

Plutarch's Morals

On Socrates' Daemon

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Xanthippe dousing Socrates (c 1655) Reyer van Blommendael, Strasbourg



Train of thought

- Supposed conversation among some friends respecting affairs at Thebes, at the period of the return of the exiles.
- About Pelopidas, Epaminondas, Charon, Archias, Leontidas, Lysanoridas.
- Plan for liberating Thebes from the Spartan rule.
- Strange portents and omens.
- Recourse to Egypt for the interpretation of a strange, antiquated writing.
- The writing interpreted.
- Folly of superstition.
- Socrates pursued a more rational method.
- What shall we think of his Daemon?
- Was it some trifling thing, as an omen or a sneeze?
- It could be nothing but sound judgment.
- A stranger from Italy introduced.
- His account of affairs at Metapontum.
- Lysis had escaped from massacre at Metapontum, and been hospitably received at Thebes.
- Theanor, the stranger, offers money in requital for the kindness bestowed on Lysis.
- The offer refused, and why.
- Discourse of Epaminondas thereon.
- Epaminondas has a good Daemon.
- The conversation turns on the liberation of Thebes from the Spartan garrison
- Fear that the plot is discovered.
- Dreams and omens.
- The Daemon of Socrates again.
- A strong impression made on the mind of some extraordinary man is from a Daemon, like that of Socrates.
- A romantic dream related.
- A descent into the infernal regions.
- Daemons are seen there; their connection with human beings on earth.
- The Pythagorean philosophy respecting dreams, daemons, and sacred impulses.
- Epaminondas refuses to kill any citizen without process of law.
- Slaughter of the Spartan commanders and liberation of Thebes.



CAPHISIAS, TIMOTHEUS, ARCHIDAMUS, CHILDREN OF ARCHINUS, LYSITHIDES, OTHER COMPANIONS.

1 I heard lately, Caphisias, a neat saying of a painter, comprised in a similitude upon those that came to view his pictures. For he said, the ignorant and unskilful were like those that saluted a whole company together, but the curious and knowing like those that complimented each single person; for the former take no exact, but only one general view of the performance; but those that with judgment examine part by part take notice of every stroke that is either well or ill done in the whole picture. The duller and lazy sort are abundantly satisfied with a short account and upshot of any business. But he that is of a generous and noble temper, that is fitted to be a spectator of virtue, as of a curious piece of art, is more delighted with the particulars. For, upon a general view, much of fortune is discovered; but when the particulars are examined, then appear the art and contrivance, the boldness in conquering intervening accidents, and the reason that was mixed with and tempered the heat and fury of the undertakers. Suppose us to be of this sort, and give us an account of the whole design, how from the very beginning it was carried on, what company you kept, and what particular discourse you had that day; — a thing so much desired, that I protest I would willingly go to Thebes to be informed, did not the Athenians already suspect me to lean too much to the Boeotian interest.

CAPHISIAS Indeed Archidamus, your kind eagerness after this story is so obliging, that, putting myself above all business (as Pindar says), I should have come on purpose to give you a relation. But since I am now come upon an embassy, and have nothing to do until I receive an answer to my memorial, to be uncivil and not to satisfy the request of an obliging friend would revive the old reproach that hath been cast upon the Boeotians for morose sullenness and hating good discourse, a reproach which began to die in the time of Socrates. But as for the rest of the company, pray sir, are they at leisure to hear such a story? — for I must be very long, since you enjoin me to add the particular discourses that passed between us.

ARCHIDAMUS You do not know the men, Caphisias, though they are worthy your acquaintance; men of good families, and no enemies to you. This is Lysithides, Thrasybulus's nephew; this Timotheus, the son of Conon; these Archinus's sons; and all the rest my very good acquaintance, so that you need not doubt a favorable and obliging audience.

CAPHISIAS Very well; but where shall I begin the story? How much of these affairs are you acquainted with already?

ARCHIDAMUS We know, Caphisias, how matters stood at Thebes before the exiles returned, — how Archias, Leontidas, and their associates, having persuaded Phoebidas the Spartan in the time of peace to surprise that castle, banished some of the citizens, awed others, took the power into their own hands, and tyrannized against all equity and law. We understood Melon's and Pelopidas's designs, having (as you know) entertained them, and having conversed with them ever since they were banished. We knew likewise that the Spartans fined Phoebidas for taking the Cadmea, and in their expedition to Olynthus cashiered him; but sent a stronger garrison, under Lysinoridas and two more, to command the castle; and further, that Ismenias



presently after his trial was basely murdered. For Gorgidas wrote constantly to the exiles, and sent them all the news; so that you have nothing to do but only to inform us in the particulars of your friends' return and the seizing of the tyrants.

2 CAPHISIAS In those days, Archidamus, all that were concerned in the design, as often as our business required, used to meet at Simmias's house, who then lay lame of a blow upon his shin. This we covered with a pretence of meeting for improvement and philosophical discourse, and, to take off all suspicion, we many times invited Archias and Leontidas, who were not altogether averse to such conversation. Besides, Simmias, having been a long time abroad and conversant with different nations, was lately returned to Thebes, full of all sorts of stories and strange relations. To him Archias, when free from business, would resort with the youth of Thebes, and sit and hear with a great deal of delight; being better pleased to see us mind philosophy and learning than their illegal actions. Now the same day in which it was agreed that about night the exiles should come privately to town, a messenger, whom none of us all but Charon knew, came from them by Pherenicus's order, and told us that twelve of the youngest of the exiles were now hunting on the mountain Cithaeron, and designed to come at night, and that he was sent to deliver this and to know in whose house they should be received, that as soon as they entered they might go directly thither. This startling us, Charon put an end to all our doubts by offering to receive them in his house. With this answer the messenger returned.

3 But Theocritus the soothsayer, grasping me by the hand, and looking on Charon that went just before us, said: That Charon, Caphisias, is no philosopher, nor so general nor so acute a scholar as thy brother Epaminondas, and yet you see that, Nature leading him, under the direction of the law, to noble actions, he willingly ventures on the greatest danger for the benefit of his country; but Epaminondas, who thinks he knows more of virtue than any of the Boeotians, is dull and inactive; and though opportunity presents, though there cannot be a fairer occasion, and though he is fitted to embrace it, yet he refuseth to join, and will not make one in this generous attempt. And I replied: Courageous Theocritus, we do what upon mature deliberation we have approved, but Epaminondas, being of a contrary opinion and thinking it better not to take this course, rationally complies with his judgment, whilst he refuseth to meddle in those matters which his reason upon our desire cannot approve, and to which his nature is averse. Nor can I think it prudent to force a physician to use fire and a lancet, that promiseth to cure the disease without them. What, said Theocritus, doth he not approve of our method? No, I replied, he would have no citizens put to death without a trial at law; but if we would endeavor to free our country without slaughter and bloodshed, none would more readily comply; but since we slight his reasons and follow our own course, he desires to be excused, to be guiltless of the blood and slaughter of his citizens, and to be permitted to watch an opportunity when he may deliver his country according to equity and right. For this action may go too far, Pherenicus, it is true, and Pelopidas may assault the bad men and the oppressors of the people; but Eumolpidas and Samidas, men of extraordinary heat and violence, prevailing in the night, will hardly sheathe their swords until they have filled the whole city with slaughter and cut in pieces many of the chief men.



4 Anaxidorus, overhearing this discourse of mine to Theocritus (for he was just by), bade us be cautious, for Archias with Lysanoridas the Spartan were coming from the castle directly towards us. Upon this advice we left off; and Archias, calling Theocritus aside together with Lysanoridas, privately discoursed him a long while, so that we were very much afraid lest they had some suspicion or notice of our design, and examined Theocritus about it. In the mean time Phyllidas (you know him, Archidamus) who was then secretary to Archias the general, who knew of the exiles coming and was one of the associates, taking me by the hand, as he used to do, before the company, found fault with the late exercises and wrestling he had seen; but afterwards leading me aside, he enquired after the exiles, and asked whether they were resolved to be punctual to the day. And upon my assuring that they were, then he replied, I have very luckily provided a feast to-day to treat Archias, make him drunk, and then deliver him an easy prey to the invaders. Excellently contrived, Phyllidas, said I, and prithee endeavor to draw all or most of our enemies together. That, said he, is very hard, nay, rather impossible; for Archias, being in hopes of the company of some noble women there, will not yield that Leontidas should be present, so that it will be necessary to divide the associates into two companies, that we may surprise both the houses. For, Archias and Leontidas being taken off, I suppose the others will presently fly, or staying make no stir, being very well satisfied if they can be permitted to be safe and quiet. So, said I, we will order it; but about what, I wonder, are they discoursing with Theocritus? And Phyllidas replied, I cannot certainly tell, but I have heard that some omens and oracles portend great disasters and calamities to Sparta; and perhaps they consult him about those matters. Theocritus had just left them, when Phidolaus the Haliartian meeting us said: Simmias would have you stay here a little while, for he is interceding with Leontidas for Amphitheus, and begs that instead of dying, according to the sentence, he may be banished.

5 Well, said Theocritus, this happens very opportunely, for I had a mind to ask what was seen and what found in Alcmena's tomb lately opened amongst you, for perhaps, sir, you were present when Agesilaus sent to fetch the relics to Sparta. And Phidolaus replied: Indeed I was not present at the opening of the grave, for I was not delegated, being extremely concerned and very angry with my fellow-citizens for permitting it to be done. There were found no relics of a body; but a small brazen bracelet, and two earthen pipkins full of earth, which now by length of time was grown very hard and petrified. Upon the monument there was a brazen plate full of strange, because very ancient, letters; for though, when the plate was washed, all the strokes were very easily perceived, yet nobody could make any thing of them; for they were a particular, barbarous, and very like the Egyptian character. And therefore Agesilaus, as the story goes, sent a transcript of them to the king of Egypt, desiring him to show them to the priests, and if they understood them, to send him the meaning and interpretation. But perhaps in this matter Simmias can inform us, for at that time he studied their philosophy and frequently conversed with the priests upon that account. The Haliartii believe the great scarcity and overflowing of the pool that followed were not effects of chance, but a particular judgment upon them for permitting the grave to be opened. And Theocritus, after a little pause, said: Nay, there seem some judgments to hang over the Lacedaemonians themselves, as those omens about which Lysanoridas just now discoursed me portend. And now he is gone to



Haliartus to fill up the grave again, and, as the oracle directs, to make some oblations to Alcmena and Aleus; but who this Aleus is, he cannot tell. And as soon as he returns, he must endeavor to find the sepulchre of Dirce, which not one of the Thebans themselves, besides the captains of the horse, knows; for he that goes out of his office leads his successor to the place alone, and in the dark; there they offer some sacrifices, but without fire, and leaving no mark behind them, they separate from one another, and come home again in the dark. So that I believe, Phidolaus, it will be no easy matter for him to discover it. For most of those that have been duly elected to that office are now in exile; nay, all besides Gorgidas and Plato; and they will never ask those, for they are afraid of them. And our present officers are invested in the castle with the spear only and the seal, but know nothing of the tomb, and cannot direct him.

6 Whilst Theocritus was speaking, Leontidas and his friends went out; and we going in saluted Simmias, sitting upon his couch, very much troubled because his petition was denied. He, looking up upon us, cried out: Good God! The savage barbarity of these men! And was it not an excellent remark of Thales, who, when his friends asked him, upon his return from his long travels, what strange news he brought home, replied, "I have seen a tyrant an old man." For even he that hath received no particular injury, yet disliking their stiff pride and haughty carriage, becomes an enemy to all lawless and unaccountable powers. But Heaven perhaps will take these things into consideration. But, Caphisias, do you know that stranger that came lately hither, who he is? And I replied, I do not know whom you mean. Why, said he, Leontidas told me that there was a man at night seen to rise out of Lysis's tomb, with great pomp and a long train of attendants, and that he had lodged there all night upon beds made of leaves and boughs; for the next morning such were discovered there, with some relics of burnt sacrifices and some milk-oblations; and that in the morning he enquired of every one he met, whether he should find Polymnis's sons at home. I wonder, said I, who it is, for by your description I guess him to be no mean man.

7 Well, said Phidolaus, when he comes we will entertain him; but at the present, Simmias, if you know any thing more of those letters about which we were talking, pray let us have it; for it is said that the Egyptian priests took into consideration the writing of a certain table which Agesilaus had from us when he opened Alcmena's tomb. As for the table, replied Simmias, I know nothing of it; but Agetoridas the Spartan came to Memphis with letters from Agesilaus to Chonouphis the priest, whilst I, Plato, and Ellopio the Peparethian, studied together at his house. He came by order of the king, who enjoined Chonouphis, if he understood the writing, to send him the interpretation with all speed. And he in three days' study, having collected all the different sorts of characters that could be found in the old books, wrote back to the king and likewise told us, that the writing enjoined the Greeks to institute games in honor of the Muses; that the characters were such as were used in the time of Proteus, and that Hercules, the son of Amphitryo, then learned them; and that the Gods by this admonished the Greeks to live peaceably and at quiet, to contend in philosophy to the honor of the Muses, and, laying aside their arms, to determine what is right and just by reason and discourse. We then thought that Chonouphis spoke right; and that opinion was confirmed when, as we were sailing from Egypt, about



Caria some Delians met us, who desired Plato, being well skilled in geometry, to solve an odd oracle lately delivered by Apollo. The oracle was this: "Then the Delians and all the other Greeks should enjoy some respite from their present evils, when they had doubled the altar at Delos." They, not comprehending the meaning of the words, after many ridiculous endeavors (for each of the sides being doubled, they had framed a body, instead of twice, eight times as big) made application to Plato to clear the difficulty. He, calling to mind what the Egyptian had told him, said that the God was merry upon the Greeks, who despised learning; that he severely reflected on their ignorance, and admonished them to apply themselves to the deepest parts of geometry; for this was not to be done by a dull short-sighted intellect, but one exactly skilled in the natures and properties of lines; it required skill to find the true proportion by which alone a body of a cubic figure can be doubled, all its dimensions being equally increased. He said that Eudoxus the Cnidian or Helico the Cyzicene might do this for them; but that was not the thing desired by the God; for by this oracle he enjoined all the Greeks to leave off war and contention, and apply themselves to study, and, by learning and arts moderating the passions, to live peaceably with one another, and profit the community.

8 Whilst Simmias was speaking, my father Polymnis came in, and sitting down by him said: Epaminondas desires you and the rest of the company, unless some urgent business requires your attendance, to stay for him here a little while, designing to bring you acquainted with this stranger, who is a very worthy man; and the design upon which he comes is very genteel and honorable. He is a Pythagorean of the Italian sect, and comes hither to make some offerings to old Lysis at his tomb, according to divers dreams and very notable appearances that he hath seen. He hath brought a good sum of money with him, and thinks himself bound to satisfy Epaminondas for keeping Lysis in his old age; and is very eager, though we are neither willing nor desire him, to relieve his poverty. And Simmias, glad at this news, replied: You tell me, sir, of a wonderful man and worthy professor of philosophy; but why doth he not come directly to us? I think, said my father, he lay all night at Lysis's tomb; and therefore Epaminondas hath now led him to the Ismenus to wash; and when that is done, they will be here. For before he came to our house, he lodged at the tomb, intending to take up the relics of the body and transport them into Italy, if some genius at night should not advise him to forbear.

9 As soon as my father had ended this discourse, Galaxidorus cried out: Good Gods! how hard a matter is it to find a man pure from vanity and superstition! For some are betrayed into those fooleries by their ignorance and weakness; others, that they may be thought extraordinary men and favorites of Heaven, refer all their actions to some divine admonition pretending dreams, visions, and the like surprising fooleries for every thing they do. This method indeed is advantageous to those that intend to settle a commonwealth, or are forced to keep themselves up against a rude and ungovernable multitude; for by this bridle of superstition they might manage and reform the vulgar; but these pretences seem not only unbecoming philosophy, but quite opposite to all those fine promises she makes. For having promised to teach us by reason what is good and profitable, falling back again to the Gods as the principle of all our actions, she seems to despise reason, and disgrace that demonstration which is her peculiar glory; and she relies on dreams and visions, in which the worst



of men are oftentimes as happy as the best. And therefore your Socrates, Simmias, in my opinion followed the most philosophical and rational method of instructions, choosing that plain and easy way as the most genteel and friendly unto truth, and scattering to the sophisters of the age all those vain pretences which are as it were the smoke of philosophy. And Theocritus taking him up said: What, Galaxidorus, and hath Meletus persuaded you that Socrates contemned all divine things? — for that was part of his accusation. Divine things! by no means, replied Galaxidorus; but having received philosophy from Pythagoras and Empedocles, full of dreams, fables, superstitions, and perfect raving, he endeavored to bring wisdom and things together, and make truth consist with sober sense.

10 Be it so, rejoined Theocritus, but what shall we think of his Daemon? Was it a mere juggle? Indeed, nothing that is told of Pythagoras regarding divination seems to me so great and divine. For, in my mind, as Homer makes Minerva to stand by Ulysses in all dangers, so the Daemon joined to Socrates even from his cradle some vision to guide him in all the actions of his life; which going before him, shed a light upon hidden and obscure matters and such as could not be discovered by unassisted human understanding; of such things the Daemon often discoursed with him, presiding over and by divine instinct directing his intentions. More and greater things perhaps you may learn from Simmias and other companions of Socrates; but once when I was present, as I went to Euthyphron the soothsayer's, it happened, Simmias, — for you remember it, — that Socrates walked up to Symbolum and the house of Andocides, all the way asking questions and jocosely perplexing Euthyphron. When standing still upon a sudden and persuading us to do the like, he mused a pretty while, and then turning about walked through Trunk-makers' Street, calling back his friends that walked before him, affirming that it was his Daemon's will and admonition. Many turned back, amongst whom I, holding Euthyphron, was one; but some of the youths keeping on the straight way, on purpose (as it were) to confute Socrates's Daemon, took along with them Charillus the piper, who came in my company to Athens to see Cebes. Now as they were walking through Gravers' Row near the court-houses, a herd of dirty swine met them; and being too many for the street and running against one another, they overthrew some that could not get out of the way, and dirted others; and Charillus came home with his legs and clothes very dirty; so that now and then in merriment they would think on Socrates's Daemon, wondering that it never forsook the man, and that Heaven took such particular care of him.

11 Then Galaxidorus: And do you think, Theocritus, that Socrates's Daemon had some peculiar and extraordinary power? And was it not that this man had by experience confirmed some part of the common necessity which made him, in all obscure and inevent matters, add some weight to the reason that was on one side? For as one grain doth not incline the balance by itself, yet added to one of two weights that are of equal poise, makes the whole incline to that part; thus an omen or the like sign may of itself be too light to draw a grave and settled resolution to any action, yet when two equal reasons draw on either side, if that is added to one, the doubt together with the equality is taken off, so that a motion and inclination to that side is presently produced. Then my father continuing the discourse said: You yourself, Galaxidorus, have heard a Megarian, who had it from Terpsion, say that Socrates's Daemon was nothing else but the sneezing either of himself or others; for if another



sneezed, either before, behind him, or on his right hand, then he pursued his design and went on to action; but if on the left hand, he desisted. One sort of sneezing confirmed him whilst deliberating and not fully resolved; another stopped him when already upon action. But indeed it seems strange that, if sneezing was his only sign, he should not acquaint his familiars with it, but pretend that it was a Daemon that encouraged or forbade him. For that this should proceed from vanity or conceit is not agreeable to the veracity and simplicity of the man; for in those we knew him to be truly great, and far above the generality of mankind. Nor is it likely so grave and wise a man should be disturbed at a casual sound or sneezing, and upon that account leave off what he was about, and give over his premeditated resolutions. Besides all, Socrates's resolution seems to be altogether vigorous and steady, as begun upon right principles and mature judgment. Thus he voluntarily lived poor all his life, though he had friends that would have been very glad and very willing to relieve him; he still kept close to philosophy, notwithstanding all the discouragements he met with; and at last, when his friends endeavored and very ingeniously contrived his escape, he would not yield to their entreaties, but met death with mirth and cheerfulness, and appeared a man of a steady reason in the greatest extremity. And sure these are not the actions of a man whose designs, when once fixed, could be altered by an omen or a sneeze; but of one who, by some more considerable guidance and impulse, is directed to practise things good and excellent. Besides, I have heard that to some of his friends he foretold the overthrow of the Athenians in Sicily. And before that time, Perilampes the son of Antiphon, being wounded and taken prisoner by us in that pursuit at Delium, as soon as he heard from the ambassadors who came from Athens that Socrates with Alcibiades and Laches fled by Rhegiste and returned safe, blamed himself very much, and blamed also some of his friends and captains of the companies — who together with him were overtaken in their flight about Parnes by our cavalry and slain there — for not obeying Socrates's Daemon and retreating that way which he led. And this I believe Simmias hath heard as well as I. Yes, replied Simmias, many times, and from many persons; for upon this, Socrates's Daemon was very much talked of at Athens.

12 Why then, pray, Simmias, said Phidolaus, shall we suffer Galaxidorus drollingly to degrade so considerable a prophetic spirit into an omen or a sneeze; which the vulgar and ignorant, it is true, merrily use about small matters; but when any danger appears, then we find that of Euripides verified, —

None near the edge of swords will mind such toys.¹

To this Galaxidorus rejoined: Sir, if Simmias hath heard Socrates himself speak any thing about this matter, I am very ready to hear and believe it with you; but yet what you and Polymnis have delivered I could easily demonstrate to be weak and insignificant. For as in physic the pulse or a whelk is itself but a small thing, yet is a sign of no small things to the physicians; and as the murmuring of the waves or of a bird, or the driving of a thin cloud, is a sign to the pilot of a stormy heaven and troubled sea; thus to a prophetic soul, a sneeze or an omen, though no great matter simply considered in itself, yet may be the sign and token of considerable impending accidents.

¹ From the *Autolycus*, a lost Satyr drama of Euripides, Frag. 284, vs. 22. (G.)



For every art and science takes care to collect many things from few, and great from small. And as if one that doth not know the power of letters, when he sees a few ill-shapen strokes, should not believe that a man skilled in letters could read in them the famous battles of the ancients, the rise of cities, the acts and calamities of kings, and should assert that some divine power told him the particulars, he would by this ignorance of his raise a great deal of mirth and laughter in the company; so let us consider whether or no we ourselves, being altogether ignorant of every one's power of divination by which he guesseth at what is to come, are not foolishly concerned when it is asserted that a wise man by that discovers some things obscure and inevitable in themselves, and moreover himself declares that it is not a sneeze or voice, but a Daemon, that leads him on to action. This, Polymnis, particularly respects you, who cannot but wonder that Socrates, who by his meekness and humility hath humanized philosophy, should not call this sign a sneeze or a voice, but very pretendingly a Daemon; when, on the contrary, I should have wondered if a man so critical and exact in discourse, and so good at names as Socrates, should have said that it was a sneeze, and not a Daemon, that gave him intimation; as much as if any one should say that he is wounded by a dart, and not with a dart by him that threw it; or as if any one should say that a weight was weighed by the balance, and not with the balance by the one who holds it. For any effect is not the effect of the instrument, but of him whose the instrument is, and who useth it to that effect; and a sign is an instrument, which he that signifies any thing thereby useth to that effect. But, as I said before, if Simmias hath any thing about this matter, let us quietly attend; for no doubt he must have a more perfect knowledge of the thing.

13 Content, said Theocritus; but let us first see who these are that are coming, for I think I see Epaminondas bringing in the stranger. Upon this motion, looking toward the door, we saw Epaminondas with his friends Ismenidorus and Bacchylidas and Melissus the musician leading the way, and the stranger following, a man of no mean presence; his meekness and good-nature appeared in his looks, and his dress was grave and becoming. He being seated next Simmias, my brother next me, and the rest as they pleased, and all silent, Simmias speaking to my brother said: Well, Epaminondas, by what name and title must I salute this stranger? — for those are commonly our first compliments, and the beginning of our better acquaintance. And my brother replied: His name, Simmias, is Theanor; by birth he is a Crotonian, a philosopher by profession, no disgrace to Pythagoras's fame; for he hath taken a long voyage from Italy hither, to evidence by generous actions his eminent proficiency in that school.

The stranger subjoined: But you, Epaminondas, hinder the performance of the best action; for if it is commendable to oblige friends, it is not discommendable to be obliged; for a benefit requires a receiver as well as a giver; by both it is perfected, and becomes a good work. For he that refuseth to receive a favor, as a ball that is struck fairly to him, disgraceth it by letting it fall short of the designed mark; and what mark are we so much pleased to hit or vexed to miss, as our kind intentions of obliging a person that deserves a favor? It is true, when the mark is fixed, he that misseth can blame nobody but himself; but he that refuseth or flies a kindness is injurious to the favor in not letting it attain the desired end. I have told you already what was the occasion of my voyage; the same I would discover to all present, and make them



judges in the case. For after the opposite faction had expelled the Pythagoreans, and the Cylonians had burned the remains of that society in their school at Metapontum, and destroyed all but Philolaus and Lysis, — who being young and nimble escaped the flame, — Philolaus flying to the Lucanians was there protected by his friends, who rose for his defence and overpowered the Cylonians; but where Lysis was, for a long time nobody could tell; at last Gorgias the Leontine, sailing from Greece to Italy, seriously told Arcesius that he met and discoursed Lysis at Thebes. Arcesius, being very desirous to see the man, as soon as he could get a passage, designed to put to sea himself; but age and weakness coming on, he took care that Lysis should be brought to Italy alive, if possible; but if not, the relics of his body. The intervening wars, usurpations, and seditions hindered his friends from doing it whilst he lived; but since his death, Lysis's Daemon hath made very frequent and very plain discoveries to us of his death; and many that were very well acquainted with the matter have told us how courteously you received and civilly entertained him, how in your poor family he was allowed a plentiful subsistence for his age, counted a father of your sons, and died in peace. I therefore, although a young man and but one single person, have been sent by many who are my elders, and who, having store of money, offer it gladly to you who need it, in return for the gracious friendship bestowed upon Lysis. Lysis, it is true, is buried nobly, and your respect, which is more honorable than a monument, must be acknowledged and requited by his familiars and his friends.

14 When the stranger had said this, my father wept a considerable time, in memory of Lysis; but my brother, smiling upon me, as he used to do, said: What do we do, Caphisias? Are we to give up our poverty to wealth, and yet be silent? By no means, I replied, let us part with our old friend and the excellent breeder of our youth; but defend her cause, for you are to manage it. My dear father, said he, I have never feared that wealth would take possession of our house, except on account of Caphisias's body; for that wants fine attire, that he may appear gay and gaudy to his numerous company of lovers, and great supplies of food, that he may be strong to endure wrestling and other exercises of the ring. But since he doth not give up poverty, since he holds fast his hereditary want, like a color, since he, a youth, prides himself in frugality, and is very well content with his present state, what need have we, and what shall we do with wealth? Shall we gild our arms? Shall we, like Nicias the Athenian, adorn our shield with gold, purple, and other gaudy variety of colors, and buy for you, sir, a Milesian cloak, and for my mother a purple gown? For I suppose we shall not consume any upon our belly, or feast more sumptuously than we did before, treating this wealth as a guest of quality and honor! Away, away, son, replied my father; let me never see such a change in our course of living. Well, said my brother, we would not lie lazily at home, and watch over our unemployed riches; for then the bestower's kindness would be a trouble, and the possession infamous. What need then, said my father, have we of wealth? Upon this account, said Epaminondas, when Jason, the Thessalian general, lately sent me a great sum of money and desired me to accept it, I was thought rude and unmannerly for telling him that he was a knave for endeavoring, whilst he himself loved monarchy, to bribe one of democratical principles and a member of a free state. Your good will, sir (addressing the stranger), which is generous and worthy a philosopher, I accept and passionately



admire; but you offer physic to your friends who are in perfect health! If, upon a report that we were distressed and overpowered, you had brought men and arms to our assistance, but being arrived had found all in quietness and peace, I am certain you would not have thought it necessary to leave those supplies which we did not then stand in need of. Thus, since now you came to assist us against poverty as if we had been distressed by it, and find it very peaceable and our familiar inmate, there is no need to leave any money or arms to suppress that which gives us no trouble or disturbance. But tell your acquaintance that they use riches well, and have friends here that use poverty as well. What was spent in keeping and burying Lysis, Lysis himself hath sufficiently repaid, by many profitable instructions, and by teaching us not to think poverty a grievance.

15 What then, said Theanor, is it mean to think poverty a grievance? Is it not absurd to fly and be afraid of riches, if no reason, but an hypocritical pretence, narrowness of mind, or pride, prompts one to reject the offer? And what reason, I wonder, would refuse such advantageous and creditable enjoyments as Epaminondas now doth? But, sir, — for your answer to the Thessalian about this matter shows you very ready, — pray answer me, do you think it commendable in some cases to give money, but always unlawful to receive it? Or are the givers and receivers equally guilty of a fault? By no means, replied Epaminondas; but, as of any thing else, so the giving and receiving of money is sometimes commendable and sometimes base. Well then, said Theanor, if a man gives willingly what he ought to give, is not that action commendable in him? Yes. And when it is commendable in one to give, is it not as commendable in another to receive? Or can a man more honestly accept a gift from any one, than from him that honestly bestows? No. Well then, Epaminondas, suppose of two friends, one hath a mind to present, the other must accept. It is true, in a battle we should avoid that enemy who is skilful in hurling his weapon; but in civilities we should neither fly nor thrust back that friend that makes a kind and genteel offer. And though poverty is not so grievous, yet on the other side, wealth is not so mean and despicable a thing. Very true, replied Epaminondas; but you must consider that sometimes, even when a gift is honestly bestowed, he is more commendable who refuses it. For we have many lusts and desires, and the objects of those desires are many. Some are called natural; these proceed from the very constitution of our body, and tend to natural pleasures; others are acquired, and rise from vain opinions and mistaken notions; yet these by the length of time, ill habits, and bad education are usually improved, get strength, and debase the soul more than the other natural and necessary passions. By custom and care any one, with the assistance of reason, may free himself from many of his natural desires. But, sir, all our arts, all our force of discipline, must be employed against the superfluous and acquired appetites; and they must be restrained or cut off by the guidance or edge of reason. For if the contrary applications of reason can make us forbear meat and drink, when hungry or thirsty, how much more easy is it to conquer covetousness or ambition, which will be destroyed by a bare restraint from their proper objects, and a non-attainment of their desired end? And pray, sir, are you not of the same opinion? Yes, replied the stranger. Then, sir, continued Epaminondas, do you not perceive a difference between the exercise itself and the work to which the exercise relates? For instance, in a wrestler, the work is the striving with his adversary for the crown, the exercise is



the preparation of his body by diet, wrestling, or the like. So in virtue, you must confess the work to be one thing and the exercise another. Very well, replied the stranger. Then, continued Epaminondas, let us first examine whether to abstain from the base unlawful pleasures is the exercise of continence, or the work and evidence of that exercise? The work and evidence, replied the stranger. But is not the exercise of it such as you practise, when after wrestling, where you have raised your appetites like ravenous beasts, you stand a long while at a table covered with plenty and variety of meats, and then give it to your servants to feast on, whilst you offer mean and spare diet to your subdued appetites? For abstinence from lawful pleasure is exercise against unlawful. Very well, replied the stranger. So, continued Epaminondas, justice is exercise against covetousness and love of money; but so is not a mere cessation from stealing or robbing our neighbor. So he that doth not betray his country or friends for gold doth not exercise against covetousness, for the law perhaps deters, and fear restrains him; but he that refuseth just gain and such as the law allows, voluntarily exercises, and secures himself from being bribed or receiving any unlawful present. For when great, hurtful, and base pleasures are proposed, it is very hard for any one to contain himself, who hath not often despised those which he had power and opportunity to enjoy. Thus, when base bribes and considerable advantages are offered, it will be difficult to refuse, unless he hath long ago rooted out all thoughts of gain and love of money; for other desires will nourish and increase that appetite, and he will easily be drawn to any unjust action who can scarce forbear reaching out his hand to a proffered present. But he that will not lay himself open to the favors of friends and the gifts of kings, but refuseth even what Fortune proffers, and keeps off his appetite, that is eager after and (as it were) leaps forward to an appearing treasure, is never disturbed or tempted to unlawful actions, but hath great and brave thoughts, and hath command over himself, being conscious of none but generous designs. I and Caphisias, dear Simmias, being passionate admirers of such men, beg the stranger to suffer us to be taught and exercised by poverty to attain that height of virtue and perfection.

16 My brother having finished this discourse, Simmias, nodding twice or thrice, said: Epaminondas is a great man, but this Polymnis is the cause of his greatness, who gave his children the best education, and bred them philosophers. But, sir, you may end this dispute at leisure among yourselves. As for Lysis (if it is lawful to discover it), pray, sir, do you design to take him out of his tomb and transport him into Italy, or leave him here amongst his friends and acquaintance, who shall be glad to lie by him in the grave? And Theanor with a smile answered: Lysis, good Simmias, no doubt is very well pleased with the place, for Epaminondas supplied him with all things necessary and fitting. But the Pythagoreans have some particular funeral ceremonies, which if any one wants, we conclude he did not make a proper and happy exit. Therefore, as soon as we learned from some dreams that Lysis was dead (for we have certain marks to know the apparitions of the living from images of the dead), most began to think that Lysis, dying in a strange country, was not interred with the due ceremonies, and therefore ought to be removed to Italy that he might receive them there. I coming upon this design, and being by the people of the country directed to the tomb, in the evening poured out my oblations, and called upon the soul of Lysis to come out and direct me in this affair. The night drawing on, I saw



nothing indeed, but thought I heard a voice saying: Move not those relics that ought not to be moved, for Lysis's body was duly and religiously interred; and his soul is sent to inform another body, and committed to the care of another Daemon. And early this morning, asking Epaminondas about the manner of Lysis's burial, I found that Lysis had taught him as far as the incommunicable mysteries of our sect; and that the same Daemon that waited on Lysis presided over him, if I can guess at the pilot from the sailing of the ship. The paths of life are large, but in few are men directed by the Daemons. When Theanor had said this, he looked attentively on Epaminondas, as if he designed a fresh search into his nature and inclinations.

17 At the same instant the surgeon coming in unbound Simmias's leg and prepared to dress it; and Phyllidas entering with Hipposthenides, extremely concerned, as his very countenance discovered, desired me, Charon, and Theocritus to withdraw into a private corner of the porch. And I asking, Phyllidas, hath any new thing happened? — Nothing new to me, he replied, for I knew and told you that Hipposthenides was a coward, and therefore begged you not to communicate the matter to him or make him an associate. We seeming all surprised, Hipposthenides cried out: For Heaven's sake, Phyllidas, don't say so, don't think rashness to be bravery, and blinded by that mistake ruin both us and the commonwealth; but, if it must be so, let the exiles return again in peace. And Phyllidas in a passion replied, How many, Hipposthenides, do you think are privy to this design? Thirty I know engaged. And why then, continued Phyllidas, would you singly oppose your judgment to them all, and ruin those measures they have all taken and agreed to? What had you to do to send a messenger to desire them to return and not approach to-day, when even chance encouraged and all things conspired to promote the design?

These words of Phyllidas troubled every one; and Charon, looking very angrily upon Hipposthenides, said: Thou coward! what hast thou done? No harm, replied Hipposthenides, as I will make appear if you will moderate your passion and hear what your gray-headed equal can allege. If, Phyllidas, we were minded to show our citizens a bravery that sought danger, and a heart that contemned life, there is day enough before us; why should we wait till the evening? Let us take our swords presently, and assault the tyrants. Let us kill, let us be killed, and be prodigal of our blood. If this may be easily performed or endured, and if it is no easy matter by the loss of two or three men to free Thebes from so great an armed power as possesses it, and to beat out the Spartan garrison, — for I suppose Phyllidas hath not provided wine enough at his entertainment to make all Archias's guard of fifteen hundred men drunk; or if we despatch him, yet Arcesus and Herippidas will be sober, and upon the watch, — why are we so eager to bring our friends and families into certain destruction, especially since the enemy hath some notice of their return? For why else should the Thespians for these three days be commanded to be in arms and follow the orders of the Spartan general? And I hear that to-day, after examination before Archias when he returns, they design to put Amphitheus to death; and are not these strong proofs that our conspiracy is discovered? Is it not the best way to stay a little, until an atonement is made and the Gods reconciled? For the diviners, having sacrificed an ox to Ceres, said that the burnt offering portended a great sedition and danger to the commonwealth. And besides, Charon, there is another thing which particularly concerns you; for yesterday Hypatodorus, the son of Erianthes, a very honest man and



my good acquaintance, but altogether ignorant of our design, coming out of the country in my company, accosted me thus: Charon is an acquaintance of yours, Hipposthenides, but no great crony of mine; yet, if you please, advise him to take heed of some imminent danger, for I had a very odd dream relating to some such matter. Last night methought I saw his house in travail; and he and his friends, extremely perplexed, fell to their prayers round about the house. The house groaned, and sent out some inarticulate sounds; at last a raging fire broke out of it, and consumed the greatest part of the city; and the castle Cadmea was covered all over with smoke, but not fired. This was the dream, Charon, that he told me. I was startled at the present, and that fear increased when I heard that the exiles intended to come to-day to your house, and I am very much afraid that we shall bring mighty mischiefs on ourselves, yet do our enemies no proportionable harm, but only give them a little disturbance; for I think the city signifies us, and the castle (as it is now in their power) them.

18 Then Theocritus putting in, and enjoining silence on Charon, who was eager to reply, said: As for my part, Hipposthenides, though all my sacrifices were of good omen to the exiles, yet I never found any greater inducement to go on than the dream you mentioned; for you say that a great and bright fire, rising out of a friend's house, caught the city, and that the habitation of the enemies was blackened with smoke, which never brings any thing better than tears and disturbance; that inarticulate sounds broke out from us shows that none shall make any clear and full discovery; only a blind suspicion shall arise, and our design shall appear and have its desired effect at the same time. And it is very natural that the diviners should find the sacrifices ill-omened; for both their office and their victims belong not to the public, but to the men in power. Whilst Theocritus was speaking, I said to Hipposthenides, Whom did you send with this message? for if it was not long ago, we will follow him. Indeed, Caphisias, he replied, it is unlikely (for I must tell the truth) that you should overtake him, for he is upon the best horse in Thebes. You all know the man, he is master of the horse to Melon, and Melon from the very beginning hath made him privy to the design. And I, observing him to be at the door, said: What, Hipposthenides, is it Clido, he that last year at Juno's feast won the single horse-race? Yes, the very same. Who then, continued I, is he that hath stood a pretty while at the court-gate and gazed upon us? At this Hipposthenides turning about cried out: Clido, by Hercules! I'll lay my life some unlucky accident hath happened. Clido, observing that we took notice of him, came softly from the gate towards us; and Hipposthenides giving him a nod and bidding him deliver his message to the company, for they were all sure friends and privy to the whole plot, he began: Sir, I know the men very well, and not finding you either at home or in the market-place, I guessed you were with them, and came directly hither to give you a full account of the present posture of affairs. You commanded me with all possible speed to meet the exiles upon the mountain, and accordingly I went home to take horse, and called for my bridle; my wife said it was mislaid, and stayed a long time in the hostry, tumbling about the things and pretending to look carefully after it; at last, when she had tired my patience, she confessed that her neighbor's wife had borrowed it last night; this raised my passion and I chid her, and she began to curse, and wished me a bad journey and as bad a return; all which curses, pray God, may fall upon her own head. At last my passion



grew high, and I began to cudgel her, and presently the neighbors and women coming in, there was fine work; I am so bruised that it was as much as I could do to come hither to desire you to employ another man, for I protest I am amazed and in a very bad condition.

19 Upon this news we were strangely altered. Just before we were angry with the man that endeavored to put it off; and now the time approaching, the very minute just upon us, and it being impossible to defer the matter, we found ourselves in great anxiety and perplexity. But I, speaking to Hipposthenides and taking him by the hand, bade him be of good courage, for the Gods themselves seemed to invite us to action. Presently we parted. Phyllidas went home to prepare his entertainment, and to make Archias drunk as soon as conveniently he could; Charon went to his house to receive the exiles; and I and Theocritus went back to Simmias again, that having now a good opportunity, we might discourse with Epaminondas.

20 We found them engaged in a notable dispute, which Galaxidorus and Phidolaus had touched upon before; the subject of the enquiry was this, —

What kind of substance or power was the famed Daemon of Socrates?

Simmias's reply to Galaxidorus's discourse we did not hear; but he said that, having once asked Socrates about it and received no answer, he never repeated the same question; but he had often heard him declare those to be vain pretenders who said they had seen any divine apparition, while to those who affirmed that they heard a voice he would gladly hearken, and would eagerly enquire into the particulars. And this upon consideration gave us probable reasons to conjecture that this Daemon of Socrates was not an apparition, but rather a sensible perception of a voice, or an apprehension of some words, which after an unaccountable manner affected him; as in a dream there is no real voice, yet we have fancies and apprehensions of words which make us imagine that we hear some speak. This perception in dreams is usual, because the body whilst we are asleep is quiet and undisturbed; but when we are awake, meaner thoughts creep in, and we can hardly bring our souls to observe better advertisements. For being in a hurry of tumultuous passions and distracting business, we cannot compose our mind or make it listen to the discoveries. But Socrates's understanding being pure, free from passion, and mixing itself with the body no more than necessity required, was easy to be moved and apt to take an impression from every thing that was applied to it; now that which was applied was not a voice, but more probably a declaration of a Daemon, by which the very thing that it would declare was immediately and without audible voice represented to his mind. Voice is like a stroke given to the soul, which receives speech forcibly entering at the ears whilst we discourse; but the understanding of a more excellent nature affects a capable soul, by applying the very thing to be understood to it, so that there is no need of another stroke. And the soul obeys, as it stretches or slackens her affections, not forcibly, as if it wrought by contrary passions, but smoothly and gently, as if it moved flexible and loose reins. And sure nobody can wonder at this, that hath observed what great ships of burden are turned by a small helm, or seen a potter's wheel move round by the gentle touch of one finger. These are lifeless things, it is true; but being of a frame fit for motion, by reason of their smoothness, they yield to the least impulse. The soul of man, being stretched with a thousand inclinations, as



with cords, is the most tractable instrument that is, and if once rationally excited, easy to be moved to the object that is to be conceived; for here the beginnings of the passions and appetites spread to the understanding mind, and that being once agitated, they are drawn back again, and so stretch and raise the whole man. Hence you may guess how great is the force of a conception when it hath entered the mind; for the bones that are insensible, the nerves, the flesh that is full of humors, and the heavy mass composed of all these, lying quiet and at rest, as soon as the soul gives the impulse and raiseth an appetite to move towards any object, are all roused and invigorated, and every member seems a wing to carry it forward to action. Nor is it impossible or even very difficult to conceive the manner of this motion and stirring, by which the soul having conceived any thing draweth after her, by means of appetites, the whole mass of the body. But inasmuch as language, apprehended without any sensible voice, easily excites; so, in my opinion, the understanding of a superior nature and a more divine soul may excite an inferior soul, touching it from without, like as one speech may touch and rouse another, and as light causes its own reflection. We, it is true, as it were groping in the dark, find out one another's conceptions by the voice; but the conceptions of the Daemons carry a light with them, and shine to those that are able to perceive them, so that there is no need of words such as men use as signs to one another, seeing thereby only the images of the conceptions, and being unable to see the conceptions themselves unless they enjoy a peculiar and (as I said before) a divine light. This may be illustrated from the nature and effect of voice; for the air being formed into articulate sounds, and made all voice, transmits the conception of the soul to the hearer; so that it is no wonder if the air, that is very apt to take impressions, being fashioned according to the object conceived by a more excellent nature, signifies that conception to some divine and extraordinary men. For as a stroke upon a brazen shield, when the noise ariseth out of a hollow, is heard only by those who are in a convenient position, and is not perceived by others; so the speeches of the Daemon, though indifferently applied to all, yet sound only to those who are of a quiet temper and sedate mind, and such as we call holy and divine men. Most believe that Daemons communicate some illuminations to men asleep, but think it strange and incredible that they should communicate the like to them whilst they are awake and have their senses and reason vigorous; as wise a fancy as it is to imagine that a musician can use his harp when the strings are slack, but cannot play when they are screwed up and in tune. For they do not consider that the effect is hindered by the unquietness and incapacity of their own minds; from which inconveniences our friend Socrates was free, as the oracle assured his father whilst he was a boy. For that commanded him to let young Socrates do what he would, not to force or draw him from his inclinations, but let the boy's humor have its free course; to beg Jupiter's and the Muses' blessing upon him, and take no farther care, intimating that he had a good guide to direct him, that was better than ten thousand tutors and instructors.

21 This, Phidolaus, was my notion of Socrates's Daemon, whilst he lived and since his death; and I look upon all they mention about omens, sneezings, or the like, to be dreams and fooleries. But what I heard Timarchus discourse upon the same subject, lest some should think I delight in fables, perhaps it is best to conceal. By no means, cried Theocritus, let's have it; for though they do not perfectly agree with it, yet I



know many fables that border upon truth; but pray first tell us who this Timarchus was, for I never was acquainted with the man. Very likely, Theocritus, said Simmias; for he died when he was very young, and desired Socrates to bury him by Lampocles, the son of Socrates, who was his dear friend, of the same age, and died not many days before him. He being eager to know (for he was a fine youth, and a beginner in philosophy) what Socrates's Daemon was, acquainting none but Cebes and me with his design, went down into Trophonius's cave, and performed all the ceremonies that were requisite to gain an oracle. There he stayed two nights and one day, so that his friends despaired of his return and lamented him as lost; but the next morning he came out with a very cheerful countenance, and having adored the God, and freed himself from the thronging inquisitive crowd, he told us many wonderful things that he had seen and heard; for this was his relation.

22 As soon as he entered, a thick darkness surrounded him; then, after he had prayed, he lay a long while upon the ground, but was not certain whether awake or in a dream, only he imagined that a smart stroke fell upon his head, and that through the parted sutures of his skull his soul fled out; which being now loose, and mixed with a purer and more lightsome air, was very jocund and well pleased; it seemed to begin to breathe, as if till then it had been almost choked, and grew bigger than before, like a sail swollen by the wind; then he heard a small noise whirling round his head, very sweet and ravishing, and looking up he saw no earth, but certain islands shining with a gentle fire, which interchanged colors according to the different variation of the light, innumerable and very large, unequal, but all round. These whirling, it is likely, agitated the ether, and made that sound; for the ravishing softness of it was very agreeable to their even motions. Between these islands there was a large sea or lake which shone very gloriously, being adorned with a gay variety of colors mixed with blue; some few of the islands swam in this sea, and were carried to the other side of the current; others, and those the most, were carried up and down, tossed, whirled, and almost overwhelmed.

The sea in some places seemed very deep, especially toward the south, in other parts very shallow; it ebbed and flowed, but the tides were neither high nor strong; in some parts its color was pure and sea-green, in others it looked muddy and as troubled as a pool. The current brings those islands that were carried over to the other side back again; but not to the same point, so that their motions are not exactly circular, but winding. About the middle of these islands, the ambient sea seemed to bend into a hollow, a little less, as it appeared to him, than eight parts of the whole. Into this sea were two entrances, by which it received two opposite fiery rivers, running in with so strong a current, that it spread a fiery white over a great part of the blue sea. This sight pleased him very much; but when he looked downward, there appeared a vast chasm, round, as if he had looked into a divided sphere, very deep and frightful, full of thick darkness, which was every now and then troubled and disturbed. Thence a thousand howlings and bellowings of beasts, cries of children, groans of men and women, and all sorts of terrible noises reached his ears; but faintly, as being far off and rising through the vast hollow; and this terrified him exceedingly.

A little while after, an invisible thing spoke thus to him: Timarchus, what dost thou desire to understand? And he replied, Every thing; for what is there that is not won-



derful and surprising? We have little to do with those things above, they belong to other Gods; but as for Proserpina's quarter, which is one of the four (as Styx divides them) that we govern, you may visit it if you please. But what is Styx? The way to hell, which reaches to the contrary quarter, and with its head divides the light; for, as you see, it rises from hell below, and as it rolls on touches also the light, and is the limit of the extremest part of the universe. There are four divisions of all things; the first is of life, the second of motion, the third of generation, and the fourth of corruption. The first is coupled to the second by a unit, in the substance invisible; the second to the third by understanding, in the Sun; and the third to the fourth by nature, in the Moon. Over every one of these ties a Fate, daughter of Necessity, presides; over the first, Atropos; over the second, Clotho; and Lachesis over the third, which is in the Moon, and about which is the whole whirl of generation. All the other islands have Gods in them; but the Moon, belonging to earthly Daemons, is raised but a little above Styx. Styx seizes on her once in a hundred and seventy-seven second revolutions; and when it approaches, the souls are startled, and cry out for fear; for hell swallows up a great many, and the Moon receives some swimming up from below which have run through their whole course of generation, unless they are wicked and impure. For against such she throws flashes of lightning, makes horrible noises, and frights them away; so that, missing their desired happiness and bewailing their condition, they are carried down again (as you see) to undergo another generation. But, said Timarchus, I see nothing but stars leaping about the hollow, some carried into it, and some darting out of it again. These, said the voice, are Daemons; for thus it is. Every soul hath some portion of reason; a man cannot be a man without it; but as much of each soul as is mixed with flesh and appetite is changed, and through pain or pleasure becomes irrational. Every soul doth not mix herself after one sort; for some plunge themselves into the body, and so in this life their whole frame is corrupted by appetite and passion; others are mixed as to some part, but the purer part still remains without the body, — it is not drawn down into it, but it swims above, and touches the extremest part of the man's head; it is like a cord to hold up and direct the subsiding part of the soul, as long as it proves obedient and is not overcome by the appetites of the flesh. That part that is plunged into the body is called the soul, but the uncorrupted part is called the mind, and the vulgar think it is within them, as likewise they imagine the image reflected from a glass to be in that. But the more intelligent, who know it to be without, call it a Daemon. Therefore those stars which you see extinguished imagine to be souls whose whole substances are plunged into bodies; and those that recover their light and rise from below, that shake off the ambient mist and darkness, as if it were clay and dirt, to be such as retire from their bodies after death; and those that are carried up on high are the Daemons of wise men and philosophers. But pray pry narrowly, and endeavor to discover the tie by which every one is united to a soul. Upon this, Timarchus looked as steadfastly as he could, and saw some of the stars very much agitated, and some less, as the corks upon a net; and some whirled round like a spindle, having a very irregular and uneven motion, and not being able to run in a straight line. And thus the voice said: Those that have a straight and regular motion belong to souls which are very manageable, by reason of their genteel breeding and philosophical education, and which upon earth do not plunge themselves into the foul clay and become



irrational. But those that move irregularly, sometimes upwards, sometimes downwards, as striving to break loose from a vexing chain, are yoked to and strive with very untractable conditions, which ignorance and want of learning make headstrong and ungovernable. Sometimes they get the better of the passions, and draw them to the right side; sometimes they are drawn away by them, and sink into sin and folly, and then again endeavor to get out. For the tie, as it were a bridle on the irrational part of the soul, when it is pulled back, draws in repentance for past sins, and shame for loose and unlawful pleasures, which is a pain and stroke inflicted on the soul by a governing and prevailing power; till by this means it becomes gentle and manageable, and like a tamed beast, without blows or torment, it understands the minutest direction of the Daemon. Such indeed are but very slowly and very hardly brought to a right temper; but of that sort which from the very beginning are governable and obedient to the direction of the Daemon, are those prophetic souls, those intimates of the Gods. Such was the soul of Hermodorus the Clazomenian, of which it is reported that for several nights and days it would leave his body, travel over many countries, and return after it had viewed things and discoursed with persons at a great distance; till at last, by the treachery of his wife, his body was delivered to his enemies, and they burnt the house while the inhabitant was abroad. It is certain, this is a mere fable. The soul never went out of the body, but it loosened the tie that held the Daemon, and permitted it to wander; so that this, seeing and hearing the various external occurrences, brought in the news to it; yet those that burnt his body are even till this time severely tormented in the deepest pit of hell. But this, youth, you shall more clearly perceive three months hence; now depart. The voice continuing no longer, Timarchus (as he said) turned about to discover who it was that spoke; but a violent pain, as if his skull had been pressed together, seized his head, so that he lost all sense and understanding; but in a little while recovering, he found himself in the entrance of the cave, where he at first lay down.

23 This was Timarchus's story; and when at Athens, in the third month after he had heard the voice, he died. We, amazed at the event, told Socrates the whole tale. Socrates was angry with us for not discovering it whilst Timarchus was alive; for he would very gladly have had a more full discovery from his own mouth. I have done, Theocritus, with the story and discourse; but pray, shall we not entreat the stranger to discuss this point? For it is a very proper subject for excellent and divine men. What then, said Theanor, shall we not have the opinion of Epaminondas, who is of the same school, and as well learned as myself in these matters? But my father with a smile said: Sir, that is his humor; he loves to be silent, he is very cautious how he proposeth any thing, but will hear eternally, and is never weary of an instructive story; so that Spintharus the Tarentine, who lived with him a long time, would often say that he never met a man that knew more, or spake less. Therefore, pray sir, let us have your thoughts.

24 Then, said Theanor, in my opinion, that story of Timarchus should be accounted sacred and inviolable, and consecrated to God; and I wonder that any one should disbelieve his report, as Simmias has related it. Swans, horses, dogs, and dragons we sometimes call sacred; and yet we cannot believe that men are sacred and favorites of Heaven, though we confess the love of man and not the love of birds to be an attribute of the Deity. Now as one that loves horses doth not take an equal care of the



whole kind, but always choosing out some one excellent, rides, trains, feeds, and loves him above the rest; so amongst men, the superior powers, choosing, as it were, the best out of the whole herd, breed them more carefully and nicely; not directing them, it is true, by reins and bridles, but by reason imparted by certain notices and signs, which the vulgar and common sort do not understand. For neither do all dogs know the huntsman's, nor all horses the jockey's signs; but those that are bred to it are easily directed by a whistle or a hollow, and very readily obey. And Homer seems to have understood the difference I mention; for some of the prophets he calls augurs, some priests, some such as understood the voice of the very Gods, were of the same mind with them, and could foretell things; thus,

Helenus Priam's son the same decreed,
On which consulting Gods before agreed.

And in another place,

As I heard lately from th' immortal Gods.²

For as those that are not near the persons of kings or commanders understand their minds by fire-signals, proclamation, sound of trumpet, or the like, but their favorites receive it from their own mouth; so the Deity converses immediately but with very few, and very seldom; but to most he gives signs, from which the art of divination is gathered. So that the Gods direct the lives of very few, and of such only whom they intend to raise to the highest degree of perfection and happiness. Those souls (as Hesiod sings) that are not to be put into another body, but are freed from all union with flesh, turn guardian Daemons and preside over others. For as wrestlers, when old age makes them unfit for exercise, have some love for it still left, delight to see others wrestle, and encourage them; so souls that have passed all the stages of life, and by their virtue are exalted into Daemons, do not slight the endeavors of man, but being kind to those that strive for the same attainments, and in some sort banding and siding with them, encourage and help them on, when they see them near their hope and ready to catch the desired prize. For the Daemon doth not go along with every one; but as in a shipwreck, those that are far from land their friends standing on the shore only look upon and pity, but those that are near they encourage and wade in to save; so the Daemon deals with mankind. Whilst we are immersed in worldly affairs, and are changing bodies, as fit vehicles for our conveyance, he lets us alone to try our strength, patiently to stem the tide and get into the haven by ourselves; but if a soul hath gone through the trials of a thousand generations, and now, when her course is almost finished, strives bravely, and with a great deal of labor endeavors to ascend, the Deity permits her proper Genius to aid her, and even gives leave to any other that is willing to assist. The Daemon, thus permitted, presently sets about the work; and upon his approach, if the soul obeys and hearkens to his directions, she is saved; if not, the Daemon leaves her, and she lies in a miserable condition.

25 This discourse was just ended, when Epaminondas looking upon me, said: Caphisias, it is time for you to be at the ring, your usual company will expect you; we, as soon as we break company, will take care of Theanor. And I replied: Sir, I'll go

² *Il.* VII. 44 and 53.



presently, but I think Theocritus here hath something to say to you and me and Galaxidorus. Let's hear it in God's name, said he; and rising up, he led us into a corner of the porch. When we had him in the midst of us, we all began to desire him to make one in the conspiracy. He replied that he knew the day appointed for the exiles' return, and that he and Gorgidas had their friends ready upon occasion; but that he was not for killing any of the citizens without due process of law, unless some grave necessity seemed to warrant the execution. Besides, it was requisite that there should be some unconcerned in the design; for such the multitude would not be jealous of, but would think what they advised was for the good of the commonwealth, that their counsels proceeded from the love they had for their country, and not from any design of procuring their own safety. This motion we liked; he returned to Simias and his company, and we went to the ring, where we met our friends, and as we wrestled together, communicated our thoughts to one another, and put things in order for action. There we saw Philip and Archias very spruce, anointed and perfumed, going away to the prepared feast; for Phyllidas, fearing they would execute Amphitheus before supper, as soon as he had brought Lysanoridas going, went to Archias, and putting him in hopes of the woman's company he desired, and assuring him she would be at the place appointed, soon trepanned him into stupid carelessness and sensuality with his fellow-wantons.

26 About the night, the wind rising, the sharpness of the weather increased, and that forced most to keep within doors; we meeting with Damocles, Pelopidas, and Theopompus received them, and others met other of the exiles; for as soon as they were come over Cithaeron, they separated, and the stormy weather obliged them to walk with their faces covered, so that without any fear or danger they passed through the city. Some as they entered had a flash of lightning on their right-hand, without a clap of thunder, and that portended safety and glory; intimating that their actions should be splendid and without danger.

27 When we were all together in the house (eight and forty in number), and Theocritus in a little room by himself offering sacrifice, there was heard on a sudden a loud knocking at the gate; and presently one came and told us that two of Archias's guard, who had some earnest business with Charon, knocked at the gate, demanding entrance, and were very angry that they were not admitted sooner. Charon surprised commanded the doors to be opened presently, and going to meet them with a garland on his head, as if he had been sacrificing or making merry, asked their business. One of them replied, Philip and Archias sent us to tell you that you must come before them presently. And Charon demanding why they sent for him in such haste, and if all was well; We know nothing more, the messenger returned, but what answer shall we carry back? That, replied Charon, putting off his garland and putting on his cloak, I follow you; for should I go along with you, my friends would be concerned, imagining that I am taken into custody. Do so, said they, for we must go and carry the governor's orders to the city guard. With this they departed, but Charon coming in and telling us the story, we were all very much surprised, imagining the design had been discovered; and most suspected Hipposthenides, and thought that he, having endeavored to hinder their coming through Chido and failed, now the time for the dangerous attempt unavoidably approached, grew faint-hearted and made a discovery of the plot. And this seemed probable, for he did not appear at Charon's house



with the rest, and so was looked upon by every one to be a rascal and a turn coat; yet we all were of opinion that Charon ought to obey the governor's orders and go to them. Then he, commanding his son to be brought to him, — the prettiest youth, Archidamus, in all Thebes, skilled in most exercises, scarce fifteen years old, but very strong and lusty for his age, — thus said: Friends, this is my only and my beloved son, and him I put into your hands, conjuring you by all that's good, if you find me treacherous, to kill him and have no mercy upon him for my sake; but as for your parts, sirs, be provided against the worst that can come; do not yield your bodies tamely to be butchered by base fellows, but behave yourselves bravely, and preserve your souls invincible for the good and glory of your country. When Charon had ended, we admired the honesty and bravery of the man, but were angry at his suspicion, and bade him take away his son. Charon, said Pelopidas, we should have taken it more kindly, if you had removed your son into another house, for why should he suffer for being in our company? Nay, let us send him away now, that, if we fall, he may live, and grow up to punish the tyrants and be a brave revenger of our deaths. By no means, replied Charon, he shall stay here, and run the same danger with you all, for it is not best that he should fall into the power of his enemies; and you, my boy, be daring above thy age, and with these brave citizens venture upon necessary dangers for the defence of liberty and virtue; for we have good hopes still left, and perhaps some God will protect us in this just and generous undertaking.

28 These words of his, Archidamus, drew tears from many; but he not shedding so much as one, and delivering his son to Pelopidas, went out of the door, saluting and encouraging every one as he went. But you would have been exceedingly surprised at the serene and fearless temper of the boy, with a soul as great as that of Achilles's son; for he did not change color or seem concerned, but drew out and tried the goodness of Pelopidas's sword. In the mean time Diotonus, one of Cephisodorus's friends, came to us with his sword girt and breastplate on; and understanding that Archias had sent for Charon, he chid our delay, and urged us to go and set upon the house presently; for so we should be too quick for them, and take them unprovided. Or, if we did not like that proposal, he said, it was better to go out and fall upon them while they were scattered and in confusion, than to coop ourselves up altogether in one room, and like a hive of bees be taken off by our enemies. Theocritus likewise pressed us to go on, affirming that the sacrifices were lucky, and promised safety and success.

29 Upon this, whilst we were arming and setting ourselves in order, Charon came in, looking very merrily and jocund, and with a smile said: Courage, sirs, there is no danger, but the design goes on very well; for Archias and Philip, as soon as they heard that according to their order I was come, being very drunk and weakened in body and understanding, with much ado came out to me; and Archias said, I hear that the exiles are returned, and lurk privately in town. At this I was very much surprised, but recovering myself asked, Who are they, sir, and where? We don't know, said Archias, and therefore sent for you, to enquire whether you had heard any clear discovery; and I, as it were surprised, considering a little with myself, imagined that what they heard was only uncertain report, and that none of the associates had made this discovery (for then they would have known the house), but that it was a groundless suspicion and rumor about town that came to their ears, and therefore



said: I remember, whilst Androclidas was alive, that a great many idle lying stories were spread abroad, to trouble and amuse us; but, sir, I have not heard one word of this, yet if you please, I will enquire what ground there is for it, and if I find any thing considerable, I shall give you notice. Yes, pray, said Phyllidas, examine this matter very narrowly; slight no particular, be very diligent and careful, foresight is very commendable and safe. When he had said this, he led back Archias into the room, where they are now drinking. But, sirs, let us not delay, but begging the God's assistance, put ourselves presently upon action. Upon this, we went to prayers, and encouraged one another.

30 It was now full supper-time, the wind was high, and snow and small rain fell, so that the streets and narrow lanes we passed were all empty. They that were to assault Leontidas and Hypates, whose houses joined, went out in their usual clothes, having no arms besides their swords; amongst those were Pelopidas, Democles, and Cephisodorus. Charon, Melon, and the rest that were to set upon Archias, put on breastplates, and shady fir or pine garlands upon their heads; some dressed themselves in women's clothes, so that they looked like a drunken company of mummers. But our enemies' unlucky Fortune, Archidamus, resolving to make their folly and carelessness as conspicuous as our eagerness and courage, and having, as in a play, intermixed a great many dangerous underplots into our plan, now, at the very point of its execution, presented to us a most unexpected and hazardous adventure. For whilst Charon, as soon as ever he parted from Archias and Philip, was come back and was setting us forward to execute the design, a letter from Archias, the chief-priest of Athens, was sent to Archias our governor, which contained a full discovery of the plot, in what house the exiles met, and who were the associates. Archias being now dead drunk, and quite beside himself with expectation of the desired women, took the letter; and the bearer saying, "Sir, it contains matter of concern," "Matters of concern to-morrow," he replied, and clapped it under his cushion; and calling for the glass, he bade the servant fill a brimmer, and sent Phyllidas often to the door to see if the women were coming.

31 The hopes of this company made them sit long; and we coming opportunely quickly forced our way through the servants to the hall, and stood a little at the door, to take notice of every one at table; our shady garlands and apparel disguising our intentions, all sat silent, in expectation of what would follow. But as soon as Melon, laying his hand upon his sword, was making through the midst of them, Cabirichus (who was the archon chosen by lot) catching him by the arm cried out to Phyllidas, Is not this Melon? Melon loosed his hold presently, and drawing out his sword, made at staggering Archias, and laid him dead on the floor; Charon wounded Philip in the neck, and whilst he endeavored to defend himself with the cups that were about him, Lysitheus threw him off his seat, and ran him through. We persuaded Cabirichus to be quiet, not to assist the tyrants, but to join with us to free his country, for whose good he was consecrated governor and devoted to the Gods. But when being drunk he would not harken to reason, but grew high, began to bustle, and turned the point of his spear upon us (for our governors always carry a spear with them), I catching it in the midst, and raising it higher than my head, desired him to let it go and consult his own safety, for else he would be killed. But Theopompus, standing on his right side and smiting him with his sword, said: Lie there, with those whose interest you



espoused; thou shalt not wear the garland in freed Thebes, nor sacrifice to the Gods any more, by whom thou hast so often curst thy country, by making prayers so many times for the prosperity of her enemies. Cabirichus falling, Theocritus standing by snatched up the sacred spear, and kept it from being stained; and some few of the servants that dared to resist we presently despatched; the others that were quiet we shut up in the hall, being very unwilling that they should get abroad and make any discovery, till we knew whether the other company had succeeded in their attempt.

32 They managed their business thus: Pelopidas and those with him went softly and knocked at Leontidas's gate; and a servant coming to demand their business, they said, they came from Athens, and brought a letter from Callistratus to Leontidas. The servant went and acquainted his master, and was ordered to open the door; as soon as it was unbarred, they all violently rushed in, and overturning the servant ran through the hall directly to Leontidas's chamber. He, presently suspecting what was the matter, drew his dagger and stood upon his guard; an unjust man, it is true, and a tyrant, but courageous and strong of his hands; but he forgot to put out the candle and get amongst the invaders in the dark, and so appearing in the light, as soon as they opened the door, he ran Cephisodorus through the belly. Next he engaged Pelopidas, and cried out to the servants to come and help; but those Samidas and his men secured, nor did they dare to come to handy blows with the strongest and most valiant of the citizens. There was a smart encounter between Pelopidas and Leontidas, for the passage was very narrow, and Cephisodorus falling and dying in the midst, nobody else could come to strike one blow. At last Pelopidas, receiving a slight wound in the head, with repeated thrusts overthrew Leontidas, and killed him upon Cephisodorus, who was yet breathing; for he saw his enemy fall, and shaking Pelopidas by the hand, and saluting all the rest, he died with a smile upon his face. This done, they went to the house of Hypates, and entering after the same manner, they pursued Hypates, flying over the roof into a neighbor's house, and caught and killed him.

33 From thence they marched directly to us, and we met in the piazza; and having saluted and told one another our success, we went all to the prison. And Phyllidas, calling out the keeper, said: Philip and Archias command you to bring Amphitheus presently before them. But he, considering the unseasonableness of the time, and that Phyllidas, as being yet hot and out of breath, spoke with more than ordinary concern, suspected the cheat, and replied to Phyllidas: Pray, sir, did ever the governors send for a prisoner at such a time before? Or ever by you? What warrant do you bring? As he was prating thus, Phyllidas ran him through, — a base fellow, upon whose carcass the next day many women spat and trampled. We, breaking open the prison door, first called out Amphitheus by name, and then others, as every one had a mind; they, knowing our voice, jocundly leaped out of their straw in which they lay, with their chains upon their legs. The others that were in the stocks held out their hands, and begged us not to leave them behind. These being set free, many of the neighbors came in to us, understanding and rejoicing for what was done. The women too, as soon as they were acquainted with the flying report, unmindful of the Boeotian strictness, ran out to one another, and enquired of every one they met how things went. Those that found their fathers or their husbands followed them; for the tears and prayers of the modest women were a very great incitement to all they met.



34 Our affairs being in this condition, understanding that Epaminondas, Gorgidas, and their friends were drawing into a body about Minerva's temple, I went to them. Many honest worthy citizens at first joined, and their number continually increased. When I had informed them in the particulars of what was done, and desired them to march into the market-place to assist their friends, they proclaimed liberty; and the multitude were furnished with arms out of the piazzas, that were stuffed with spoil, and the neighboring armorers' shops. Then Hipposthenides with his friends and servants appeared, having by chance joined the trumpeters that were coming to Thebes, against the feast of Hercules. Straight some gave the alarm in the market-place, others in other parts of the city, distracting their enemies on all sides, as if the whole city was in arms. Some, lighting smoky fire, concealed themselves in the cloud and fled to the castle, drawing to them the select band which used to keep guard about the castle all night. The garrison of the castle, when these poured in among them scattered and in disorder, though they saw us all in confusion, and knew we had no standing compact body, yet would not venture to make a descent, though they were above five thousand strong. They were really afraid, but pretended they dared not move without Lysanoridas's orders, who, contrary to his usual custom, was absent from the castle that day. For which neglect, the Spartans (as I was told), having got Lysanoridas into their hands, fined him heavily; and having taken Hermippidas and Arcesus at Corinth, they put them both to death without delay. And surrendering the castle to us upon articles, they marched out with their garrison.



Death of Socrates (1762) Jacques Philip Joseph de Saint-Quentin, École des Beaux-Arts, Paris

