored Achilles above Alcestis, giving him his abode in the Isles of the Blest. So there is my description of Love—that he is the most venerable and valuable of the gods, and that he has sovereign power to provide all virtue and happiness for men whether living or departed. The Speech of Pausanias Such in the main was Phaedrus' speech as reported to me. It was followed by several others, which my friend could not recollect at all clearly; so he passed them over and related that of Pausanias, which ran as follows: I do not consider, Phaedrus, our plan of speaking a good one, if the rule is simply that we are to make eulogies of Love. If Love were only one, it would be right; but, you see, he is not one, and this being the case, it would be more correct to have it previously announced what sort we ought to praise. Now this defect I will endeavor to amend, and will first decide on a Love who deserves our praise, and then will praise him in terms worthy of his godhead. We are all aware that there is no Aphrodite or Love-passion without a Love. True, if that goddess were one, then Love would be one: but since there are two of her, there must needs be two Loves also. Does anyone doubt that she is double? Surely there is the elder, of no mother born, but daughter of Heaven, whence we name her Heavenly; [20] while the younger was the child of Zeus and Dione, and her we call Popular. [21] It follows then that of the two Loves also the one ought to be called Popular, as fellow-worker with the one of those goddesses, and the other Heavenly. All gods, of course, ought to be praised: but none the less I must try to describe the faculties of each of these two. For of every action it may be observed that as acted by itself it is neither noble nor base.

For instance, in our conduct at this moment, whether we drink or sing or converse, none of these things is noble in itself; each only turns out to be such in the doing, as the manner of doing it may be. For when the doing of it is noble and right, the thing itself becomes noble; when wrong, it becomes base. So also it is with loving, and Love is not in every case noble or worthy of celebration, but only when he impels us to love in a noble manner. Now the Love that belongs to

[19] *Hom. Il. 11.786.*

[20] *Hdt. 1.105*, *Hdt. 1.131*; *Paus. 1.14.7.*

[21] *Paus. 1.22.3.*

the Popular Aphrodite is in very truth popular and does his work at haphazard: this is the Love we see in the meaner sort of men; who, in the first place, love women as well as boys; secondly, where they love, they are set on the body more than the soul; and thirdly, they choose the most witless people they can find, since they look merely to the accomplishment and care not if the manner be noble or no. Hence they find themselves doing everything at haphazard, good or its opposite, without distinction: for this Love proceeds from the goddess who is far the younger of the two, and who in her origin partakes of both female and male. But the other Love springs from the Heavenly goddess who, firstly, partakes not of the female but only of the male; and secondly, is the elder, untinged with wantonness: wherefore those who are inspired by this Love betake them to the male, in fondness for what has the robuster nature and a larger share of mind. Even in the passion for boys you may note the way of those who are under the single incitement of this Love: they love boys only when they begin to acquire some mind—a growth associated with that of down on their chins. For I conceive that those who begin to love them at this age are prepared to be always with them and share all with them as long as life shall last: they will not take advantage of a boy's green thoughtlessness to deceive him and make a mock of him by running straight off to another. Against this love of boys a law should have been enacted, to prevent the sad waste of attentions paid to an object so uncertain: for who can tell where a boy will end at last, vicious or virtuous in body and soul? Good men, however, voluntarily make this law for themselves, and it is a rule which those "popular" lovers ought to be forced to obey, just as we force them, so far as we can, to refrain from loving our freeborn women.

These are the persons responsible for the scandal which prompts some to say it is a shame to gratify one's lover: such are the cases they have in view, for they observe all their reckless and wrongful doings; and surely, whatsoever is done in an orderly and lawful manner can never justly bring reproach. Further, it is easy to note the rule with regard to love in other cities: there it is laid down in simple terms, while ours here is complicated. For in Elis and Boeotia and where there is no skill in speech they have simply an ordinance that it is seemly to gratify lovers, and no one whether young or old will call it shameful, in order, I suppose, to save themselves the trouble of trying what speech can do to persuade the youths; for they have no ability for speaking. But in Ionia and many other regions where they live under foreign sway, it is counted a disgrace. Foreigners hold this thing,

and all training in philosophy and sports, to be disgraceful, because of their despotic government; since, I presume, it is not to the interest of their princes to have lofty notions engendered in their subjects, or any strong friendships and communions; all of which Love is pre-eminently apt to create. It is a lesson that our despots learnt by experience; for Aristogeiton's love and Harmodius's friendship grew to be so steadfast that it wrecked their power. Thus where it was held a disgrace to gratify one's lover, the tradition is due to the evil ways of those who made such a law— that is, to the encroachments of the rulers and to the cowardice of the ruled. But where it was accepted as honorable without any reserve, this was due to a sluggishness of mind in the law-makers. In our city we have far better regulations, which, as I said, are not so easily grasped.

Consider, for instance, our saying that it is more honorable to love openly than in secret, especially when the beloved excels not so much in beauty as in nobility and virtue; and again, what a wonderful encouragement a lover gets from us all: we have no thought of his doing anything unseemly, and success in his pursuit is counted honorable and failure disgraceful; and how in his endeavors for success our law leaves him a free hand for performing such admirable acts as may win him praise; while the same acts, if attempted for any other purpose or effect to which one might be inclined, would bring one nothing in return but the sharpest reproach. For suppose that with the view of gaining money from another, or some office, or any sort of influence, a man should allow himself to behave as lovers commonly do to their favorites—pressing their suit with supplications and entreaties, binding themselves with vows, sleeping on doorsteps, and submitting to such slavery as no slave would ever endure—both the friends and the enemies of such a man would hinder his behaving in such fashion; for while the latter would reproach him with adulation and ill-breeding, the former would admonish him and feel ashamed of his conduct. But in a lover all such doings only win him favor: by free grant of our law he may behave thus without reproach, as compassing a most honorable end. Strangest of all, he alone in the vulgar opinion has indulgence from the gods when he forsakes the vow he has sworn; for the vow of love-passion, they say, is no vow.[22] So true it is that both gods and men have given absolute licence to the lover, as our Athenian law provides. Thus far, then, we have ground for supposing that here in our city both

[22]Cf. Sophocles, fr. 694 *ὅρκους δὲ μοιχῶν εἰς τέφραν ἐγὼ γράφω*, the lecher's vows in ashes I record.

loving some one and showing affection to one's lover are held in highest honor. But it happens that fathers put tutors in charge of their boys when they are beloved, to prevent them from conversing with their lovers: the tutor has strict injunctions on the matter, and when they observe a boy to be guilty of such a thing his playmates and fellows reproach him, while his reproachers are not in their turn withheld or upbraided by their elders as speaking amiss; and from this it might rather be inferred that his behavior is held to be a great disgrace in Athens. Yet the truth of it, I think, is this: the affair is no simple thing; you remember we said that by itself it was neither noble nor base, but that it was noble if nobly conducted, and base if basely. To do the thing basely is to gratify a wicked man in a wicked manner: "nobly" means having to do with a good man in a noble manner. By "wicked" we mean that popular lover, who craves the body rather than the soul: as he is not in love with what abides, he himself is not abiding. As soon as the bloom of the body he so loved begins to fade he "flutters off and is gone,"[23] leaving all his speeches and promises dishonored: whereas the lover of a nature that is worthy abides throughout life, as being fused into one with the abiding.

Now our law has a sure and excellent test for the trial of these persons, showing which are to be favored and which to be shunned. In the one case, accordingly, it encourages pursuit, but flight in the other, applying ordeals and tests in each case, whereby we are able to rank the lover and the beloved on this side or on that. And so it is for this reason that our convention regards a quick capitulation as a disgrace: for there ought, first, to be a certain interval—the generally approved touchstone—of time; and, second, it is disgraceful if the surrender is due to gold or public preferment, or is a mere cowering away from the endurance of ill-treatment, or shows the youth not properly contemptuous of such benefits as he may receive in pelf or political success. For in these there appears nothing steadfast or abiding, unless it be the impossibility of their producing a noble friendship. One way remains in our custom whereby a favorite may rightly gratify his lover: it is our rule that, just as in the case of the lovers it was counted no flattery or scandal for them to be willingly and utterly enslaved to their favorites, so there is left one sort of voluntary thraldom which is not scandalous; I mean, in the cause of virtue. It is our settled tradition that when a man freely devotes his service to another in the belief that

[23]So Agamemnon speaks of the dream which brought him a message through the lips of Nestor (*Hom. Il. 2.71*).

his friend will make him better in point of wisdom, it may be, or in any of the other parts of virtue, this willing bondage also is no sort of baseness or flattery. Let us compare the two rules—one dealing with the passion for boys, and the other with the love of wisdom and all virtuous ways: by this we shall see if we are to conclude it a good thing that a favorite should gratify his lover. For when lover and favorite come together, each guided by his own rule—on the one side, of being justified in doing any service to the favorite who has obliged him, and on the other, of being justified in showing any attentions to the friend who makes him wise and good; the elder of his plenty contributing to intellectual and all other excellence, the younger in his paucity acquiring education and all learned arts: only then, at the meeting of these two principles in one place, only then and there, and in no other case, can it befall that a favorite may honorably indulge his lover. To have such hopes deceived is no disgrace; while those of any other sort must be disgraceful, whether deceived or not.

For suppose that a youth had a lover he deemed to be wealthy and, after obliging him for the sake of his wealth, were to find himself deceived and no money to be got, since the lover proved to be poor; this would be disgraceful all the same; since the youth may be said to have revealed his character, and shown himself ready to do anyone any service for pelf, and this is not honorable. By the same token, when a youth gratifies a friend, supposing him to be a good man and expecting to be made better himself as a result of his lover's affection, and then finds he is deceived, since his friend proves to be vile and destitute of virtue; even so the deception is honorable. For this youth is also held to have discovered his nature, by showing that he would make anyone the object of his utmost ardor for the sake of virtuous improvement; and this by contrast is supremely honorable. Thus by all means it is right to bestow this favor for the sake of virtue. This is the Love that belongs to the Heavenly Goddess, heavenly itself and precious to both public and private life: for this compels lover and beloved alike to feel a zealous concern for their own virtue. But lovers of the other sort belong all to the other Goddess, the Popular. Such, Phaedrus, is the contribution I am able to offer you, on the spur of the moment, towards the discussion of Love. Pausanias' praise made a pause with this phrase—you see what jingles the schoolmen are teaching me![24] The

[24]The punning assonance alludes to those sophists who developed the etymological suggestions of Heracleitus and Aeschylus into mere sound-effects for prose. A more

next speaker, so Aristodemus told me, was to have been Aristophanes: but a surfeit or some other cause had chanced to afflict him with a hiccough, which prevented him from speaking; and he could only just say to Eryximachus the doctor, whose place was next below him,

"I look to you Eryximachus, either to stop my hiccough, or to speak in my stead until I can stop it."

"Why, I will do both," replied Eryximachus

"for I will take your turn for speaking, and when you have stopped it, you shall take mine. But during my speech, if on your holding your breath a good while the hiccough chooses to stop, well and good; otherwise, you must gargle with some water. If, however, it is a very stubborn one, take something that will tickle your nostrils, and sneeze: do this once or twice, and though it be of the stubbornest, it will stop."

"Start away with your speech," said Aristophanes,

"and I will do as you advise."

The Speech of Eryximachus

Then Eryximachus spoke as follows: Well then, since Pausanias did not properly finish off the speech he began so well, I must do my best to append a conclusion thereto. His division of Love into two sorts appears to me a good one: but medicine, our great mystery, has taught me to observe that Love is not merely an impulse of human souls towards beautiful men but the attraction of all creatures to a great variety of things, which works in the bodies of all animals and all growths upon the earth, and practically in everything that is; and I have learnt how mighty and wonderful and universal is the sway of this god over all affairs both human and divine. [25] Reverence for my profession prompts me to begin with the witness of medicine. This double Love belongs to the nature of all bodies: for between bodily health and sickness there is an admitted difference or dissimilarity, and what is dissimilar craves and loves dissimilar things. Hence the desire felt by a sound body is quite other than that of a sickly one. Now I agree with what Pausanias was just saying, that it is right to gratify good men, base to gratify the dissolute: similarly, in treating actual bodies it is right and necessary to gratify the good and healthy elements of each, and this is what we term the physician's skill; but it is a disgrace to do aught but disappoint the bad and sickly parts, if one aims at being an adept. For the art of medicine may be summarily

serious philological development is discussed in *Plat. Crat. 396.*

[25]This cosmic theory was derived from Empedocles, who spoke of Love as the combining, and Strife as the disruptive, force pervading the universe.

described as a knowledge of the love-matters of the body in regard to repletion and evacuation; and the master-physician is he who can distinguish there between the nobler and baser Loves, and can effect such alteration that the one passion is replaced by the other; and he will be deemed a good practitioner who is expert in producing Love where it ought to flourish but exists not, and in removing it from where it should not be. Indeed he must be able to make friends and happy lovers of the keenest opponents in the body. Now the most contrary qualities are most hostile to each other—cold and hot, bitter and sweet, dry and moist, and the rest of them. It was by knowing how to foster love and unanimity in these that, as our two poets[26] here relate, and as I myself believe, our forefather Asclepius composed this science of ours.

And so not merely is all medicine governed, as I propound it, through the influence of this god, but likewise athletics and agriculture. Music also, as is plain to any the least curious observer, is in the same sort of case: perhaps Heracleitus intends as much by those perplexing words, "The One at variance with itself is drawn together, like harmony of bow or lyre."[27] Now it is perfectly absurd to speak of a harmony at variance, or as formed from things still varying. Perhaps he meant, however, that from the grave and acute which were varying before, but which afterwards came to agreement, the harmony was by musical art created. For surely there can be no harmony of acute and grave while still at variance: harmony is consonance, and consonance is a kind of agreement; and agreement of things varying, so long as they are at variance, is impossible. On the other hand, when a thing varies with no disability of agreement, then it may be harmonized; just as rhythm is produced by fast and slow, which in the beginning were at variance but later came to agree. In all these cases the agreement is brought about by music which, like medicine in the former instance, introduces a mutual love and unanimity. Hence in its turn music is found to be a knowledge of love-matters relating to harmony and rhythm. In the actual system of harmony or rhythm we can easily distinguish these love-matters; as yet the double Love is absent: but when we come to the application of rhythm and harmony to social life, whether we construct what are called "melodies" or render correctly, by what is known as "training," tunes and measures already constructed, we find

[26] Aristophanes and Agathon.

[27] Heracl. fr. (Bywater). The universe is held together by the strain of opposing forces, just as the right use of bow or lyre depends on opposite tension.

here a certain difficulty and require a good craftsman. Round comes the same conclusion: well-ordered men, and the less regular only so as to bring them to better order, should be indulged in this Love, and this is the sort we should preserve; this is the noble, the Heavenly Love, sprung from the Heavenly Muse. But the Popular Love comes from the Queen of Various Song; in applying him we must proceed with all caution, that no debauchery be implanted with the reaping of his pleasure, just as in our craft we set high importance on a right use of the appetite for dainties of the table, that we may cull the pleasure without disease.

Thus in music and medicine and every other affair whether human or divine, we must be on the watch as far as may be for either sort of Love; for both are there. Note how even the system of the yearly seasons is full of these two forces; how the qualities I mentioned just now, heat and cold, drought and moisture, when brought together by the orderly Love, and taking on a temperate harmony as they mingle, become bearers of ripe fertility and health to men and animals and plants, and are guilty of no wrong. But when the wanton-spirited Love gains the ascendant in the seasons of the year, great destruction and wrong does he wreak. For at these junctures are wont to arise pestilences and many other varieties of disease in beasts and herbs; likewise hoar-frosts, hails, and mildews, which spring from mutual encroachments and disturbances in such love-connections as are studied in relation to the motions of the stars and the yearly seasons by what we term astronomy. So further, all sacrifices and ceremonies controlled by divination, namely, all means of communion between gods and men, are only concerned with either the preservation or the cure of Love. For impiety is usually in each case the result of refusing to gratify the orderly Love or to honor and prefer him in all our affairs, and of yielding to the other in questions of duty towards one's parents whether alive or dead, and also towards the gods. To divination is appointed the task of supervising and treating the health of these Loves; wherefore that art, as knowing what human love-affairs will lead to seemliness and pious observance, is indeed a purveyor of friendship betwixt gods and men. Thus Love, conceived as a single whole, exerts a wide, a strong, nay, in short, a complete power: but that which is consummated for a good purpose, temperately and justly, both here on earth and in heaven above, wields the mightiest power of all and provides us with a perfect bliss; so that we are able to consort with one another and have friendship with the gods who are above us. It may well be that with the best will in the world I have omitted many points in the

praise I owe to Love; but any gaps which I may have left it is your business, Aristophanes, to fill: or if you intend some different manner of glorifying the god, let us hear your eulogy, for you have stopped your hiccough now.

Then, as my friend related, Aristophanes took up the word and said:

"Yes, it has stopped, though not until it was treated with a course of sneezing, such as leaves me wondering that the orderly principle of the body should call for the noises and titillations involved in sneezing; you see, it stopped the very moment I applied the sneeze to it."

"My good Aristophanes," replied Eryximachus,

"take heed what you are about. Here are you buffooning before ever you begin, and compelling me to be on the watch for the first absurdity in your speech, when you might deliver it in peace." At this Aristophanes laughed, and

"Quite right, Eryximachus," he said;

"I unsay all that I have said. Do not keep a watch on me for as to what is going to be said, my fear is not so much of saying something absurd—since that would be all to the good and native to my Muse—as something utterly ridiculous."

"You think you can just let fly, Aristophanes, and get off unscathed! Have a good care to speak only what you can defend; though perhaps I may be pleased to let you off altogether." The Speech of Aristophanes It is indeed my intention, Eryximachus, said Aristophanes, to speak in somewhat different strain from you and Pausanias. For in my opinion humanity has entirely failed to perceive the power of Love: if men did perceive it, they would have provided him with splendid temples and altars, and would splendidly honor him with sacrifice; whereas we see none of these things done for him, though they are especially his due. He of all gods is most friendly to men; he succors mankind and heals those ills whose cure must be the highest happiness of the human race. Hence I shall try and introduce you to his power, that you may transmit this teaching to the world at large. You must begin your lesson with the nature of man and its development. For our original nature was by no means the same as it is now. In the first place, there were three kinds of human beings, not merely the two sexes, male and female, as at present: there was a third kind as well, which had equal shares of the other two, and whose name survives though, the thing itself has vanished. For "man-woman" [28] was then a unity in form no

[28] i.e. "hermaphrodite"; cf. Lucret. v. 837ff.

less than name, composed of both sexes and sharing equally in male and female; whereas now it has come to be merely a name of reproach. Secondly, the form of each person was round all over, with back and sides encompassing it every way; each had four arms, and legs to match these, and two faces perfectly alike on a cylindrical neck. There was one head to the two faces, which looked opposite ways; there were four ears, two privy members, and all the other parts, as may be imagined, in proportion. The creature walked upright as now, in either direction as it pleased and whenever it started running fast, it went like our acrobats, whirling over and over with legs stuck out straight; only then they had eight limbs to support and speed them swiftly round and round. The number and features of these three sexes were owing to the fact that the male was originally the offspring of the sun, and the female of the earth; while that which partook of both sexes was born of the moon, for the moon also partakes of both.[29] They were globular in their shape as in their progress, since they took after their parents. Now, they were of surprising strength and vigor, and so lofty in their notions that they even conspired against the gods; and the same story is told of them as Homer relates of Ephialtes and Otus, [30] that scheming to assault the gods in fight they essayed to mount high heaven. Thereat Zeus and the other gods debated what they should do, and were perplexed: for they felt they could not slay them like the Giants, whom they had abolished root and branch with strokes of thunder—it would be only abolishing the honors and observances they had from men; nor yet could they endure such sinful rioting. Then Zeus, putting all his wits together, spoke at length and said:

"Methinks I can contrive that men, without ceasing to exist, shall give over their iniquity through a lessening of their strength. I propose now to slice every one of them in two, so that while making them weaker we shall find them more useful by reason of their multiplication; and they shall walk erect upon two legs. If they continue turbulent and do not choose to keep quiet, I will do it again," said he;

"I will slice every person in two, and then they must go their ways on one leg, hopping." So saying, he sliced each human being in two, just as they slice sorb-apples to make a dry preserve, or eggs with hairs; and at the cleaving of each he bade Apollo turn its face and half-neck to the section side, in order that every one might be made more orderly

[29] The double sex of the moon is mentioned in an Orphic hymn (ix. 4): cf. Macrob. iii. 8.

[30] *Hom. Od. 11.305ff.*; *Hom. Il. 5.385ff.*

by the sight of the knife's work upon him; this done, the god was to heal them up.

Then Apollo turned their faces about, and pulled their skin together from the edges over what is now called the belly, just like purses which you draw close with a string; the little opening he tied up in the middle of the belly, so making what we know as the navel. For the rest, he smoothed away most of the puckers and figured out the breast with some such instrument as shoemakers use in smoothing the wrinkles of leather on the last; though he left there a few which we have just about the belly and navel, to remind us of our early fall. Now when our first form had been cut in two, each half in longing for its fellow would come to it again; and then would they fling their arms about each other and in mutual embraces yearn to be grafted together, till they began to perish of hunger and general indolence, through refusing to do anything apart. And whenever on the death of one half the other was left alone, it went searching and embracing to see if it might happen on that half of the whole woman which now we call a woman, or perchance the half of the whole man. In this plight they were perishing away, when Zeus in his pity provided a fresh device. He moved their privy parts to the front—for until then they had these, like all else, on the outside, and did their begetting and bringing forth not on each other but on the earth, like the crickets. These parts he now shifted to the front, to be used for propagating on each other—in the female member by means of the male; so that if in their embracements a man should happen on a woman there might be conception and continuation of their kind; and also, if male met with male they might have satiety of their union and a relief, and so might turn their hands to their labors and their interest to ordinary life. Thus anciently is mutual love ingrained in mankind, reassembling our early estate and endeavoring to combine two in one and heal the human sore. Each of us, then, is but a tally[31] of a man, since every one shows like a flat-fish the traces of having been sliced in two; and each is ever searching for the tally that will fit him. All the men who are sections of that composite sex that at first was called man-woman are woman-courters; our adulterers are mostly descended from that sex, whence likewise are derived our man-courting women and adulteresses. All the women who are sections of the woman have no great fancy for men: they are inclined rather to women, and of this

[31] A tally, or notched stick matching another, is the nearest English equivalent for *σύμβολον*, which was a half of a broken die given and kept as a token of friendship; see below, *Plat. Sym. 193a* (*λίσται*).

stock are the she-minions.
Men who are sections of the male pursue the masculine, and so long as their boyhood lasts they show themselves to be slices of the male by making friends with men and delighting to lie with them and to be clasped in men's embraces; these are the finest boys and striplings, for they have the most manly nature. Some say they are shameless creatures, but falsely: for their behavior is due not to shamelessness but to daring, manliness, and virility, since they are quick to welcome their like. Sure evidence of this is the fact that on reaching maturity these alone prove in a public career to be men. So when they come to man's estate they are boy-lovers, and have no natural interest in wiving and getting children, but only do these things under stress of custom; they are quite contented to live together unwedded all their days. A man of this sort is at any rate born to be a lover of boys or the willing mate of a man, eagerly greeting his own kind. Well, when one of them—whether he be a boy-lover or a lover of any other sort—happens on his own particular half, the two of them are wondrously thrilled with affection and intimacy and love, and are hardly to be induced to leave each other's side for a single moment. These are they who continue together throughout life, though they could not even say what they would have of one another. No one could imagine this to be the mere amorous connection, or that such alone could be the reason why each rejoices in the other's company with so eager a zest: obviously the soul of each is wishing for something else that it cannot express, only divining and darkly hinting what it wishes. Suppose that, as they lay together, Hephaestus should come and stand over them, and showing his implements[32] should ask:

"What is it, good mortals, that you would have of one another?"—and suppose that in their perplexity he asked them again:

"Do you desire to be joined in the closest possible union, so that you shall not be divided by night or by day? If that is your craving, I am ready to fuse and weld you together in a single piece, that from being two you may be made one; that so long as you live, the pair of you, being as one, may share a single life; and that when you die you may also in Hades yonder be one instead of two, having shared a single death. Bethink yourselves if this is your heart's desire, and if you will be quite contented with this lot." No one on hearing this, we are sure, would demur to it or would be found wishing for anything else: each

[32] i.e. his anvil (*Hom. Od. 8.274*), bellows, tongs, and hammer (*Hom. Il. 18.372ff.*, *Hom. Il. 18.474ff.*).

would unreservedly deem that he had been offered just what he was yearning for all the time, namely, to be so joined and fused with his beloved that the two might be made one.

The cause of it all is this, that our original form was as I have described, and we were entire; and the craving and pursuit of that entirety is called Love. Formerly, as I have said, we were one; but now for our sins we are all dispersed by God, as the Arcadians were by the Lacedaemonians[33]; and we may well be afraid that if we are disorderly towards Heaven we may once more be cloven asunder and may go about in the shape of those outline-carvings on the tombs, with our noses sawn down the middle, and may thus become like tokens of split dice. Wherefore we ought all to exhort our neighbors to a pious observance of the gods, in order that we may escape harm and attain to bliss under the gallant leadership of Love. Let none in act oppose him—and it is opposing him to incur the hate of Heaven: if we make friends with the god and are reconciled, we shall have the fortune that falls to few in our day, of discovering our proper favorites. And let not Eryximachus interrupt my speech with a comic mock, and say I refer to Pausanias and Agathon; it may be they do belong to the fortunate few, and are both of them males by nature; what I mean is—and this applies to the whole world of men and women—that the way to bring happiness to our race is to give our love its true fulfillment: let every one find his own favorite, and so revert to his primal estate. If this be the best thing of all, the nearest approach to it among all acts open to us now must accordingly be the best to choose; and that is, to find a favorite whose nature is exactly to our mind. Love is the god who brings this about; he fully deserves our hymns. For not only in the present does he bestow the priceless boon of bringing us to our very own, but he also supplies this excellent hope for the future, that if we will supply the gods with reverent duty he will restore us to our ancient life and heal and help us into the happiness of the blest. There, Eryximachus, is my discourse on Love, of a different sort from yours. As I besought you, make no comic sport of it, for we want to hear what the others will say in their turn—I rather mean the other two, since only Agathon and Socrates are left.

"Well, I will obey you," said Eryximachus,

"for in fact I enjoyed your speech. Had I not reason to know the prowess of Socrates and Agathon in love-matters, I should have great

[33]Probably referring to the dispersal of Mantinea into villages in 385 B.C. (*Xen. Hell. 5.2.1ff.*).

fears of their being at a loss for eloquence after we have heard it in such copious variety: but you see, my confidence is unshaken."
Whereon Socrates remarked:

"Your own performance, Eryximachus, made a fine hit: but if you could be where I am now—or rather, I should say, where I shall be when Agathon has spoken—you would be fitly and sorely afraid, and would be as hard put to it as I am."

"You want to throw a spell over me, Socrates," said Agathon,

"so that I may be flustered with the consciousness of the high expectations the audience has formed of my discourse."

"Nay, Agathon, how forgetful I should be," replied Socrates,

"if after noticing your high and manly spirit as you stepped upon the platform with your troupe—how you sent a straight glance at that vast assembly to show that you meant to do yourself credit with your production, and how you were not dismayed in the slightest—if I should now suppose you could be flustered on account of a few fellows like us."

"Why, Socrates," said Agathon,

"I hope you do not always fancy me so puffed up with the playhouse as to forget that an intelligent speaker is more alarmed at a few men of wit than at a host of fools."

"No, Agathon, it would be wrong of me indeed," said Socrates,

"to associate you with any such clownish notion: I am quite sure that on finding yourself with a few persons whom you considered clever you would make more account of them than of the multitude. Yet we, perhaps, are the latter; for we were there, and among the crowd: but suppose you found yourself with other folk who were clever, you would probably feel ashamed that they should witness any shameful act you might feel yourself to be doing. Will you agree to that?"

"Quite true," he said.

"Whereas before the multitude you would not be ashamed if you felt you were doing anything shameful?" Here Phaedrus interposed:

"My dear Agathon, if you go on answering Socrates he will be utterly indifferent to the fate of our present business, so long as he has some one to argue with, especially some one handsome. For my part, I enjoy listening to Socrates' arguments; but I am responsible for our eulogy of Love, and must levy a speech from every one of you in turn. Let each of you two, then, give the god his meed before you have your argument."

"You are quite right, Phaedrus," said Agathon,

"and there is nothing to hinder my speaking; for I shall find many other occasions for arguing with Socrates."

The Speech of Agathon

I propose first to speak of the plan most proper for my speaking, and after that to speak. Every one of the previous speakers, instead of eulogizing the god, has merely, as it seems to me, felicitated humanity on the benefits he bestows: not one of them has told us what is the nature of the benefactor himself. There is but one correct method of giving anyone any kind of praise, namely to make the words unfold the character of him, and of the blessings brought by him, who is to be our theme. Hence it is meet that we praise him first for what he is and then for what he gives. So I say that, while all gods are blissful, Love—with no irreverence or offence be it spoken—is the most blissful, as being the most beautiful and the best. How most beautiful, I will explain. First of all, Phaedrus, he is youngest of the gods. He himself supplies clear evidence of this; for he flies and flees from old age—a swift thing obviously, since it gains on us too quickly for our liking. Love hates it by nature, and refuses to come within any distance of it. He is ever consorting with the young, and such also is he: well says the old saw,

"Like and like together strike."[34] And though in much else I agree with Phaedrus, in this I agree not, that Love by his account is more ancient than Cronos and Iapetus[35]: I say he is youngest of the gods and ever young, while those early dealings with the gods which Hesiod [36] and Parmenides relate, I take to have been the work of Necessity, not of Love, if there is any truth in those stories. For there would have been no gelding or fettering of each other, nor any of those various violences, if Love had been amongst them; rather only amity and peace, such as now subsist ever since Love has reigned over the gods. So then he is young, and delicate withal: he requires a poet such as Homer to set forth his delicacy divine. Homer it is who tells of Ate as both divine and delicate; you recollect those delicate feet of hers, where he says—"Yet delicate are her feet, for on the groundShe speeds not, only on the heads of men." [37] So I hold it convincing proof of her delicacy that she goes not on hard things but on soft. The same method will serve us to prove the delicacy of Love. Not upon earth goes he, nor on our crowns, which are not very soft; [38] but takes his way and abode in the

[34]So *Hom. Od. 17.218* "Heaven ever bringeth like and like together."

[35]These two Titans, the sons of Heaven and Earth, were proverbially the original inhabitants of the world

[36]*Hes. Th. 176ff.*, *Hes. Th. 746ff.* There are no such stories in the remaining fragments of Parmenides.

[37]*Hom. Il. 19.92-93*

softest things that exist. The tempers and souls of gods and men are his chosen habitation: not indeed any soul as much as another; when he comes upon one whose temper is hard, away he goes, but if it be soft, he makes his dwelling there.

So if with feet and every way he is wont ever to get hold of the softest parts of the softest creatures, he needs must be most delicate. Youngest, then, and most delicate is he, and withal pliant of form: for he would never contrive to fold himself about us every way, nor begin by stealing in and out of every soul so secretly, if he were hard. Clear evidence of his fit proportion and pliancy of form is found in his shapely grace, a quality wherein Love is in every quarter allowed to excel: unshapeliness and Love are ever at war with one another. Beauty of hue in this god is evinced by his seeking his food among flowers: for Love will not settle on body or soul or aught else that is flowerless or whose flower has faded away; while he has only to light on a plot of sweet blossoms and scents to settle there and stay. Enough has now been said, though much remains unsaid, of the beauty of our god; next shall Love's goodness be my theme. The strongest plea for this is that neither to a god he gives nor from a god receives any injury, nor from men receives it nor to men gives it. For neither is the usage he himself gets a violent usage, since violence takes not hold of Love; nor is there violence in his dealings, since Love wins all men's willing service; and agreements on both sides willingly made are held to be just by "our city's sovereign, the law." [39] Then, over and above his justice, he is richly endowed with temperance. We all agree that temperance is a control of pleasures and desires, while no pleasure is stronger than Love: if they are the weaker, they must be under Love's control, and he is their controller; so that Love, by controlling pleasures and desires, must be eminently temperate. And observe how in valor "not even the God of War withstands" [40] him; for we hear, not of Love caught by Ares, but of Ares caught by Love—of Aphrodite. The captor is stronger than the caught; and as he controls what is braver than any other, he must be bravest of all. So much for justice and temperance and valor in the god: it remains to speak of skill; and here I must try my best to be adequate. First, if I in turn may dignify our craft as Eryximachus did his, the god is a composer so accomplished that he is a cause of composing in others: every one, you know, be-

[38] Perhaps here he smiles at or touches the bald head of Socrates.

[39] Quoted from Alcidamas, a stylist of the school of Gorgias; *Aristot. Rh. 3.1406a.*

[40] *Soph. Thyest. Fr. 235* "Necessity, whom not the God of War withstands."

comes a poet, "though alien to the Muse before," [41] when Love gets hold of him. This we may fitly take for a testimony that Love is a poet well skilled—I speak summarily—in all composing that has to do with music; for whatever we have not or know not we can neither give to another nor teach our neighbor.

And who, let me ask, will gainsay that the composing [42] of all forms of life is Love's own craft, whereby all creatures are begotten and produced? Again, in artificial manufacture, do we not know that a man who has this god for teacher turns out a brilliant success, whereas he on whom Love has laid no hold is obscure? If Apollo invented archery and medicine and divination, [43] it was under the guidance of Desire and Love; so that he too may be deemed a disciple of Love as likewise may the Muses in music, Hephaestus in metal-work, Athene in weaving and Zeus "in pilotage of gods and men."[44][45] Hence also those dealings of the gods were contrived by Love—clearly love of beauty—astir in them, for Love has no concern with ugliness; though aforetime, as I began by saying, there were many strange doings among the gods, as legend tells, because of the dominion of Necessity. But since this god arose, the loving of beautiful things has brought all kinds of benefits both to gods and to men. Thus I conceive, Phaedrus, that Love was originally of surpassing beauty and goodness, and is latterly the cause of similar excellences in others. And now I am moved to summon the aid of verse, and tell how it is he who makes—"Peace among men, and a windless waveless main;Repose for winds, and slumber in our pain." [46] He it is who casts alienation out, draws intimacy in; he brings us together in such friendly gatherings as the present; at feasts and dances and oblations he makes himself our leader; politeness contriving, moroseness outdriving; kind giver of amity, giving no enmity; gracious, superb; a marvel to the wise, a delight to the gods coveted of such as share him not, treasured of such as good share have got; father of luxury, tenderness, elegance, graces and longing and yearning; careful of the good, careless of the bad; in toil and fear, in drink and discourse, our trustiest helmsman, boatswain, champion, deliverer; ornament of all

[41] *Eur. Sthen. Fr. 663*

[42] Agathon here strains the meaning of *ποιήτης* back to the original and wider one of maker, creator. Cf. below, *Plat. Sym. 205 B.C.*

[43] *Hom. Il. 2.827*, *Hom. Il. 1.72*; above, *Plat. Sym. 190f.*

[44] Unknown

[45] Cf. *Plat. Parm. (Diels2 123) δαίμων ἣ πάντα κυβερνᾷ.*

[46] Cf. *Hom. Od. 5.391* "Then ceased the wind, and came a windless calm." Agathon is here displaying his own poetic skill, not quoting.

gods and men; leader fairest and best, whom every one should follow, joining tunefully in the burthen of his song, wherewith he enchants the thought of every god and man. There, Phaedrus, he said, the speech I would offer at his shrine: I have done my best to mingle amusement with a decent gravity.

At the end of Agathon's speech, as Aristodemus told me, there was tumultuous applause from all present, at hearing the youngster speak in terms so appropriate to himself and to the god. Then Socrates, with a glance at Eryximachus, said:

"Son of Acumenus, do you really call it an unfearful fear that has all this while affrighted me, and myself no prophet in saying just now that Agathon would make a marvellous speech, and I be hard put to it?"

"In one part of your statement, that he would speak finely," replied Eryximachus,

"I think you were a true prophet; but as to your being hard put to it, I do not agree."

"But surely, my good sir," said Socrates,

"I am bound to be hard put, I or anyone else in the world who should have to speak after such a fine assortment of eloquence. The greater part of it was not so very astounding; but when we drew towards the close, the beauty of the words and phrases could not but take one's breath away. For myself, indeed, I was so conscious that I should fail to say anything half as fine, that for very shame I was on the point of slinking away, had I had any chance. For his speech so reminded me of Gorgias that I was exactly in the plight described by Homer: [47] I feared that Agathon in his final phrases would confront me with the eloquent Gorgias' head, and by opposing his speech to mine would turn me thus dumbfounded into stone. And so in that moment I realized what a ridiculous fool I was to fall in with your proposal that I should take my turn in your eulogies of Love, and to call myself an expert in love-matters, when really I was ignorant of the method in which eulogies ought to be made at all. For I was such a silly wretch as to think that one ought in each case to speak the truth about the person eulogized; on this assumption I hoped we might pick out the fairest of the facts and set these forth in their comeliest guise. I was

[47] *Hom. Od. 11.632*, where Odysseus is sore afraid that Persephone will send up the Gorgon's head among the crowd of ghosts from Hades. Agathon has just displayed his addiction to the elegant rhetoric of Gorgias.

quite elated with the notion of what a fine speech I should make, for I felt that I knew the truth. But now, it appears that this is not what is meant by a good speech of praise; which is rather an ascription of all the highest and fairest qualities, whether the case be so or not; it is really no matter if they are untrue. Our arrangement, it seems, was that each should appear to eulogize Love, not that he should make a real eulogy."

"Hence it is, sirs, I suppose, that you muster every kind of phrase for your tribute to Love, declaring such and such to be his character and influence, in order to present him in the best and fairest light; successfully, of course, before those who do not know him, though it must be otherwise before those who do; your praise has such a fine impressive air! No, I find I was quite mistaken as to the method required; it was in ignorance that I agreed to take my turn in the round of praising. "The tongue," you see, undertook, "the mind" did not; [48] so good-bye to my bond. I am not to be called upon now as an eulogist in your sense; for such I cannot be. Nevertheless I am ready, if you like, to speak the mere truth in my own way; not to rival your discourses, and so be your laughing-stock. Decide then, Phaedrus, whether you have any need of such a speech besides, and would like to hear the truth told about Love in whatsoever style of terms and phrases may chance to occur by the way." So Phaedrus and the others bade him speak, just in any manner he himself should think fit.

"Then allow me further, Phaedrus, to put some little questions to Agathon, so as to secure his agreement before I begin my speech."

"You have my leave," said Phaedrus;

"so ask him." After that, my friend told me, Socrates started off in this sort of way:

"I must say, my dear Agathon, you gave your speech an excellent introduction, by stating that your duty was first to display the character of Love, and then to treat of his acts. Those opening words I thoroughly admire. So come now, complete your beautiful and magnificent description of Love, and tell me this: Are we so to view his character as to take Love to be love of some object, or of none? My question is not whether he is love of a mother or a father—how absurd it would be to ask whether Love is love of mother or father —but as though I were asking about our notion of "father," whether one's father is a father of somebody or not. Surely you would say, if you cared to give the proper answer, that the father is father of son or of daughter,

[48] *Eur. Hipp. 612* "The tongue hath sworn; the mind is yet unsworn."

would you not?"

"Yes, of course," said Agathon.

"And you would say the same of the mother?" He agreed to this too.

"Then will you give me just a few more answers," said Socrates,

"so that you may the better grasp my meaning? Suppose I were to ask you, "Well now, a brother, viewed in the abstract, is he brother of somebody or not?""

"He is," said Agathon.

"That is, of brother or of sister?" He agreed.

"Now try and tell me about Love: is he a love of nothing or of something?"

"Of something, to be sure."

"Now then," said Socrates,

"keep carefully in mind what is the object of Love, and only tell me whether he desires the particular thing that is his object."

"Yes, to be sure," he replied.

"Has he or has he not the object of his desire and love when he desires and loves it?"

"He does not have it, most likely," he said.

"Not as a likelihood," said Socrates,

"but as a necessity, consider if the desiring subject must have desire for something it lacks, and again, no desire if it has no lack. I at least, Agathon, am perfectly sure it is a necessity. How does it strike you?"

"I am sure of it also," said he.

"Very good. Now could a tall man wish to be tall, or a strong man to be strong?"

"By what has been admitted, this is impossible."

"Since, I suppose, the man in each case would not be lacking the quality mentioned."

"True."

"For if, being strong, he should wish to be strong," said Socrates,

"or being swift, to be swift, or being healthy, to be healthy,—since we are apt to suppose in these and all such cases that men of this or that sort, possessing these qualities, do also desire what they have already: I put this in, to prevent any misconception; these men, Agathon, if you consider, are bound to have at the very moment each thing that they have whether they wish it or not; and how, I ask, is a man going to desire that? No, when a person says, "I being healthy, want to be healthy; being rich, I want to be rich; I desire the very things that I have"—we shall tell him, "My good sir, riches you possess, and health

and strength, which you would like to possess in the future also: for the time now present you have them whether you would or no. When you say, "I desire these present things," we suggest you are merely saying "I wish these things now present to be present also in the future."" Would he not admit our point?" To this Agathon assented.

"And so," continued Socrates,

"a man may be said to love a thing not yet provided or possessed, when he would have the presence of certain things secured to him for ever in the future."

"Certainly," he said.

"Then such a person, and in general all who feel desire, feel it for what is not provided or present; for something they have not or are not or lack and that sort of thing is the object of desire and love?"

"Assuredly," he said.

"Now then," said Socrates,

"let us agree to what we have so far concluded. First, is not Love directed to certain things of which, in the second place, he has a want?" "Yes," he said.

"Then, granting this, recollect what things you named in our discussion as the objects of Love: if you like, I will remind you. What you said, I believe, was to the effect that the gods contrived the world from a love of beautiful things, for of ugly there was no love. Did you not say something of the sort?"

"Yes, I did," said Agathon.

"And quite properly, my friend," said Socrates;

"then, such being the case, must not Love be only love of beauty, and not of ugliness?" He assented.

"Well then, we have agreed that he loves what he lacks and has not?"

"Yes," he replied.

"And what Love lacks and has not is beauty?"

"That needs must be," he said.

"Well now, will you say that what lacks beauty, and in no wise possesses it, is beautiful?"

"Surely not."

"So can you still allow Love to be beautiful, if this is the case?" Whereupon Agathon said,

"I greatly fear, Socrates, I knew nothing of what I was talking about."

"Ah, your words were beautiful enough, Agathon; but pray give me one or two more: you hold, do you not, that good things are beautiful?"

"I do."

"Then if Love lacks beautiful things, and good things are beautiful, he must lack good things too."

"I see no means, Socrates, of contradicting you," he replied;

"let it be as you say."

"No, it is Truth, my lovable Agathon, whom you cannot contradict: Socrates you easily may." The Speech of Socrates And now I shall let you alone, and proceed with the discourse upon Love which I heard one day from a Mantinean woman named Diotima: [49] in this subject she was skilled, and in many others too; for once, by bidding the Athenians offer sacrifices ten years before the plague, she procured them so much delay in the advent of the sickness. Well, I also had my lesson from her in love-matters; so now I will try and follow up the points on which Agathon and I have just agreed by narrating to you all on my own account, as well as I am able, the speech she delivered to me. So first, Agathon, I must unfold, in your manner of exposition, who and what sort of being is Love, and then I shall tell of his works. The readiest way, I think, will be to give my description that form of question and answer which the stranger woman used for hers that day. For I spoke to her in much the same terms as Agathon addressed just now to me, saying Love was a great god, and was of beautiful things; and she refuted me with the very arguments I have brought against our young friend, showing that by my account that god was neither beautiful nor good.

"How do you mean, Diotima?" said I;

"is Love then ugly and bad?"

"Peace, for shame!" she replied:

"or do you imagine that whatever is not beautiful must needs be ugly?"

"To be sure I do."

"And what is not skilled, ignorant? Have you not observed that there is something halfway between skill and ignorance?"

"What is that?"

"You know, of course, that to have correct opinion, if you can give no reason for it, is neither full knowledge—how can an unreasoned thing be knowledge?—nor yet ignorance; for what hits on the truth cannot be ignorance. So correct opinion, I take it, is just in that position, between understanding and ignorance."

[49] These names suggest a connection respectively with prophecy and with the favor of Heaven.

"Quite true," I said.

"Then do not compel what is not beautiful to be ugly," she said,

"or what is not good to be bad. Likewise of Love, when you find yourself admitting that he is not good nor beautiful, do not therefore suppose he must be ugly and bad, but something betwixt the two."

"And what of the notion," I asked,

"to which every one agrees, that he is a great god?"

"Every one? People who do not know," she rejoined,

"or those who know also?"

"I mean everybody in the world." At this she laughed and said,

"But how, Socrates, can those agree that he is a great god who say he is no god at all?"

"What persons are they?" I asked.

"You are one," she replied,

"and I am another."

"How do you make that out?" I said.

"Easily," said she;

"tell me, do you not say that all gods are happy and beautiful? Or will you dare to deny that any god is beautiful and happy?"

"Bless me!" I exclaimed,

"not I."

"And do you not call those happy who possess good and beautiful things?"

"Certainly I do."

"But you have admitted that Love, from lack of good and beautiful things, desires these very things that he lacks."

"Yes, I have."

"How then can he be a god, if he is devoid of things beautiful and good?"

"By no means, it appears."

"So you see," she said,

"you are a person who does not consider Love to be a god."

"What then," I asked,

"can Love be? A mortal?"

"Anything but that."

"Well what?"

"As I previously suggested, between a mortal and an immortal."

"And what is that, Diotima?"

"A great spirit, Socrates: for the whole of the spiritual [50] is between

[50] *Δαίμονες* and *τὸ δαιμόνιον* represent the mysterious agencies and influences by

divine and mortal."

"Possessing what power?" I asked.

"Interpreting and transporting human things to the gods and divine things to men; entreaties and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and requitals from above: being midway between, it makes each to supplement the other, so that the whole is combined in one."

"Through it are conveyed all divination and priestcraft concerning sacrifice and ritual and incantations, and all soothsaying and sorcery. God with man does not mingle: but the spiritual is the means of all society and converse of men with gods and of gods with men, whether waking or asleep. Whosoever has skill in these affairs is a spiritual man to have it in other matters, as in common arts and crafts, is for the mechanical. Many and multifarious are these spirits, and one of them is Love."

"From what father and mother sprung?" I asked.

"That is rather a long story," she replied;

"but still, I will tell it you. When Aphrodite was born, the gods made a great feast, and among the company was Resource the son of Cunning. And when they had banqueted there came Poverty abegging, as well she might in an hour of good cheer, and hung about the door. Now Resource, grown tipsy with nectar—for wine as yet there was none—went into the garden of Zeus, and there, overcome with heaviness, slept. Then Poverty, being of herself so resourceless, devised the scheme of having a child by Resource, and lying down by his side she conceived Love. Hence it is that Love from the beginning has been attendant and minister to Aphrodite, since he was begotten on the day of her birth, and is, moreover, by nature a lover bent on beauty since Aphrodite is beautiful. Now, as the son of Resource and Poverty, Love is in a peculiar case. First, he is ever poor, and far from tender or beautiful as most suppose him: rather is he hard and parched, shoeless and homeless; on the bare ground always he lies with no bedding, and takes his rest on doorsteps and waysides in the open air; true to his mother's nature, he ever dwells with want. But he takes after his father in scheming for all that is beautiful and good; for he is brave, strenuous and high-strung, a famous hunter, always weaving some stratagem; desirous and competent of wisdom, throughout life ensuing the truth; a master of jugglery, witchcraft, >and artful speech. By birth neither immortal nor mortal, in the selfsame day he is flourishing and alive at the hour when he is abounding in resource; at another he is dying, and then reviving again by force of his father's nature: yet the resources

which the gods communicate with mortals.

that he gets will ever be ebbing away; so that Love is at no time either resourceless or wealthy, and furthermore, he stands midway betwixt wisdom and ignorance."

" The position is this: no gods ensue wisdom or desire to be made wise; such they are already; nor does anyone else that is wise ensue it. Neither do the ignorant ensue wisdom, nor desire to be made wise: in this very point is ignorance distressing, when a person who is not comely or worthy or intelligent is satisfied with himself. The man who does not feel himself defective has no desire for that whereof he feels no defect."

"Who then, Diotima," I asked,

"are the followers of wisdom, if they are neither the wise nor the ignorant?"

"Why, a child could tell by this time," she answered,

"that they are the intermediate sort, and amongst these also is Love. For wisdom has to do with the fairest things, and Love is a love directed to what is fair; so that Love must needs be a friend of wisdom, and, as such, must be between wise and ignorant. This again is a result for which he has to thank his origin: for while he comes of a wise and resourceful father, his mother is unwise and resourceless. Such, my good Socrates, is the nature of this spirit. That you should have formed your other notion of Love is no surprising accident. You supposed, if I am to take your own words as evidence, that the beloved and not the lover was Love. This led you, I fancy, to hold that Love is all-beautiful. The lovable, indeed, is the truly beautiful, tender, perfect, and heaven-blest; but the lover is of a different type, in accordance with the account I have given." Upon this I observed:

"Very well then, madam, you are right; but if Love is such as you describe him, of what use is he to mankind?"

"That is the next question, Socrates," she replied,

"on which I will try to enlighten you. While Love is of such nature and origin as I have related, he is also set on beautiful things, as you say. Now, suppose some one were to ask us: In what respect is he Love of beautiful things, Socrates and Diotima? But let me put the question more clearly thus: What is the love of the lover of beautiful things?"

"That they may be his," I replied.

"But your answer craves a further query," she said,

"such as this: What will he have who gets beautiful things?" This question I declared I was quite unable now to answer offhand.

"Well," she proceeded,

"imagine that the object is changed, and the inquiry is made about the good instead of the beautiful. Come, Socrates (I shall say), what is the love of the lover of good things?"

"That they may be his," I replied.

"And what will he have who gets good things?"

"I can make more shift to answer this," I said;

"he will be happy."

"Yes," she said,

"the happy are happy by acquisition of good things, and we have no more need to ask for what end a man wishes to be happy, when such is his wish: the answer seems to be ultimate."

"Quite true," I said.

"Now do you suppose this wish or this love to be common to all mankind, and that every one always wishes to have good things? Or what do you say?"

"Even so," I said;

"it is common to all."

"Well then, Socrates," she said,

"we do not mean that all men love, when we say that all men love the same things always; we mean that some people love and others do not?"

"I am wondering myself," I replied.

"But you should not wonder," she said;

"for we have singled out a certain form of love, and applying thereto the name of the whole, we call it love; and there are other names that we commonly abuse."

"As, for example—?" I asked.

"Take the following: you know that poetry [51] is more than a single thing. For of anything whatever that passes from not being into being the whole cause is composing or poetry; so that the productions of all arts are kinds of poetry, and their craftsmen are all poets."

"That is true."

"But still, as you are aware," said she,

"they are not called poets: they have other names, while a single section disparted from the whole of poetry—merely the business of music and meters—is entitled with the name of the whole. This and no more is called poetry; those only who possess this branch of the art are poets."

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[51] Cf. above, *Plat. Sym. 197a.*

"Quite true," I said.

"Well, it is just the same with love. Generically, indeed, it is all that desire of good things and of being happy [52]—Love most mighty and all-beguiling. Yet, whereas those who resort to him in various other ways—in money-making, an inclination to sports, or philosophy—are not described either as loving or as lovers, all those who pursue him seriously in one of his several forms obtain, as loving and as lovers, the name of the whole."

"I fancy you are right," I said. >

"And certainly there runs a story," she continued,

"that all who go seeking their other half [53] are in love; though by my account love is neither for half nor for whole, unless, of course, my dear sir, this happens to be something good. For men are prepared to have their own feet and hands cut off if they feel these belongings to be harmful."

"The fact is, I suppose, that each person does not cherish his belongings except where a man calls the good his own property and the bad another's; since what men love is simply and solely the good. Or is your view otherwise?"

"Faith, no," I said.

"Then we may state unreservedly that men love the good?"

"Yes," I said.

"Well now, must we not extend it to this, that they love the good to be theirs?"

"We must."

"And do they love it to be not merely theirs but theirs always?"

"Include that also."

"Briefly then," said she,

"love loves the good to be one's own for ever."

"That is the very truth," I said.

"Now if love is always for this," she proceeded,

"what is the method of those who pursue it, and what is the behavior whose eagerness and straining are to be termed love? What actually is this effort? Can you tell me?"

"Ah, Diotima," I said;

"in that case I should hardly be admiring you and your wisdom, and sitting at your feet to be enlightened on just these questions."

"Well, I will tell you," said she;

[52] Cf. above, *Plat. Sym. 204e-205a.*

[53] A "prophetic" allusion to Aristophanes' speech, *Plat. Sym. 192ff.*

"it is begetting on a beautiful thing by means of both the body and the soul."

"It wants some divination to make out what you mean," I said;

"I do not understand."

"Let me put it more clearly," she said.

"All men are pregnant, Socrates, both in body and in soul: on reaching a certain age our nature yearns to beget. This it cannot do upon an ugly person, but only on the beautiful: the conjunction of man and woman is a begetting for both. [54] It is a divine affair, this engendering and bringing to birth, an immortal element in the creature that is mortal; and it cannot occur in the discordant. The ugly is discordant with whatever is divine, whereas the beautiful is accordant. Thus Beauty presides over birth as Fate and Lady of Travail; and hence it is that when the pregnant approaches the beautiful it becomes not only gracious but so exhilarate, that it flows over with begetting and bringing forth; though when it meets the ugly it coils itself close in a sullen dismay: rebuffed and repressed, it brings not forth, but goes in labor with the burden of its young. Therefore when a person is big and teeming-ripe he feels himself in a sore flutter for the beautiful, because its possessor can relieve him of his heavy pangs. For you are wrong, Socrates, in supposing that love is of the beautiful."

"What then is it?"

"It is of engendering and begetting upon the beautiful."

"Be it so," I said.

"To be sure it is," she went on;

"and how of engendering? Because this is something ever-existent and immortal in our mortal life. From what has been admitted, we needs must yearn for immortality no less than for good, since love loves good to be one's own for ever. And hence it necessarily follows that love is of immortality." All this instruction did I get from her at various times when she discoursed of love-matters; and one time she asked me,

"What do you suppose, Socrates, to be the cause of this love and desire? For you must have observed the strange state into which all the animals are thrown, whether going on earth or winging the air, when they desire to beget: they are all sick and amorously disposed, first to have union one with another, and next to find food for the new-born; in whose behalf they are ready to fight hard battles, even the weakest against the strongest, and to sacrifice their lives; to be racked with

[54] The argument requires the application of "begetting" and other such terms indifferently to either sex.

starvation themselves if they can but nurture their young, and be put to any sort of shift. As for men," said she,

"one might suppose they do these things on the promptings of reason; but what is the cause of this amorous condition in the animals? Can you tell me?" Once more I replied that I did not know; so she proceeded:

"How do you design ever to become a master of love-matters, if you can form no notion of this?"

"Why, it is just for this, I tell you, Diotima—as I stated a moment ago—that I have come to see you, because I noted my need of an instructor. Come, tell me the cause of these effects as well as of the others that have relation to love."

"Well then," she said,

"if you believe that love is by nature bent on what we have repeatedly admitted, you may cease to wonder. For here, too, on the same principle as before, the mortal nature ever seeks, as best it can, to be immortal. In one way only can it succeed, and that is by generation; since so it can always leave behind it a new creature in place of the old. It is only for a while that each live thing can be described as alive and the same, as a man is said to be the same person from childhood until he is advanced in years: yet though he is called the same he does not at any time possess the same properties; he is continually becoming a new person, and there are things also which he loses, as appears by his hair, his flesh, his bones, and his blood and body altogether. And observe that not only in his body but in his soul besides we find none of his manners or habits, his opinions, desires, pleasures, pains or fears, ever abiding the same in his particular self; some things grow in him, while others perish."

"And here is a yet stranger fact: with regard to the possessions of knowledge, not merely do some of them grow and others perish in us, so that neither in what we know are we ever the same persons; but a like fate attends each single sort of knowledge. What we call "conning" implies that our knowledge is departing; since forgetfulness is an egress of knowledge, while conning substitutes a fresh one in place of that which departs, and so preserves our knowledge enough to make it seem the same. Every mortal thing is preserved in this way; not by keeping it exactly the same for ever, like the divine, but by replacing what goes off or is antiquated with something fresh, in the semblance of the original. Through this device, Socrates, a mortal thing partakes of immortality, both in its body and in all other respects; by no other means can it be done. So do not wonder if everything naturally values

its own offshoot; since all are beset by this eagerness and this love with a view to immortality." On hearing this argument I wondered, and said:

"Really, can this in truth be so, most wise Diotima?" Whereat she, like the professors in their glory:

"Be certain of it, Socrates; only glance at the ambition of the men around you, and you will have to wonder at the unreasonableness of what I have told you, unless you are careful to consider how singularly they are affected with the love of winning a name, "and laying up fame immortal for all time to come." [55] For this, even more than for their children, they are ready to run all risks, to expend money, perform any kind of task, and sacrifice their lives. Do you suppose," she asked,

"that Alcestis would have died for Admetus, or Achilles have sought death on the corpse of Patroclus, or your own Codrus [56] have welcomed it to save the children of his queen, if they had not expected to win "a deathless memory for valor," which now we keep? Of course not. I hold it is for immortal distinction and for such illustrious renown as this that they all do all they can, and so much the more in proportion to their excellence. They are in love with what is immortal."

"Now those who are teeming in body betake them rather to women, and are amorous on this wise: by getting children they acquire an immortality, a memorial, and a state of bliss, which in their imagining they "for all succeeding time procure." But pregnancy of soul—for there are persons," she declared,

"who in their souls still more than in their bodies conceive those things which are proper for soul to conceive and bring forth; and what are those things? Prudence, and virtue in general; and of these the begetters are all the poets and those craftsmen who are styled "inventors." Now by far the highest and fairest part of prudence is that which concerns the regulation of cities and habitations; it is called sobriety and justice. So when a man's soul is so far divine that it is made pregnant with these from his youth, and on attaining manhood immediately desires to bring forth and beget, he too, I imagine, goes about seeking the beautiful object whereon he may do his begetting, since he will never beget upon the ugly. Hence it is the beautiful rather than the ugly bodies that he welcomes in his pregnancy, and if he chances also on a soul that is fair and noble and well-endowed, he gladly cher-

[55] Diotima, like Agathon, breaks into verse of her own composing.

[56] A legendary king of Athens who exposed his life because an oracle had said that the Dorian invaders would conquer if they did not slay the Athenian king.

ishes the two combined in one; and straightway in addressing such a person he is resourceful in discoursing of virtue and of what should be the good man's character and what his pursuits; and so he takes in hand the other's education. For I hold that by contact with the fair one and by consorting with him he bears and brings forth his long-felt conception, because in presence or absence he remembers his fair. Equally too with him he shares the nurturing of what is begotten, so that men in this condition enjoy a far fuller community with each other than that which comes with children, and a far surer friendship, since the children of their union are fairer and more deathless. Every one would choose to have got children such as these rather than the human sort—merely from turning a glance upon Homer and Hesiod and all the other good poets, and envying the fine offspring they leave behind to procure them a glory immortally renewed in the memory of men. Or only look," she said,

"at the fine children whom Lycurgus [57] left behind him in Lacedaemon to deliver his country and—I may almost say—the whole of Greece; while Solon is highly esteemed among you for begetting his laws; and so are diverse men in diverse other regions, whether among the Greeks or among foreign peoples, for the number of goodly deeds shown forth in them, the manifold virtues they begot. In their name has many a shrine been reared because of their fine children; whereas for the human sort never any man obtained this honor."

"Into these love-matters even you, Socrates, might haply be initiated; but I doubt if you could approach the rites and revelations to which these, for the properly instructed, are merely the avenue. However I will speak of them," she said,

"and will not stint my best endeavors; only you on your part must try your best to follow. He who would proceed rightly in this business must not merely begin from his youth to encounter beautiful bodies. In the first place, indeed, if his conductor guides him aright, he must be in love with one particular body, and engender beautiful converse therein; but next he must remark how the beauty attached to this or that body is cognate to that which is attached to any other, and that if he means to ensue beauty in form, it is gross folly not to regard as one and the same the beauty belonging to all; and so, having grasped this truth, he must make himself a lover of all beautiful bodies, and slacken the stress of his feeling for one by contemning it and counting it a trifle. But his next advance will be to set a higher value on the

[57] The legendary creator of Spartan laws and customs.

beauty of souls than on that of the body, so that however little the grace that may bloom in any likely soul it shall suffice him for loving and caring, and for bringing forth and soliciting such converse as will tend to the betterment of the young; and that finally he may be constrained to contemplate the beautiful as appearing in our observances and our laws, and to behold it all bound together in kinship and so estimate the body's beauty as a slight affair. From observances he should be led on to the branches of knowledge, that there also he may behold a province of beauty, and by looking thus on beauty in the mass may escape from the mean, meticulous slavery of a single instance, where he must center all his care, like a lackey, upon the beauty of a particular child or man or single observance; and turning rather towards the main ocean of the beautiful may by contemplation of this bring forth in all their splendor many fair fruits of discourse and meditation in a plenteous crop of philosophy; until with the strength and increase there acquired he descries a certain single knowledge connected with a beauty which has yet to be told. And here, I pray you," said she,

"give me the very best of your attention."

"When a man has been thus far tutored in the lore of love, passing from view to view of beautiful things, in the right and regular ascent, suddenly he will have revealed to him, as he draws to the close of his dealings in love, a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature; and this, Socrates, is the final object of all those previous toils. First of all, it is ever-existent and neither comes to be nor perishes, neither waxes nor wanes; next, it is not beautiful in part and in part ugly, nor is it such at such a time and other at another, nor in one respect beautiful and in another ugly, nor so affected by position as to seem beautiful to some and ugly to others. Nor again will our initiate find the beautiful presented to him in the guise of a face or of hands or any other portion of the body, nor as a particular description or piece of knowledge, nor as existing somewhere in another substance, such as an animal or the earth or sky or any other thing; but existing ever in singularity of form independent by itself, while all the multitude of beautiful things partake of it in such wise that, though all of them are coming to be and perishing, it grows neither greater nor less, and is affected by nothing. So when a man by the right method of boy-loving ascends from these particulars and begins to descry that beauty, he is almost able to lay hold of the final secret. Such is the right approach or induction to love-matters. Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from

personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty. In that state of life above all others, my dear Socrates," said the Mantinean woman,

"a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty. This, when once beheld, will outshine your gold and your vesture, your beautiful boys and striplings, whose aspect now so astounds you and makes you and many another, at the sight and constant society of your darlings, ready to do without either food or drink if that were any way possible, and only gaze upon them and have their company. But tell me, what would happen if one of you had the fortune to look upon essential beauty entire, pure and unalloyed; not infected with the flesh and color of humanity, and ever so much more of mortal trash? What if he could behold the divine beauty itself, in its unique form?"

"Do you call it a pitiful life for a man to lead—looking that way, observing that vision by the proper means, and having it ever with him? Do but consider," she said,

"that there only will it befall him, as he sees the beautiful through that which makes it visible, to breed not illusions but true examples of virtue, since his contact is not with illusion but with truth. So when he has begotten a true virtue and has reared it up he is destined to win the friendship of Heaven; he, above all men, is immortal." This, Phaedrus and you others, is what Diotima told me, and I am persuaded of it; in which persuasion I pursue my neighbors, to persuade them in turn that towards this acquisition the best helper that our human nature can hope to find is Love. Wherefore I tell you now that every man should honor Love, as I myself do honor all love-matters with especial devotion, and exhort all other men to do the same; both now and always do I glorify Love's power and valor as far as I am able. So I ask you, Phaedrus, to be so good as to consider this account as a eulogy bestowed on Love, or else to call it by any name that pleases your fancy. After Socrates had thus spoken, there was applause from all the company except Aristophanes, who was beginning to remark on the allusion which Socrates' speech had made to his own; [58] when suddenly there was a knocking at the outer door, which had a noisy sound like that of revellers, and they heard notes of a flute-girl.

[58] See *Plat. Sym. 205e.*

"Go and see to it," said Agathon to the servants;

"and if it be one of our intimates, invite him in: otherwise, say we are not drinking, but just about to retire." A few moments after, they heard the voice of Alcibiades in the forecourt, very drunken and bawling loud, to know where Agathon was, and bidding them bring him to Agathon. So he was brought into the company by the flute-girl and some others of his people supporting him: he stood at the door, crowned with a bushy wreath of ivy and violets, and wearing a great array of ribands on his head.

"Good evening, sirs," he said;

"will you admit to your drinking a fellow very far gone in liquor, or shall we simply set a wreath on Agathon—which indeed is what we came for—and so away? I tell you, sir, I was hindered from getting to you yesterday; but now I am here with these ribands on my head, so that I can pull them off mine and twine them about the head of the cleverest, the handsomest, if I may speak the—see, like this![59]"

"Ah, you would laugh at me because I am drunk? Well, for my part, laugh as you may, I am sure I am speaking the truth. Come, tell me straight out, am I to enter on the terms stated or not? Will you take a cup with me or no?" At this they all boisterously acclaimed him, bidding him enter and take a seat, and Agathon also invited him. So he came along with the assistance of his people and while unwinding the ribands for his purpose of wreathing his friend he so held them before his eyes that he failed to notice Socrates, and actually took a seat next to Agathon, between Socrates and him: for Socrates had moved up when he caught sight of Alcibiades. So there he sat, and he saluted Agathon and began to twine his head. Then Agathon said to the servants,

"Take off Alcibiades' shoes, so that he can recline here with us two."

"By all means," said Alcibiades;

"but who is our third at table?" With that he turned about and saw Socrates, and the same moment leapt up and cried,

"Save us, what a surprise! Socrates here! So it was to lie in wait for me again that you were sitting there—your old trick of turning up on a sudden where least I expected you! Well, what are you after now? Tell me, I say, why you took a seat here and not by Aristophanes or some one else who is absurd and means to be? Why did you intrigue to get a seat beside the handsomest person in the room?" Then Socrates

[59]His drunken gesture interrupts what he means to say and resumes later, "If I may speak the truth."

said,

"Agathon, do your best to protect me, for I have found my love for this fellow no trifling affair. From the time when I fell in love with him I have not had a moment's liberty either to look upon or converse with a single handsome person, but the fellow flies into a spiteful jealousy which makes him treat me in a monstrous fashion, girding at me and hardly keeping his hands to himself. So take care that he does no mischief now: pray reconcile us; or if he sets about using force, protect me, for I shudder with alarm at his amorous frenzy."

"No," said Alcibiades;

"no reconcilement for you and me. I will have my revenge on you for this another time: for the present, Agathon, give me some of your ribands, that I may also deck this person's head, this astonishing head. He shall not reproach me with having made a garland for you and then, though he conquers every one in discourse—not once in a while, like you the other day, but always—bestowing none upon him." So saying he took some of the ribands and, after decking the head of Socrates, resumed his seat. Reclining there, he proceeded:

"Now then, gentlemen, you look sober: I cannot allow this; you must drink, and fulfil our agreement. So I appoint as president of this bout, till you have had a reasonable drink—myself. Agathon, let the boy bring me as large a goblet as you have."

"Ah well, do not trouble," he said;

"boy, bring me that cooler there,"— for he saw it would hold a good half-gallon and more. This he got filled to the brim, and after quaffing it off himself bade them fill up for Socrates, saying,

"Against Socrates, sirs, my crafty plan is as nought. However large the bumper you order him, he will quaff it all off and never get tipsy with it." Socrates drank as soon as the boy had filled: but

"What procedure is this, Alcibiades?" asked Eryximachus.

"Are we to have nothing to say or sing over the cup? Are we going to drink just like any thirsty folk?" To this Alcibiades answered:

"Ha, Eryximachus, "of noblest, soberest sire most noble son"; all hail!"

"And the same to you," said Eryximachus:

"but what are we to do?"

"Whatever you command, for we are bound to obey you:"One learned leech is worth the multitude." [60] So prescribe what you please."

"Then listen," said Eryximachus.

[60] *Hom. Il. 11.514*

"We resolved, before your arrival, that each in order from left to right should make the finest speech he could upon Love, and glorify his name. Now all of us here have spoken; so you, since you have made no speech and have drained the cup, must do your duty and speak. This done, you shall prescribe what you like for Socrates, and he for his neighbor on the right, and so on with the rest."

"Very good, Eryximachus," said Alcibiades;

"but to pit a drunken man against sober tongues is hardly fair. Besides, my gifted friend, you are surely not convinced by anything that Socrates has just told you? You must know the case is quite the contrary of what he was saying. It is he who, if I praise any god in his presence of any person other than himself, will not keep his hands off me."

"Come, enough of this," said Socrates.

"On the honor of a gentleman," said Alcibiades,

"it is no use your protesting, for I could not praise anyone else in your presence."

"Well, do that if you like," said Eryximachus;

"praise Socrates."

"You mean it?" said Alcibiades;

"you think I had better, Eryximachus? Am I to set upon the fellow and have my revenge before you all?"

"Here," said Socrates;

"what are you about,—to make fun of me with your praises, or what?"

"I shall speak the truth; now, will you permit me?"

"Ah well, so long as it is the truth, I permit you and command you to speak."

"You shall hear it this moment," said Alcibiades;

"but there is something you must do."

"If I say anything that is false, have the goodness to take me up short and say that there I am lying; for I will not lie if I can help it. Still, you are not to be surprised if I tell my reminiscences at haphazard; it is anything but easy for a man in my condition to give a fluent and regular enumeration of your oddities." Alcibiades' praise of Socrates The way I shall take, gentlemen, in my praise of Socrates, is by similitudes. Probably he will think I do this for derision; but I choose my similitude for the sake of truth, not of ridicule. For I say he is likest to the Silenus-figures that sit in the statuaries' shops; those, I mean, which our craftsmen make with pipes or flutes in their hands: when their two halves are pulled open, they are found to contain images of gods.

And I further suggest that he resembles the satyr Marsyas. Now, as to your likeness, Socrates, to these in figure, I do not suppose even you yourself will dispute it; but I have next to tell you that you are like them in every other respect. You are a fleering fellow, eh? If you will not confess it, I have witnesses at hand. Are you not a piper? Why, yes, and a far more marvellous one than the satyr. His lips indeed had power to entrance mankind by means of instruments; a thing still possible today for anyone who can pipe his tunes: for the music of Olympus' flute belonged, I may tell you, to Marsyas his teacher. So that if anyone, whether a fine flute-player or paltry flute-girl, can but flute his tunes, they have no equal for exciting a ravishment, and will indicate by the divinity that is in them who are apt recipients of the deities and their sanctifications. You differ from him in one point only—that you produce the same effect with simple prose unaided by instruments. For example, when we hear any other person—quite an excellent orator, perhaps—pronouncing one of the usual discourses, no one, I venture to say, cares a jot; but so soon as we hear you, or your discourses in the mouth of another,—though such person be ever so poor a speaker, and whether the hearer be a woman or a man or a youngster—we are all astounded and entranced. As for myself, gentlemen, were it not that I might appear to be absolutely tipsy, I would have affirmed on oath all the strange effects I personally have felt from his words, and still feel even now. For when I hear him I am worse than any wild fanatic; I find my heart leaping and my tears gushing forth at the sound of his speech, and I see great numbers of other people having the same experience. When I listened to Pericles and other skilled orators I thought them eloquent, but I never felt anything like this; my spirit was not left in a tumult and had not to complain of my being in the condition of a common slave: whereas the influence of our Marsyas here has often thrown me into such a state that I thought my life not worth living on these terms.

In all this, Socrates, there is nothing that you can call untrue. Even now I am still conscious that if I consented to lend him my ear, I could not resist him, but would have the same feeling again. For he compels me to admit that, sorely deficient as I am, I neglect myself while I attend to the affairs of Athens. So I withhold my ears perforce as from the Sirens, and make off as fast as I can, for fear I should go on sitting beside him till old age was upon me. And there is one experience I have in presence of this man alone, such as nobody would expect in me; and that is, to be made to feel ashamed; he alone can make me feel it. For he brings home to me that I cannot disown the duty of doing what

he bids me, but that as soon as I turn from his company I fall a victim to the favors of the crowd. So I take a runaway's leave of him and flee away; when I see him again I think of those former admissions, and am ashamed. Often I could wish he had vanished from this world; yet again, should this befall, I am sure I should be more distressed than ever; so I cannot tell what to do with the fellow at all. Such then is the effect that our satyr can work upon me and many another with his piping; but let me tell you how like he is in other respects to the figures of my comparison, and what a wondrous power he wields. I assure you, not one of you knows him; well, I shall reveal him, now that I have begun. Observe how Socrates is amorously inclined to handsome persons; with these he is always busy and enraptured. Again, he is utterly stupid and ignorant, as he affects. Is not this like a Silenus? Exactly. It is an outward casing he wears, similarly to the sculptured Silenus. But if you opened his inside, you cannot imagine how full he is, good cup-companions, of sobriety. I tell you, all the beauty a man may have is nothing to him; he despises it more than any of you can believe; nor does wealth attract him, nor any sort of honor that is the envied prize of the crowd. All these possessions he counts as nothing worth, and all of us as nothing, I assure you; he spends his whole life in chaffing and making game of his fellow-men.

Whether anyone else has caught him in a serious moment and opened him, and seen the images inside, I know not; but I saw them one day, and thought them so divine and golden, so perfectly fair and wondrous, that I simply had to do as Socrates bade me. And believing he had a serious affection for my youthful bloom, I supposed I had here a godsend and a rare stroke of luck, thinking myself free at any time by gratifying his desires to hear all that our Socrates knew; for I was enormously proud of my youthful charms. So with this design I dismissed the attendant whom till then I invariably brought to my meetings with Socrates, and I would go and meet him alone: I am to tell you the whole truth; you must all mark my words, and, Socrates, you shall refute me if I lie. Yes, gentlemen, I went and met him, and the two of us would be alone; and I thought he would seize the chance of talking to me as a lover does to his dear one in private, and I was glad. But nothing of the sort occurred at all: he would merely converse with me in his usual manner, and when he had spent the day with me he would leave me and go his way. After that I proposed he should go with me to the trainer's, and I trained with him, expecting to gain my point there. So he trained and wrestled with me many a time when no one was there. The same story! I got no further with the affair. Then,

as I made no progress that way, I resolved to charge full tilt at the man, and not to throw up the contest once I had entered upon it: I felt I must clear up the situation. Accordingly I invited him to dine with me, for all the world like a lover scheming to ensnare his favorite. Even this he was backward to accept; however, he was eventually persuaded. The first time he came, he wanted to leave as soon as he had dined. On that occasion I was ashamed and let him go. The second time I devised a scheme: when we had dined I went on talking with him far into the night, and when he wanted to go I made a pretext of the lateness of the hour and constrained him to stay. So he sought repose on the couch next to me, on which he had been sitting at dinner, and no one was sleeping in the room but ourselves. Now up to this point my tale could fairly be told to anybody; but from here onwards I would not have continued in your hearing were it not, in the first place, that wine, as the saying goes, whether you couple "children" with it or no, is "truthful";[61] and in the second, I consider it dishonest, when I have started on the praise of Socrates, to hide his deed of lofty disdain. Besides, I share the plight of the man who was bitten by the snake: you know it is related of one in such a plight that he refused to describe his sensations to any but persons who had been bitten themselves, since they alone would understand him and stand up for him if he should give way to wild words and actions in his agony. Now I have been bitten by a more painful creature, in the most painful way that one can be bitten: in my heart, or my soul, or whatever one is to call it, I am stricken and stung by his philosophic discourses, which adhere more fiercely than any adder when once they lay hold of a young and not ungifted soul, and force it to do or say whatever they will; I have only to look around me, and there is a Phaedrus, an Agathon, an Eryximachus, a Pausanias, an Aristodemus, and an Aristophanes—I need not mention Socrates himself—and all the rest of them; every one of you has had his share of philosophic frenzy and transport, so all of you shall hear. You shall stand up alike for what then was done and for what now is spoken. But the domestics, and all else profane and clownish, must clap the heaviest of doors upon their ears. Well, gentlemen, when the lamp had been put out and the servants had withdrawn, I determined not to mince matters with him, but to speak out freely what I intended. So I shook him and said,

"Socrates, are you asleep?"

[61] The usual proverb of the truthfulness of wine (*οἶνος καὶ ἀλήθεια*) was sometimes extended to *οἶνος καὶ παῖδες ἀληθεῖς* Truthful are wine and children.

"Why, no," he replied.

"Let me tell you what I have decided."

"What is the matter?" he asked.

"I consider," I replied,

"that you are the only worthy lover I have had, and it looks to me as if you were shy of mentioning it to me. My position is this: I count it sheer folly not to gratify you in this as in any other need you may have of either my property or that of my friends. To me nothing is more important than the attainment of the highest possible excellence, and in this aim I believe I can find no abler ally than you. So I should feel a far worse shame before sensible people for not gratifying such a friend than I should before the senseless multitude for gratifying him." When he heard this, he put on that innocent air which habit has made so characteristic of him, and remarked:

"My dear Alcibiades, I daresay you are not really a dolt, if what you say of me is the actual truth, and there is a certain power in me that could help you to be better; for then what a stupendous beauty you must see in me, vastly superior to your comeliness!"

"And if on espying this you are trying for a mutual exchange of beauty for beauty, it is no slight advantage you are counting on—you are trying to get genuine in return for reputed beauties, and in fact are designing to fetch off the old bargain of "gold for bronze." [62] But be more wary, my gifted friend: you may be deceived and I may be worthless. Remember, the intellectual sight begins to be keen when the visual is entering on its wane; but you are a long way yet from that time." To this I answered: "You have heard what I had to say; not a word differed from the feeling in my mind: it is for you now to consider what you judge to be best for you and me." "Ah, there you speak to some purpose," he said:

"for in the days that are to come we shall consider and do what appears to be best for the two of us in this and our other affairs." Well, after I had exchanged these words with him and, as it were, let fly my shafts, I fancied he felt the wound: so up I got, and without suffering the man to say a word more I wrapped my own coat about him—it was winter-time; drew myself under his cloak, so; wound my arms about this truly spiritual and miraculous creature; and lay thus all the night long. Here too, Socrates, you are unable to give me the lie. When I had done all this, he showed such superiority and contempt, laughing my

[62] *Hom. Il. 6.236*— Glaucus foolishly exchanging his golden armour for the bronze armour of Diomedes.

youthful charms to scorn, and flouting the very thing on which I prided myself, gentlemen of the jury—for you are here to try Socrates for his lofty disdain: you may be sure, by gods—and goddesses—that when I arose I had in no more particular sense slept a night with Socrates than if it had been with my father or my elder brother. After that, you can imagine what a state of mind I was in, feeling myself affronted, yet marvelling at the sobriety and integrity of his nature: for I had lighted on a man such as I never would have dreamt of meeting—so sensible and so resolute. Hence I could find neither a reason for being angry and depriving myself of his society nor a ready means of enticing him. For I was well aware that he was far more proof against money on every side than Ajax against a spear; [63] and in what I thought was my sole means of catching him he had eluded me. So I was at a loss, and wandered about in the most abject thraldom to this man that ever was known. Now all this, you know, had already happened to me when we later went on a campaign together to Potidaea; [64] and there we were messmates.

Well, first of all, he surpassed not me only but every one else in bearing hardships; whenever we were cut off in some place and were compelled, as often in campaigns, to go without food, the rest of us were nowhere in point of endurance. Then again, when we had plenty of good cheer, he alone could enjoy it to the full, and though unwilling to drink, when once overruled he used to beat us all; and, most surprising of all, no man has ever yet seen Socrates drunk. Of this power I expect we shall have a good test in a moment. But it was in his endurance of winter—in those parts the winters are awful—that I remember, among his many marvellous feats, how once there came a frost about as awful as can be: we all preferred not to stir abroad, or if any of us did, we wrapped ourselves up with prodigious care, and after putting on our shoes we muffled up our feet with felt and little fleeces. But he walked out in that weather, clad in just such a coat as he was always wont to wear, and he made his way more easily over the ice unshod than the rest of us did in our shoes. The soldiers looked askance at him, thinking that he despised them. So much for that: "but next, the valiant deed our strong-souled hero dared"[65] on service there one day, is well worth hearing. Immersed in some problem at dawn, he stood in the same spot considering it; and when he found it a tough one, he would not

[63] Referring to the sevenfold shield of Ajax; cf. *Pind. I. 5.45*; Soph. Af. 576.

[64] 432 B.C.

[65] *Hom. Od. 4.242*

give it up but stood there trying. The time drew on to midday, and the men began to notice him, and said to one another in wonder:

"Socrates has been standing there in a study ever since dawn!" The end of it was that in the evening some of the Ionians after they had supped— this time it was summer—brought out their mattresses and rugs and took their sleep in the cool; thus they waited to see if he would go on standing all night too. He stood till dawn came and the sun rose; then walked away, after offering a prayer to the Sun. Then, if you care to hear of him in battle—for there also he must have his due—on the day of the fight in which I gained my prize for valor from our commanders, it was he, out of the whole army, who saved my life: I was wounded, and he would not forsake me, but helped me to save both my armor and myself. I lost no time, Socrates, in urging the generals to award the prize for valor to you; and here I think you will neither rebuke me nor give me the lie. For when the generals, out of regard for my consequence, were inclined to award the prize to me, you outdid them in urging that I should have it rather than you.

And further let me tell you, gentlemen, what a notable figure he made when the army was retiring in flight from Delium [66]: I happened to be there on horseback, while he marched under arms. The troops were in utter disorder, and he was retreating along with Laches, when I chanced to come up with them and, as soon as I saw them, passed them the word to have no fear, saying I would not abandon them. Here, indeed, I had an even finer view of Socrates than at Potidaea—for personally I had less reason for alarm, as I was mounted; and I noticed, first, how far he outdid Laches in collectedness, and next I felt—to use a phrase of yours, Aristophanes—how there he stepped along, as his wont is in our streets, "strutting like a proud marsh-goose, with ever a side-long glance," [67] turning a calm sidelong look on friend and foe alike, and convincing anyone even from afar that whoever cares to touch this person will find he can put up a stout enough defence. The result was that both he and his comrade got away unscathed: for, as a rule, people will not lay a finger on those who show this disposition in war; it is men flying in headlong rout that they pursue. There are many more quite wonderful things that one could find to praise in Socrates: but although there would probably be as much to say about any other one of his habits, I select his unlikeness to anybody else, whether in the ancient or in the modern world, as calling for our greatest wonder.

[66] The Athenians were defeated by the Thebans, 424 B.C.: cf. *Thuc. 4. 76 ff.*

[67] *Aristoph. Clouds 362*

You may take the character of Achilles and see his parallel in Brasidas or others; you may couple Nestor, Antenor, or others I might mention, with Pericles; and in the same order you may liken most great men; but with the odd qualities of this person, both in himself and in his conversation, you would not come anywhere near finding a comparison if you searched either among men of our day or among those of the past, unless perhaps you borrowed my words and matched him, not with any human being, but with the Silenuses and satyrs, in his person and his speech. For there is a point I omitted when I began—how his talk most of all resembles the Silenuses that are made to open. If you chose to listen to Socrates' discourses you would feel them at first to be quite ridiculous; on the outside they are clothed with such absurd words and phrases—all, of course, the gift of a mocking satyr.

His talk is of pack-asses, smiths, cobblers, and tanners, and he seems always to be using the same terms for the same things; so that anyone inexpert and thoughtless might laugh his speeches to scorn. But when these are opened, and you obtain a fresh view of them by getting inside, first of all you will discover that they are the only speeches which have any sense in them; and secondly, that none are so divine, so rich in images of virtue, so largely—nay, so completely—intent on all things proper for the study of such as would attain both grace and worth. This, gentlemen, is the praise I give to Socrates: at the same time, I have seasoned it with a little fault-finding, and have told you his rude behavior towards me. However, I am not the only person he has treated thus: there are Charmides, son of Glaucon, Euthydemus, son of Diocles, and any number of others who have found his way of loving so deceitful that he might rather be their favorite than their lover. I tell you this, Agathon, to save you from his deceit, that by laying our sad experiences to heart you may be on your guard and escape learning by your own pain, like the loon in the adage. [68] When Alcibiades had thus spoken, there was some laughter at his frankness, which showed him still amorously inclined to Socrates; who then remarked:

"I believe you are sober, Alcibiades; else you would never have enfolded yourself so charmingly all about, trying to screen from sight your object in all this talk, nor would have put it in as a mere incident at the end. The true object of all you have said was to stir up a quarrel between me and Agathon: for you think you must keep me as your undivided lover, and Agathon as the undivided object of your

[68] *Hom. Il. 17.33 ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω*, fools get their lesson from the deed done.

love. But now you are detected: your Satyric or Silenic play-scene is all shown up. Dear Agathon, do not let the plot succeed, but take measures to prevent anyone from setting you and me at odds." To which Agathon replied:

"Do you know, Socrates, I fancy you have hit on the truth. Besides, I take his sitting down between us two as an obvious attempt to draw us apart. See, he shall not gain his point: I will come and sit by your side."

"By all means," said Socrates;

"here is a place for you beyond me."

"Good God!" said Alcibiades,

"here's the fellow at me again. He has set his heart on having the better of me every way. But at least, you surprising person, do allow Agathon to sit between us."

"That cannot be," said Socrates:

"you have praised me, and so it behoves me to praise my neighbor on the right. [69]"

"Thus if Agathon sits beyond you, he must surely be praising me again, before receiving his due praises from me. So let him be, my good soul, and do not grudge the lad those praises of mine: for I am most eager to pronounce his eulogy."

"Ha, ha! Alcibiades," said Agathon;

"there can be no question of my staying here: I shall jump up and at once, if that will make Socrates praise me."

"There you are," said Alcibiades;

"just as usual: when Socrates is present, nobody else has a chance with the handsome ones. You see how resourceful he was in devising a plausible reason why our young friend should sit beside him." So Agathon was getting up in order to seat himself by Socrates, when suddenly a great crowd of revellers arrived at the door, which they found just opened for some one who was going out. They marched straight into the party and seated themselves: the whole place was in an uproar and, losing all order, they were forced to drink a vast amount of wine. Then, as Aristodemus related, Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and some others took their leave and departed; while he himself fell asleep, and slumbered a great while, for the nights were long. He awoke towards dawn, as the cocks were crowing; and immediately he saw that all the company were either sleeping or gone, except Agathon, Aristophanes,

[69] At *Plat. Sym. 214c* it was only agreed that each should impose what topic he pleased upon his neighbor.

and Socrates, who alone remained awake and were drinking out of a large vessel, from left to right; and Socrates was arguing with them. As to most of the talk, Aristodemus had no recollection, for he had missed the beginning and was also rather drowsy; but the substance of it was, he said, that Socrates was driving them to the admission that the same man could have the knowledge required for writing comedy and tragedy—that the fully skilled tragedian could be a comedian as well. While they were being driven to this, and were but feebly following it, they began to nod; first Aristophanes dropped into a slumber, and then, as day began to dawn, Agathon also. When Socrates had seen them comfortable, he rose and went away,—followed in the usual manner by my friend; on arriving at the Lyceum, he washed himself, and then spent the rest of the day in his ordinary fashion; and so, when the day was done, he went home for the evening and reposed.

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