PLUTARCH

ON THE

DELAY OF THE DIVINE JUSTICE.

TRANSLATED

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

BY

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SYNOPSIS.

§ 1. The dialogue opens with comments on the cavils against the Divine Providence by a person who is supposed to have just departed.

2. The alleged encouragement to the guilty by the delay of punishment, while the sufferers by the guilt of others are disheartened by failing to see the wrong-doers duly punished.

3. The guilty themselves, it is said, do not recognize punishment when it comes late, but think it mere misfortune.

4. Plutarch answers the objections to the course of Providence. In the first place, man must not be too confident of his ability to pass judgment on things divine. There are many things in human legislation undoubtedly reasonable, yet with no obvious reason. How much more in the administration of the universe by the Supreme Being!

5. God by the delay of punishment gives man the example of forbearance, and rebukes his yielding to the first impulses of anger and of a vindictive temper.

6. God has reference, in the delay of punishment, to the possible reformation of the guilty, and to the services which, when reformed, they may render to their country or their race. Instances cited.

7. The wicked often have their punishment postponed till after they have rendered some important service

§ 16. The same is to be said of a family or a race ; and, moreover, the punishment for inherited guilt may often have a curative, or even a preventive efficacy, so that children or posterity may refrain from guilt because the ancestral penalty falls upon them before they become guilty.

17. The immortality of the soul asserted, on the ground that God would not have deemed a race doomed to perish after a brief earthly life worth rewarding or punishing.

18. Punishments in a future state of being are out of sight, and are liable to be disbelieved. Therefore it is necessary, in order to deter men from guilt, that there should be visible punishments in this life.

19. The remedial efficacy of the penal consequences of parental or ancestral guilt reaffirmed, and illustrated by analogies in the treatment of disease.

20. God often punishes latent and potential vice, visible only to Omniscience.

21. If a child has no taint of a father's vices, he remains unpunished. But moral qualities, equally with physical traits, often lapse in the first generation, and reappear in the second or third, and even later.

22. The story of Thespesius, who — apparently killed, but really in a trance, in consequence of a fall — went into the infernal regions, beheld the punishments there inflicted, and came back to the body and its life, converted from a profligate into a man of pre-eminent virtue and excellence.

INTRODUCTION.[1]

PLUTARCH[2] was born, about the middle of the first Christian century, at Cheroneia in Boeotia, where he spent the greater part of his life, and where he probably died. The precise dates of his birth and death are unknown; but he can hardly have been born earlier than A. D. 45, and he must have lived nearly or quite till A. D. 120, as some of his works contain references to events that cannot have taken place earlier than the second decade of the second century. We know little of him from other sources, much from his own writings. There may have been many such men in his time; but antiquity has transmitted to us no record like his. He reminds one of such men as were to be found half a century ago in many of our American country towns. Those potentially like them have now, for the most part, emigrated to the large cities, and have become very unlike their prototypes. Cheroneia, with its great memories, was a small and insignificant town,

[1] A large part of this Introduction is reprinted, by permission of the editors, from an article of mine on "Plutarch and his Times," in the Andover Review, November, 1884.

[2] Πλούταρχος.

and Plutarch was a country gentleman, superior, as in culture so in serviceableness, to all his fellow citizens, holding the foremost place in municipal affairs, liberal, generous, chosen to all local offices of honor, and especially of trust and responsibility, associating on the most pleasant terms with the common people, always ready to give them his advice and aid, and evidently respected and beloved by all. He belonged to an old and distinguished family, and seems always to have possessed a competency for an affluent, though sober, domestic establishment and style of living, and for an unstinted hospitality. He was probably the richest man in his native city; for he assigns as a reason for not leaving it and living at some centre of intellectual activity, that Cheroneia could not afford to lose the property which he would take with him in case of his removal.

He had what corresponds to our university education, at Athens, under the Peripatetic philosopher Ammonius. He also visited Alexandria, then a renowned seat of learning; but how long he stayed there, or whether he extended his Egyptian travel beyond that city, we have no means of knowing. There is no proof of his having been in Rome or in Italy more than once, and that was when he was about forty years of age. He went to Rome on public business, probably in behalf of his native city, and remained there long enough to become acquainted with some eminent men, to make him-

self known as a scholar and an ethical philosopher, and to deliver lectures that attracted no little public notice. This visit seems to have been the great event of his life, as a winter spent in Boston or New York used to be in the life of one of our country gentlemen before the time of railways.

He had a wife, who appears to have been of a character kindred to his own ; at least five children, of whom two sons, if not more, lived to be themselves substantial citizens and worthy members of society ; and two brothers, who seem to have possessed his full confidence and warm affection. He was singularly happy in his relations to a large circle of friends, especially in Athens, for which he had the lifelong love that students in our time acquire for a university town. He was archon, or mayor, of Cheroneia, probably more than once, — the office having doubtless been annual and elective, — and in this capacity he entered, like a veritable country magistrate, into material details of the public service, superintending, as he says, the measuring of tiles and the delivery of stone and mortar for municipal uses. He officiated for many years as priest of Apollo at Delphi, and as such gave several sumptuous entertainments. Indeed, hospitality of this sort appears, so far as we can see, to have been the sole or chief duty of his priestly office. As an adopted citizen of one of the Athenian tribes, he was not infrequently a guest at civic banquets and semi-civic festivals.

As regards Plutarch's philosophy, it is easier to say to which of the great schools he did not belong than to determine by what name he would have preferred to be called. He probably would have termed himself a Platonist, but not, like Cicero, of the New Academy, which had incorporated Pyrrhonism with the provisional acceptance of the Platonic philosophy. At the same time, he was a closer follower and a more literal interpreter of Plato than were the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, who had not yet become a distinctly recognized sect, and who in many respects were the precursors of the mysticism of the Reformation era. Plutarch, with Plato, recognized two eternities: that of the Divine Being, supremely good and purely spiritual; and that of matter, as, if not intrinsically evil, the cause, condition, and seat of all evil, and as at least opposing such obstacles to its own best ideal manipulation that the Divine Being could not embody his pure and perfect goodness, unalloyed by evil, in any material form. Herein the Platonists were at variance with both the Stoics and the Epicureans. The Stoics regarded matter as virtually an emanation from the Supreme Being, who is not only the universal soul and reason, but the creative fire, which, transformed into air and water, — part of the water becoming earth, — is the source of the material universe, which must at the end of a certain cosmical cycle be re-absorbed into the divine essence, whence will emanate in endless succes-

sion new universes to replace those that pass away. The Epicureans, on the other hand, believed in the existence of matter only, and regarded mind and soul as the ultimate product of material organization.

In one respect Plutarch transcends Plato, and, so far as I know, all pre-Christian philosophers. Plato's theism bears a close kindred to pantheism. His God, if I may be permitted the phrase, is only semi-detached. He becomes the creator rather by blending his essence with eternal matter, than by shaping that matter to his will. He is rather in all things than above all things, rather the Soul of the universe than its sovereign Lord. But in Plutarch's writings the Supreme Being is regarded as existing independently of material things; they, as subject to his will, not as a part of his essence.

Plutarch was, like Plato, a realist. He regarded the ideas or patterns of material things, that is, *genera*, or kinds of objects, as having an actual existence (where or how it is hard to say), as projected from the Divine Mind, floating somewhere in ethereal spaces between the Deity and the material universe, — the models by which all things in the universe are made.

As to Plutarch's theology, he was certainly a monotheist. He probably had some vague belief in inferior deities (*daemons* he would have called them), as holding a place like that filled by angels and by evil spirits in the creed of most Christians;

yet it is entirely conceivable that his occasional references to these deities are due merely to the conventional rhetoric of his age. His priesthood of the Delphian Apollo can hardly be said to have been a religious office. It was rather a post of dignity and honor, which a gentleman of respectable standing, courteous manners, and hospitable habits might creditably fill, even though he had no faith in Apollo. But that Plutarch had a serious, earnest, and efficient faith in the one Supreme God, in the wise and eternal Providence, and in the Divine wisdom, purity, and holiness, we have in his writings an absolute certainty. Nor can we find, even in Christian literature, the record of a firmer belief than his in human immortality, and in a righteous retribution beginning in this world and reaching on into the world beyond death.

But Plutarch was, most of all, an ethical philosopher. Yet here again he cannot be classed as belonging to any school. For Epicureanism he has an intense abhorrence, and regards the doctrines of that sect as theoretically absurd and practically demoralizing. He maintains that the disciples of Epicurus, as such, utterly fail in the quest of pleasure, or what according to their master is still better, painlessness: for the condition of those who, as he says, "swill the mind with the pleasures of the body, as hogherds do their swine," cannot entirely smother the sense of vacuity and need; nor is it possible by any appliances of luxury to cut off

even sources of bodily disquietude, which are only the more fatal to the happiness of him who seeks bodily well-being alone; while the prospect of annihilation at death deprives those necessarily unhappy in this life of their only solace, and gives those who live happily here the discomfort of anticipating the speedy and entire loss of all that has ministered to their enjoyment.

In Plutarch's moderation, his avoidance of extreme views, and his just estimate of happiness as an end, though not the supreme end, of being, he is in harmony with the Peripatetics, among whom his Athenian preceptor was the shining light of his age; but his ethical system was much more strict and uncompromising than theirs, and I cannot find that he quotes them or refers to them as a distinct school of philosophy. In matters appertaining to physical science he indeed often cites Aristotle, but not, I think, in a single instance, as to any question in morals.

As regards the Stoics, Plutarch writes against them, but chiefly against dogmas which in his time had become nearly obsolete, — namely, that all acts not in accordance with the absolute right are equally bad; that all virtuous acts are equally good; that there is no intermediate moral condition between that of the wise or perfectly good man and that of the utterly vicious; and that outward circumstances neither enhance nor diminish the happiness of the truly wise man. These extravagances do

not appear in the writings of Seneca, nor in Epictetus as reported by Arrian, and Plutarch in reasoning against them is controverting Zeno rather than his later disciples. He is in full sympathy with the Stoics as to their elevated moral standard, though without the sternness and rigidness which had often characterized their professed beliefs and their public teaching, yet of which there remained few vestiges among his contemporaries. With the utmost mildness and gentleness, he manifests everywhere an inflexibility of principle and a settled conviction as to the rightfulness or wrongfulness of specific acts which might satisfy the most rigid Stoic, and in which he plants himself as firmly on the ground of the eternal Right as if his philosophy had been founded on a distinctively Christian basis.

Indeed, Plutarch is so often decidedly Christian in spirit, and in many passages of his writings there is such an almost manifest transcript of the thought of the Divine Founder of our religion, that it has been frequently maintained that he drew from Christian sources. This, I must believe, is utterly false in the sense in which it is commonly asserted, yet in a more recondite sense true. If Plutarch had known anything about Christians or the Christian Scriptures, he could not have failed to refer to them; for he is constantly making references to contemporary persons and objects, sects and opinions. We know of no Christian church at Cheroneia in that age, and indeed it is exceedingly improbable

that there should have been one in so small a town. The circulation of thought, and consequently the diffusion of a new religion from the great centres of population to outlying districts or villages, was infinitesimally slow. Our word *pagan* is an enduring witness of this tardiness of transmission. It had its birth (in its present sense) after Christianity had become the legally established religion of the Empire, and had supplanted heathen temples and rites in the cities, while in the *pagi*, or villages, the old gods were still in the ascendant. There were indeed Christian churches in Athens and in Rome; but they would most probably have eluded the curiosity and escaped the knowledge of a temporary resident, especially as most of their chief members were either Jews or slaves. Yet I cannot doubt that an infusion of Christianity had somehow infiltrated itself into Plutarch's ethical opinions and sentiments, as into those of Seneca, who has been represented as an acquaintance and correspondent of St. Paul, though it is historically almost impossible that the two men ever saw or heard of each other.

In one respect, the metaphor by which we call the Author of our religion the Sun of Righteousness has a special aptness. The sun, unlike lesser luminaries, lights up sheltered groves and grottos that are completely dark under the full moon, and sends its rays through every chink and cranny of roof or wall. In like manner there seems to have been an indi-

rect and tortuous transmission of Christian thought into regions where its source was wholly unknown. In the ethical writings of the post-Christian philosophers, of Plutarch, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, there may be traced a loftiness, precision, delicacy, tenderness, breadth of human sympathy, and recognition of holiness in the Divine Being as the archetype of human purity, transcending all that is most admirable in pre-Christian moralists. Thus, while I cannot but regard Cicero's "De Officiis" as in many respects the world's master-work in ethical philosophy, containing fewer unchristian sentences than I could number on the fingers of one hand, there is nothing in it that reminds me of the Gospels; while these others often shape their thoughts in what seem to be evangelic moulds.

Now I think that we may account for the large diffusion of Christian thought and sentiment among persons who knew not Christianity even by name. The new religion was very extensively embraced among slaves in all parts of the Roman Empire, and *slave* then meant something very different from what it means now. It is an open question whether there was not, at least out of Greece, more of learning, culture, and refinement in the slave than in the free population of the Empire. We must remember how many illustrious names in Greek and Roman literature — such names as those of Aesop, Terence, Epictetus — belonged to slaves. Tiro, Cicero's slave, was not only one of his dearest friends, but fore-

most among his literary confidants and advisers. Most of the rich men who had any love of literature owned their librarians and their copyists, and the teachers of the children were generally the property of the father. Among Christian slaves there were undoubtedly many who felt no call to martyrdom, (which can have been incumbent on them only when the alternative was apostasy and denial of their faith,) who therefore made no open profession of their religion, while in precept, conversation, and life they were imbued with its spirit, — a spirit as subtile in its penetrating power as it is refining and purifying in its influence. From the lips of Christian slaves many children, no doubt, received in classic forms moral precepts redolent of the aroma breathed from the Sermon on the Mount. If the social medium which Plutarch represents is a fair specimen of the best rural society of the Empire in his time, there must have been a ready receptivity for the highest style of ethical teaching, — a genial soil for the germination of a truly evangelic righteousness of moral conception, maxim, and principle.

Probably no book except the Bible has had more readers than Plutarch's Lives. These biographies have been translated into every language of the civilized world; they have been among the earliest and most fascinating books for children and youth of many successive generations; and down to the present time, when fiction seems to have almost

superseded history and biography, and to have destroyed the once universal appetency for them among young people, they have exercised to a marvellous degree a shaping power over character. They are, indeed, underrated by the exact historian, because modern research has discovered here and there some mistake in the details of events. But such mistakes were in that age inevitable. Historical criticism was then an unknown science. Documents and traditions covering the same ground were deemed of equal value when they were in harmony, and when they differed an author followed the one which best suited his taste, or his purpose for the time being. Thus Cicero, in one case, in the same treatise gives three different versions of the same story. Thus, too, there were several stories afloat about the fate of Regulus; but Roman writers took that which Niebuhr thinks farthest from the truth, yet which threw the greatest odium on the hated name of Carthage. Now I have no doubt that, whenever there were two or more versions of the same act or event, Plutarch chose that which would best point his moral. But it is only in few and unimportant particulars that he has been proved to be inaccurate.

It has been also objected to Plutarch, that he attaches less importance to the achievements of his heroes in war and in civic life, than to traits and anecdotes illustrative of their characters. This seems to me a feature which adds not only to the charm

of these Lives, but even more to their historical value. The events of history are at once the outcome and the procreant cradle of character, and we know nothing of any period or portion of history except as we know the men who made it and the men whom it made. Biography is the soul; history the body, which it tenants and animates, and which, when not thus tenanted, is a heap of very dry bones. The most thorough knowledge of the topography of Julius Caesar's battles in Gaul, the minutest description of the campaign that terminated in Pharsalia, the official journal of the Senate during his dictatorship, would tell us very little about him and his time. But a vivid sketch of his character, with well-chosen characteristic anecdotes, would give us a very distinct and realizing conception of the antecedent condition of things that made a life like his possible, and of his actual influence for good and for evil on his country and his age.

Nor is the value of such a biography affected in the least by any doubts that we may entertain as to the authenticity of incidents, trivial except as illustrative of character, which occupy a large space in Plutarch's Lives. Indeed, the least authentic may be of the greatest historical value. An anecdote may be literally true, and yet some peculiar combination of circumstances may have led him of whom it is told to speak or act out of character. But a mythical anecdote of a man, coming down

from his own time and people, must needs owe its origin and complexion to his known character.

It is perfectly easy to see throughout these biographies the author's didactic aim. If I may use sacred words, here by no means misapplied, his prime object was "reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness." He evidently felt and mourned the degeneracy of his age, was profoundly aware of the worth of teaching by example, and was solicitous to bring from the past such elements of ethical wisdom as the records of illustrious men could be made to render up. True to this purpose, he measures the moral character of such transactions as he relates by the highest standard of right which he knows, and there is not a person or deed that fails to bear the stamp, clear-cut, yet seldom obtrusive, of his approval or censure.

The Lives, though the best known of Plutarch's writings, are but a small part of them, and hardly half of those still extant. His other works are generally grouped under the title of "Moralia,"[1] or Morals, though among them there are many treatises that belong to the department of history or biography, some to that of physics. Most of these works are short; a few, of considerable length. Some of them may have been lectures; some are letters of advice or of consolation; some are in a narrative form; many are in the form of dialogue, which, sanctioned by the prestige of Plato's pre-

[1] Τὰ ἠθικά.

eminence, was very largely employed by philosophers of later times, possessing, as it does, the great advantage of putting opposite and diverse opinions in the mouths of interlocutors, and thus giving to the treatise the vivacity and the dramatic interest of oral discussion. Some of these dialogues have a *symposium*, or supper party, for their scene, and introduce a numerous corps of speakers. In these Plutarch himself commonly sustains a prominent part, and the members of his family often have their share in the conversation, or are the subjects of kindly mention. In several instances the occasion, circumstances, and conversation are described so naturally as to make it almost certain that the author simply wrote out from memory what was actually said. At any rate, these festive dialogues present very clearly his idea of what a *symposium* ought to be, and in its entire freedom from excess and extravagance of any kind it would bear the strictest ordeal with all modern moralists, the extreme ascetics alone excepted.

Had not the Lives been written, I am inclined to believe that the Moralia alone would have given Plutarch as high a place as he now holds, not only in the esteem of scholars, but in the interest and delight of all readers of good books; and I am sure that there is no loving reader of the Lives who will not be thankful to have his attention drawn to the Moralia. They exhibit throughout the same moral traits which their author shows

as a biographer. He treats, indeed, incidentally, of some subjects which a purer ethical taste in the public mind might have excluded. He recognizes the existence of immoralities, which, not discreditable in the best society of unevangelized Greece and Rome, have almost lost their place and name in Christendom. Some of his dialogues have among the interlocutors those with whom as good a man as he would in our time associate only in the hope of converting them. But his own opinion and feeling on all moral questions are uniformly and explicitly in behalf of all that is pure, and true, and right, and reverent.

Many of these Moralia are on what are commonly, yet wrongly, called the minor morals, that is, on the evils that most of all infest and destroy the happiness of families and the peace of society, and on the opposite virtues, — on such subjects, for instance, as "Idle Talking," "Curiosity," "Self-Praise," and the like. Others are on such grave topics as "The Benefits that a Man may derive from his Enemies," and "The Best Means of Self-Knowledge." There is in all these treatises a large amount of blended common sense and keen ethical insight; and so little does human nature change with its surroundings that the greater part of Plutarch's cautions, counsels, and precepts are as closely applicable to our own time as if they had been written yesterday.

One of the most remarkable writings in this col-

lection is Plutarch's letter to his wife on the death of a daughter two years old, during his absence from home. It not only expresses sweetly and lovingly the topics of consolation which would most readily occur to a Christian father; it gives us also a charming picture of a household united by ties of spiritual affinity, and living in a purer, higher medium than that of affluence and luxury. A few sentences may convey something of the tone and spirit of this epistle. "Since our little daughter afforded us the sweetest and most charming pleasure, so ought we to cherish her memory, which will conduce in many ways, or rather many fold, more to our joy than our grief." "They who were present at the funeral report this with admiration, that you neither put on mourning, nor disfigured yourself or any of your maids, neither were there any costly preparations nor magnificent pomp; but all things were managed with silence and moderation, in the presence of our relatives alone." "So long as she is gone to a place where she feels no pain, why should we grieve for her?" "This is the most troublesome thing in old age, that it makes the soul weak in its remembrance of divine things, and too earnest for things relating to the body." "But that which is taken away in youth, being more soft and tractable, soon returns to its native vigor and beauty." "It is good to pass the gates of death before too great a love of bodily and earthly things be engendered in the soul." "It is an impious thing to lament for those

whose souls pass immediately into a better and more divine state." "Wherefore let us comply with custom in our outward and public behavior, and let our interior be more unpolluted, pure and holy."

Now, when I remember that in the pre-Christian Greek and Roman world the strongest utterances about immortality had been by Socrates, if Plato reported him aright, when he expressed strong hope of life beyond death, yet warned his friends not to be too confident about a matter so wrapped in uncertainty, — and by Cicero, who, when his daughter died, confessed that his reasonings had left no conviction in his own mind, — I cannot doubt that some Easter morning rays had pierced the dense Boeotian atmosphere, and that the risen Saviour had in that lovely Cheroneian household those whom he designates as "other sheep, not of this fold."

There is among the Moralia another letter of consolation, to Apollonius on the death of his son, longer, more elaborate, and evidently intended as a literary composition, to be preserved with the author's other works, which breathes the same spirit of submission and trust.

Another of the Moralia, which has a special interest as regards the author's own family, is on the "Training of Children," — a series of counsels — including the careful heed of the parents to their own moral condition and habits — to which the experience of these intervening centuries has little to add, while it could find nothing to take away.

In one sense, the miscellanies brought together under the name of "Moralia" bear that title not inappropriately; for, as I have intimated, Plutarch could not but be didactic in whatever he wrote, and the ethical feeling, spirit, and purpose are perpetually, yet never ostentatiously or inappropriately, coming to the surface on all kinds of subjects. But there is a great deal in the collection not professedly or directly ethical. There are many scraps of history and biography, and a very large number and variety of characteristic anecdotes, both of well-known personages, and of others who are made known to us almost as vividly by a single trait, deed, or saying as if we had their entire life-record. There is an invaluable series of "Apophthegms"[1] of kings and great commanders,[2] and another of "Laconic [or Spartan] Apophthegms," which are much more than their name implies, some of them being condensed memoirs. There are, also, several papers that give us more definite notions than can be found anywhere else of the science and natural history of the author's time. Withal, we have here so many references to manners, customs, and habits, such pictures of home with all that could give it the sweetness and grace that belong to it, such views

[1] Ἀποφθέγματα.

[2] The genuineness of this series has been called in question; but the internal evidence seems decisive in its favor. It is, throughout, so entirely in Plutarch's vein, that one is tempted to ask, Who else could have written it?

of society, both in city and in country, in ordinary intercourse and on festive occasions, that one can learn more of life in that age in the Roman Empire from these volumes than from any other single author; and the writer of a book like Becker's "Gallus" might find here almost all the materials that he would need, except for the delineation of the night-side of Roman extravagance, gluttony, drunkenness, debauchery, and depravity, which came not within Plutarch's experience.

The most remarkable of all Plutarch's writings, the most valuable equally in a philosophical and an ethical point of view, and the most redolent of what we almost involuntarily call Christian sentiment, is that "On the Delay of the Divine Justice," or, to give a more literal translation of the original title, "Concerning those who are punished slowly by the Divine [Being]."[1] It treats of what from the earliest time has been a mystery to serious minds, and has been urged equally by malignant irreligion and by honest scepticism against the supremacy of the Divine justice in the government of the world; namely, the postponement of the penal consequences of guilt, sometimes till there are no witnesses of the crime left to behold the punishment, sometimes till the offender himself has lost the thread between the evil that he did and its retribution, sometimes till the sinner has gone to the grave in peace, and left innocent posterity to suffer for his sins. Plu-

[1] Περὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου βραδέως τιμορουμένων.

tarch, with his unquestioning faith in immortality, doubts not that guilt, unpunished in this life, will be overtaken by just retribution in the life to come. But, as he says, retribution, though it may be consummated only in the future life, is not delayed till then. It seems late, because it lasts long. The sentence is passed upon the guilt when it is committed; and, however its visible execution may be postponed, the sinner is from that moment a prisoner of the Divine justice, awaiting execution. He may give splendid suppers, and live luxuriously; yet still he is within prison walls from which there is no escape.

This is undoubtedly true, and yet there are many cases, and those of the worst kind, in which it seems to be not true. A moderately bad man, in most instances, feels profoundly the shame and misery that he has brought upon himself. But a thoroughly wicked man takes contentedly a position which we may fitly term sub-human. If we suppose a man possessed of a magnificent house, luxuriously and tastefully furnished, who yet chooses never to ascend a stair, and lives in the basement shabbily and meanly, with the coarsest appliances of physical comfort, we might take him as the type of not a few bad men who seem entirely at their ease. They live in the basement. They have thrown away the key to the upper rooms. They have lost all appreciation of the higher, better modes of human living, and they are contented and

satisfied as a well-fed beast is, in the absence of all spiritual cravings and ambitions. But this life, poor and mean as it is at the best, becomes still more narrow and sordid with the lapse of time. Many have looked with envy on prosperous guilt early or midway in its career; none can have witnessed its lengthened age without pity and loathing. Especially is this the case with the several forms of sensual vice. As age advances, the power of enjoyment wanes, while the morbid craving grows, even under the consciousness of added misery with its continued indulgence. The body becomes the soul's dungeon, and its walls thicken inward and close up the wonted entrances of enjoyment. The senses, deadened on the side of pleasure, no longer avenues of beauty or of harmony, seem to serve only as means of prolonging a death in life, and as open inlets of discomfort and pain.

But the suspense of sentence has in not a few cases, according to Plutarch, a directly merciful purpose. As the most fertile soil may before tillage produce the rankest weeds, so in the soul most capable of good there may be, prior to culture, a noisome crop of evil, and yet God may spare the sinner for the good that is in him, and for the signal service which, when reclaimed, he may render to mankind. Then, too, by the delay of visible judgment God gives men in his own example the lesson of long-suffering, and rebukes their promptness in resentment and revenge. Still

further, when penalty appears to fall on the posterity or successors of the guilty, and a race, a people, a city, or a family seems punished for the iniquity of its progenitors, Plutarch brings out very fully and clearly the absolutely essential and necessary solidarity of the family or the community, which can hardly fail so to inherit of its ancestors in disposition and character as to invite upon itself, to merit for itself, or at best to need as preventive or cure, the penal consequences of ancestral guilt.

This essay is all the more valuable because not written by a Christian. It shows that the intense stress laid by Christian teaching on a righteous retribution lasting on beyond the death-change is not a mere dogma of the sacred records of our religion, but equally the postulete of the unsophisticated reason and conscience of developed humanity.

My translation is not literal, in the common meaning of that term. If it were so, it would be unintelligible ; for Plutarch's style lacks simplicity, and his sentences, though seldom obscure, are often involved and intricate, sometimes elliptical. I have, however, given a faithful transcript in English of what I understand Plutarch to have written, omitting no thought or shade of thought that I suppose to be his, and inserting none of my own.

I have used Wyttenbach's edition of the Moralia, departing from his text in but a single instance,

and that, one in which he pronounces the reading in the text impossible, and suggests a conjectural reading as necessary to the sense of the passage. I have also made constant reference to the late Professor Hackett's edition of this treatise, which it is superfluous to commend where he was known; for not only was he confessedly among the foremost scholars of his time, but his exacting conscientiousness would not suffer him to put less than his best and most thorough work into whatever came from his hands.

PLUTARCH

ON THE DELAY OF THE DIVINE JUSTICE.

1. EPICURUS,[1] having said such things, O Cinius,[2] before any one could reply, while we were at the farther end of the porch, went hastily away. But we, somewhat amazed at the man's rudeness, stood still, looking at one another without speaking, and then turned and resumed our walk.

[1] A name probably chosen for this retreating collocutor because the dialogue is anti-Epicurean in its dogmas and its spirit, and the supposed arguments to be refuted were therefore such as an Epicurean would have urged. Epicurus denied the Divine Providence, and maintained that the gods did not concern themselves with human affairs.

[2] Some commentators suppose this to be the second part of a dialogue, of which the first part is lost. But it is more probable that the reader is, for dramatic effect, introduced into the midst of a prepared scene. This was not an uncommon device in the philosophical dialogues that have come down to us from early time. Plato, Cicero, and Lucian furnish instances of it, and two other of Plutarch's dialogues begin in a similar way. *Cinius* is a name that occurs nowhere else. A purely conjectural emendation of a single letter would give us the better known name, *Quintus*. The scene of this dialogue is the temple of Apollo at Delphi, — the temple in which Plutarch officiated as priest.

Then PATROCLEAS[1] commenced the conversation, saying, — What then? Do you see fit to drop the discussion? or will you answer his argument as if he were present, though he has taken himself away?

TIMON[2] then said, — If he threw a javelin[3] at us as he went away, it certainly would not be well for us to take no notice of the weapon still sticking in our sides. Brasidas,[4] indeed, as we are told, drew out the spear from his own body, and killed with it the man who had hurled it at him. But it is no concern of ours to retaliate on those who fling at us misplaced and false reasoning; it is enough for them if we reject their arguments before they affect our belief.

Then I said, — Which of the arguments that he urged moved you the most? For the man, as if

[1] Plutarch's son-in-law.

[2] Plutarch's brother.

[3] The figure by which arguments are called spears or javelins, and are said to be hurled when uttered — in itself not unnatural — occurs frequently in the ancient classics. Indeed, the most authentic derivation of the Latin *dicere*, *to speak*, is from the Greek δικεῖν, *to hurl*. The French word *trait* offers an analogy in point.

[4] Brasidas, the most distinguished Spartan general, and the leader of the Spartan forces, in the earlier part of the Peloponnesian war, was slain near Amphipolis, at the moment of victory. Cleon, the Athenian general, was killed at the same time. The incident referred to in the text has no record in history; but a scholiast on Aristophanes says that Cleon and Brasidas killed each other, referring probably to the tradition that they both were killed by Cleon's spear.

inspired both by wrath and by scorn, brought together against the Divine Providence many things heaped up in confusion, yet no well-ordered reasons, but such miscellaneous cavils as could be gathered here and there.

2. PATROCLEAS then said, — The slowness and procrastination of the Deity in the punishment of the wicked seem to me the most mysterious of all things; and now, under these arguments, I find myself a new and fresh adherent to the doctrine in behalf of which they are urged. Indeed, I used a long time ago to be vexed by that saying of Euripides: —

"He lingers; such the nature of the gods."[1]

While in no respect, least of all toward wicked men, is it fitting that God should be dilatory; for they are in no wise dilatory or slow in ill-doing, but are hurried on to evil by their passions with the utmost impetuosity. Indeed, as Thucydides says,[2] punishment close at hand bars the way to those who most hope to gain by guilt. Moreover, no debt overdue, equally with the delay of due punishment, renders the person wronged utterly hopeless and depressed, while it confirms the evil-doer in boldness and audacity. On the other hand, pun-

[1] A verse from the *Orestes*, — the reply of Orestes when asked whether Apollo would give him no assistance in his troubles.

[2] In a speech of Cleon in favor of the slaughter of the men and the enslavement of the women and children of Mytilene, for the attempt to release themselves from the sway of the Athenians.

ishments directly inflicted on those who are bold in evil are at once preventive of future crimes, and a source of great consolation to those who have suffered wrong. I am therefore troubled by the saying of Bias,[1] which often recurs to me, when he told a man of bad character that he had no fear that he would go unpunished, but feared that he himself might not live to see him punished. What good, indeed, did the punishment of Aristocrates[2] do to the Messenians who were slain before it came upon him? He betrayed them in the battle of Taphrus, yet, not being found out for twenty years, he reigned over the Arcadians all that time, till at length his treachery was discovered and met with its due penalty; but the victims of his crime had ceased to be. Again, what comfort did any of the Orchomenians[3] who lost children, friends, and kin-

[1] One of the seven wise men of Greece, as also of the smaller number of four to whom alone the possession of pre-eminent wisdom was ascribed by some authorities. He is said to have been the author of the selfish maxim, that one should love his friends as if he were at some future time going to hate them.

[2] Aristocrates, king of Orchomenus in Arcadia, joined the Messenians in war against Sparta, and was bribed by the Lacedaemonians to betray his allies in the battle of Taphrus. Many years afterward, his treachery became known, and he was stoned to death by his own subjects.

[3] There is no historical vestige of this transaction, or of the king implicated in it. The scene of the story was propably Orchomenus in Boeotia, and Plutarch, as a Boeotian, would naturally have been familiar with chapters of local history too remote in time or too insignificant to have left any permanent record.

dred by the treachery of Lyciscus derive from the disease that many years afterward seized him and consumed his body, while he, when he dipped and washed his feet in the river, always prayed, with oaths and curses, that his limbs might rot if he had ever been guilty of treason and injustice? Indeed, not even the children's children of those who were then murdered could have witnessed at Athens the snatching of the contaminated bodies of the murderers from their graves, and their transportation beyond the boundaries of the state.[1] Hence, Euripides is absurd, when, to dissuade from crime, he says: —

> "No haste has Justice; dread not her approach;
> She strikes no mortal heart with sudden blow;
> But noiseless, with slow step, she glides along,
> To smite the guilty when their hour has come."[2]

It seems to me that it is no other considerations than these that lead bad men to encourage themselves, and to give themselves free scope for guilty enterprise, inasmuch as the fruit of wrong-doing is quickly ripe and in full sight, while punishment is late, and lingers far behind the enjoyment derived from the guilt.

[1] Probably, if not Lyciscus, those implicated with him in his crime took refuge in Athens, and many years afterward, at some crisis which created superstitious alarm, their bodies were disinterred and transported beyond the limits of the state, — a not unusual mode of lustration in the early time.

[2] This is from a lost tragedy.

3. When Patrocleas had thus spoken, OLYMPICUS,[1] taking up the thread of his discourse, said, — It should also be observed, Patrocleas, how exceedingly great is the mischief resulting from the delay and procrastination of the Deity about these matters, since the tardiness of retribution takes away faith in Providence; and because chastisement for the wicked does not ensue immediately upon the performance of an evil deed, but comes upon them afterward, they place it to the account of misfortune, call it ill-luck and not punishment, and so are in no wise profited by it, — being grieved indeed for what befalls them, but not led to repentance for their ill-doing. For as the punishment of the whip and the spur immediately on a horse's stumbling or shying corrects him and puts him on right behavior, while beating and twitching of the reins and shouting at him at a later period seem to him for some other purpose than discipline, and thus annoy him without teaching him, so guilt rebuked and checked by punishment after each of its wrong-doings and transgressions might gradually become conscience-stricken, and be brought to the fear of God, as presiding over the affairs and experiences of men with a justice that does not linger; but justice hesitating and slow-paced, as Euripides describes it, and falling upon the wicked as if by chance, being vague, untimely, and out of due order, seems like a merely

[1] This name occurs as that of an interlocutor in one of the Symposiacs.

fortuitous event rather than ordained by Providence. Thus, I do not see what use there is in those mills of the gods said to grind so late[1] as to render punishment hard to be recognized, and to make wickedness fearless.

4. These things having been uttered, and I being wrapped in thought, TIMON said, — Shall I now put the climax to this reasoning on the side of scepticism, or shall I rather suffer Plutarch[2] to argue against what has already been brought forward?

Then I said, — What need is there of bringing on the third wave,[3] and utterly whelming the subject in doubt and difficulty, if one is not able to refute what was urged at the outset, and to set aside the objections already offered? First, then, taking our start from the home-altar of reverence for all that is divine, — the heritage of the philosophers of the Academy, — we shall piously refrain from speaking about these things as if we had cer-

[1] The reference here is, undoubtedly, to an hexameter verse from some unknown poet, quoted by Sextus Empiricus in the third century: —

Ὀψὲ θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά.

"The mills of the gods grind late, but they grind fine."

[2] Αὐτὸν, evidently meaning Plutarch.

[3] I doubt whether there is reference here to every third wave as having a fuller flow. Timon, though inclined at the outset to the other side, is represented as so affected by the arguments of Patrocleas and Olympicus that he is prepared to make a third speech against the Divine Providence, yet is willing to yield place to his brother; and the speech which Plutarch supersedes is the third wave.

tain knowledge of them. For it is less presumptuous for one unskilled in music to discourse about it, or for one not versed in military science to give his judgment in matters relating to the conduct of war, than for us to pretend to look through the things that appertain to God and to superior spirits, mere men as we are, like unskilled observers who should undertake to pass sentence on the skill of artists by their own conjectures and surmises. It is not easy, indeed, for a common person to comprehend a physician's reasons for using the knife later, and not earlier, or for ordering a bath, not yesterday, but today ; and still less is it easy or safe for a mortal to say of God anything except that he, best knowing the fit time for the curing of wickedness, applies to every evil-doer punishment as the appropriate medicine, and this not of the same intensity, nor at one and the same interval of time, for all. Now that the medical treatment of souls, termed punishment and justice, is the greatest of all arts, Pindar,[1] with myriads of others, testifies, calling God, the chief and lord of all, the supremely good artificer, as being the author of justice, to whom it belongs to allot to each of the guilty the time, mode, and measure of his punishment. Moreover, Plato says that Minos, although the son of Zeus, became his disciple in this art, so that it is not possible for one who has not been a learner in it and acquired skill in it, to proceed aright in the administration of

[1] In some poem not now extant.

justice, or to pass an intelligent judgment on its administration by another. Even the laws which men make do not always have a justifying reason that is simple and generally manifest; but some of their enactments seem very ridiculous. Thus, in Lacedaemon, the Ephori when they come into office make immediate proclamation that no man shall let the beard on the upper lip grow,[1] and that the laws must be so obeyed that they shall never be annoying to the citizens. Thus too, the Romans strike the slaves whom they are going to emancipate with a slender twig.[2] They also, when they make their wills, appoint certain persons their heirs, and sell their property to other persons,[3] which appears absurd. But the most absurd of all seems that enactment of Solon, that, in case of an insurrection in the

[1] We have evidence from other sources that the Spartans were accustomed to shave the upper lip, and in Sparta custom and law were identical.

[2] Slaves might be manumitted in Rome by having their names inscribed on the roll of taxable citizens with permission of their masters, in which case they must have been possessed of some *peculium*, — property of their own earning or given them by their masters. They might also be made free by will. But the oldest mode of manumission is that here referred to. The slave was brought before the magistrate, whose lictor laid a rod or wand on his head, after which ceremony the master pronounced him free.

[3] In this, which was one of several modes in which wills were made in Rome, the testator made a fictitious sale of his property to a friend, who received his instructions as to the disposal of it. The person thus made the purchaser filled very much the place that with us is held by the executor of a will.

city, he who does not attach himself to either party, or act on either side, shall be branded with civic infamy.[1] In fine, one who understood not the purpose of the lawgiver, nor comprehended the reasons for the individual statutes, might enumerate many instances of foolish legislation. What wonder is it then, if, while human affairs are so difficult to be understood, it is not easy to say concerning the gods why they punish some transgressors later, some earlier?

5. These things I say, not as a pretence for getting rid of the subject, but as an apology for the liberty which I crave in discussing it, that my discourse, as if looking to some ultimate harbor or refuge,[2] may proceed with the greater assurance to resolve the doubt. But first see how, as Plato says, God, making himself conspicuous as the example of all things good, bestows human virtue, in some sort his own likeness, on those who are able to be followers of God. For nature throughout, being first in a state of chaos, had the beginning of its change, and of its becoming an orderly universe, by means of a resemblance to and a participation in the Divine idea and the Divine virtue. The same

[1] Solon's theory was, that neutrality in a disturbed condition of the state indicated either indifference to the public well-being or the most sordid selfishness; while sedition might be sometimes justifiable, and at the worst was not inconsistent with honesty of purpose.

[2] The "harbor or refuge" is man's inevitable ignorance of Divine things, which is often a sufficient answer for doubts or objections which man cannot solve or refute.

author says that nature kindled sight in us, that the soul by seeing and admiring the heavenly bodies, accustoming itself to behold and admire what is becoming and orderly, might hate unseemly and vagrant passions, and might shun rash and haphazard conduct, as the source of all wickedness and vice. For it has fallen to man's lot to enjoy from God no greater gift than the capacity of being formed to virtue by the imitation of those things in God that are beautiful and good. Thus also to bad men he appoints punishment with a lingering and leisurely stroke, not because he fears mistake or reason for repentance were he to punish more promptly, but in order to expel from us the brutish and impetuous element that there is in punishment, and to teach us not to fall upon those who have injured us with anger, nor when

"Revenge, outleaping all restraint of reason,"[1]

blazes and rages, as if we were bent on appeasing thirst or hunger, but, imitating his clemency and long-suffering, to proceed to chastisement deliberately and cautiously, choosing, as helping us to take the wiser counsel, the time that shall give us the least reason for repentance. As Socrates said, it is not so bad to drink turbid water to excess as for a temper agitated and overwhelmed by anger and rage, before it can be settled and clarified, to satiate itself in the punishment of a kinsman or a neighbor.

[1] From an unknown poet.

For it is not, as Thucydides says, the retribution nearest in time to the injury received, but that which lies the farthest from it, that obeys the law of fitness. As anger, according to Melanthius,[1]

"By deeds depraved and dire casts reason out,"

so reason performs right and moderate deeds, putting anger and resentment to flight. Hence it is that men are made meek by the examples of other men; as when they hear how Plato, having lifted his staff over his servant's head, stood still for a long time, punishing his own anger, as he said; and how Archytas, learning of some misconduct and disorder of his laborers in the field, conscious that he was becoming resentful and bitter in his feeling toward them, did nothing except to say, as he left them, "It is fortunate for you that I am angry." But if the reported sayings and doings of men can tone down the harshness and severity of anger, how much more fitting is it that we — seeing that God, to whom there is no need of delay nor possibility of repentance, yet puts off punishment into the future, and awaits its fitting time — should ourselves be circumspect in these matters, and should regard as a Divine part of virtue the clemency and long-suffering which God manifests, reforming few indeed by punishment, but by the slowness of punishment benefiting and admonishing many![2]

[1] A tragedian, of whom only a few fragments are preserved.

[2] This whole section looks almost like a paraphrase of St. Paul's exhortation: "Be ye kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,

6. Let us next consider, in the second place, that punishments inflicted by men have no purpose but retaliation, terminating in the suffering of the wrong-doer, and going no farther. They thus follow hard upon the offences, as a dog barking at the offender's heels, and pursue evil deeds close in their rear. But God probably sees through the dispositions of the diseased souls to which he draws nigh in judgment, knows whether they show an inclination to repentance, and grants time for reformation to those whose guilt has not been excessive or irreclaimable. For, aware what endowment of virtue souls bring from him when they come into the world, and how strong and imperishable in them is this native nobleness, which, though — corrupted by bad association and nurture — it may blossom into evil contrary to nature, yet when cured restores some men entirely to proper habits of life, he therefore does not punish all alike; but the incurable he speedily takes out of being, and cuts them off, inasmuch as it is not only harmful to others, but, most of all, injurious to the sinner's own self, to be always conversant with wickedness. On the other hand, to those whose sins probably proceeded rather from ignorance of the good than from preference for what is vile, he gives time for a change of character; but if they continue as they are, he executes justice on them too, and there is no danger

even as God [for Christ's sake] hath forgiven you. *Be ye* therefore *followers of God,* as dear children; and walk in love."

of their escaping. Now see what changes have taken place in the habits and lives of men. Therefore the changeable part of the life or character is designated by a word denoting *turn*,[1] and also by a word denoting *habit*,[2] because habit constitutes a large part of the character, and, when adopted, has commanding influence. I am inclined to think, indeed, that the ancients ascribed to Cecrops[3] a double nature, not, as some say, because from a good king he became a fierce and dragon-like tyrant, but, on the other hand, because, having been in the beginning perverse and an object of terror, he afterward ruled with meekness and kindness. But if this is an open question, we know concerning Gelon[4] and Hieron[5] of Sicily, and Peisis-

[1] Τρόπος, from τρέπειν, *to turn*. Our phrase *turn of mind* virtually denotes a change, i. e. a direction of mind not native or normal.

[2] Ἦθος, *habit*. Habits are not native, but always imply a change from a previous state in which they had not begun to be.

[3] A man in the upper part of his body; in the lower, a dragon.

[4] Gelon first obtained the sovereignty of Gela in Sicily, by setting aside the minor sons of the late king, of whom he had been appointed guardian. He subsequently availed himself of dissensions in Syracuse, to obtain the sovereignty of that city, which rose to great prosperity and wealth under his reign.

[5] Hieron was the brother and successor of Gelon, who left an infant son. Some accounts say that he assumed the sovereignty in his nephew's name, and retained it as in his own right. He was tyrannical in his rule, but was successful in war, and was distinguished for his patronage of literature and of learned men. Aeschylus and Pindar were among his invited and permanent guests.

tratus,[1] the son of Hippocrates, that, getting possession of absolute power by foul means, they used it to good purpose. Gaining the ascendency unlawfully, they governed with moderation and for the public welfare. Indeed, they made excellent laws, gave great encouragement to agriculture, and converted their subjects from scoffers and babblers into sober citizens and industrious men. Gelon also, being an excellent military commander and conquering the Carthaginians in a great battle, refused to conclude the peace which they sought, till he had procured the insertion in the treaty of a promise on their part to cease offering children to Cronus.[2] Lydiades [3] at first exercised a tyrannical sway in Megalopolis; but during his reign becoming a different

[1] Peisistratus obtained supreme power in Athens no less than three times, and always by intrigue and violence. But his administration was wise and beneficent. He enriched Athens with several of the most costly and tasteful public edifices. He was a liberal patron of letters. He settled the poor of the city in the outlying districts of Attica, and laid the foundation for the agricultural prosperity of the state.

[2] This treaty could have had only a temporary effect; for at a subsequent period we read of two hundred children being burned at the shrine of Cronus in Carthage, as a propitiatory sacrifice when a successor of Gelon appeared in arms before the city. In the Hebrew Scriptures we learn that this particular form of human sacrifice was largely practised by the Canaanites, — the stock of which the Phoenicians who settled Carthage were an offshoot.

[3] Lydiades rose from an obscure condition to a despotic sovereignty over Megalopolis, and probably with little scruple as to the means of elevation; but, becoming convinced that it was for the interest of the city to join the Achaean league as a free

man, and inspired with hatred for injustice, he restored laws to the citizens, and then, fighting with their enemies, fell gloriously in his country's cause. If one had killed Miltiades [1] when he was a tyrant in Chersonesus, or had prosecuted and slain Cimon when he was living with his sister as his wife,[2] or had the people banished Themistocles [3] from the city when he went about making riot and doing mischief, and showed his insolence in the market-

state, he abdicated the crown, and was chosen commander of the forces of the republic thus constituted. He died in battle.

[1] We are reminded here of the stanza in Byron's song : —

> "The tyrant of the Chersonese
> Was freedom's best and bravest friend ;
> That tyrant was Miltiades.
> O that the present hour might send
> Another despot of the kind !
> Such chains as his were sure to bind."

[2] Elpinice, whose first husband was Cimon, was his father's daughter ; but they had different mothers. In the earlier ages, for obvious reasons, kindred was reckoned only on the mother's side, and the intermarriage of the children of the same father and different mothers was legal, and not unusual. We find traces of the lawfulness of such marriages in Hebrew history as late as the time of David. Cimon's marriage was probably lawful ; but public sentiment had then advanced so far as to render such a union discreditable, if not absolutely infamous. It is worthy of remark here that the Greek names for *brother* and *sister*, ἀδελφός and ἀδελφή, in their derivation and original use denote a relation on the mother's side alone.

[3] The stories that have come down to us of the riotous living, recklessness, and debauchery of Themistocles as a young man almost transcend belief. It is related of him that he was once drawn in a carriage through the thronged market-place by four shameless women harnessed like horses.

place, sentencing him to exile as Alcibiades was afterward sentenced, would not the Marathons have been lost to us? and the Eurymedons? and the beautiful

> "Euboean headland,[1] where the sons of Athens
> Laid the fair corner-stone of liberty?"[2]

Great natures, indeed, produce nothing small. Because of the intensity of their impulses, what is strong and efficient in them does not remain idle; but they are tossed to and fro as on an ocean before attaining to a fixed and established character. Therefore, as one unskilled in husbandry, seeing a tract of country full of prickly shrubs and weeds, abounding in vermin, and having much stagnant water and a great deal of mud, would not make choice of it, while to one who has learned to discriminate and judge, these very things indicate strength and all other good qualities in the soil, and show that it can be ploughed without resistance, so in like manner there are great natures that bring forth many things annoying and blameworthy, the roughness and thorniness of which so put us out of patience that we might think it best to cut them off and to prevent all further growth;

[1] Ἀρτεμίσιον, Artemisium. The first naval battle between the Grecian forces and Xerxes was fought off Artemisium. Themistocles commanded the Athenian portion of the fleet, and the splendid victory was ascribed, in great part, to his skill and prowess.

[2] From Pindar, — commemorative of this battle.

while the better Judge, discerning from these very tokens the excellence and nobleness that lie beneath them, awaits maturity as the coadjutor of reason and virtue, and the period when the nature once so wild shall yield fruit that is not wild.

7. Enough has been said on this point. To pass to another consideration, do you not think that it was wise in some of the Greek states to copy the Egyptian law, that a woman with child under sentence of death shall have her sentence suspended till her child is born?

We think so, — they all said.

Then I continued, — If one cannot bear children, yet will be able in process of time to bring forth into the light some clandestine transaction or conspiracy, or will disclose some lurking evil, or will become the author of some salutary counsel, or will invent a supply for some urgent need, is not he who awaits the benefit that will accrue from delay in punishing such a man wiser than he who would put the offender out of the way at once? So I think.

And so do we, said PATROCLEAS.

You are right, said I. For consider that, if Dionysius [1] had been punished in the beginning of

[1] Before Dionysius the elder obtained the undisputed sovereignty of Syracuse, Sicily had been devastated by the Carthaginians, and several of its chief cities destroyed. In the first year of his reign, the Carthaginian general, after a successful campaign, offered him terms of peace, solely because his own army had

his tyrannical reign, none of Greek descent would ever have lived again in Sicily after its devastation by the Carthaginians. Nor, if Periander[1] had been speedily punished, would Greeks have again inhabited Apollonia, or Anactorium, or the peninsula of the Leucadians.[2] I think, too, that Cassander's punishment was delayed, that Thebes might be repeopled.[3] The larger part of the strangers that had plundered the temple,[4] and afterwards went to

suffered severely from pestilence. But in subsequent wars Dionysius repeatedly defeated the Carthaginians, and, whatever his demerits, he raised his kingdom to a high degree of prosperity, and rendered it attractive to the emigrants whom the overpeopled Greek cities were constantly sending to every region where Greek enterprise, genius, and skill could hope for recognition and reward.

[1] Periander was the tyrant of Corinth in the seventh century before Christ. His history is obscure ; but the traditions with regard to him relate many acts of violence and cruelty, and also very great misfortunes, and his domestic life was overshadowed equally by crime and by misery. The three places named in this sentence were early Corinthian colonies, and they may have been settled by Periander's enterprise, or may have been places of refuge from his caprice and oppression.

[2] The island of Leucadia was a peninsula in Homer's time, and was probably still so when the Corinthian colony was established.

[3] Alexander destroyed Thebes ; twenty years afterward Cassander rebuilt it. Plutarch very probably refers to the tradition that Cassander poisoned Alexander. Not that he was free from other undoubted crimes ; for his whole life was marked by sporadic acts of violence. He cannot be said to have received any specific punishment ; but he was kept in perpetual harassment by the quarrels among the successors of Alexander.

[4] That is, this temple of Delphi, the scene of the dialogue.

Sicily with Timoleon, perished wretchedly in their guilt, but not till they had conquered the Carthaginians, and put an end to their oppressive rule.[1] Indeed, the Deity uses some bad men as public executioners to punish others, and then destroys the executioners themselves. This, I think, has been the case with most tyrants. For as the gall of the hyena, and the saliva of the sea-calf, and other parts of loathsome beasts, have a certain virtue in the cure of diseases, so upon some who need severe chastisement God inflicts the implacable bitterness of a tyrant or the annoying oppression of a chieftain, and removes not what pains and troubles them till the disease is cured and purged away. Such a medicine was Phalaris[2] to the people of Agrigentum, and Marius to the Romans.[3] God indeed expressly foretold to the people of

[1] In the Phocian war two Phocian leaders with their associates seized the treasure deposited in the temple at Delphi, and used it to hire foreign mercenaries. Those concerned in the robbery were wandering as outlaws in Peloponnesus, when Timoleon enlisted them for service in Sicily against the Carthaginians. They contributed largely to his success; but after their dispersion most of them encountered such disasters as were regarded as the normal penalty of sacrilege.

[2] So little is really known about Phalaris that he is almost a mythical personage. His name, however, will always remain associated with his brazen bull, and his trying his first experiment with it by roasting in it its inventor, who certainly best deserved the doom.

[3] The readers of Roman history may doubt the medicinal virtue of Marius, who certainly served as a seton on the body politic.

Sicyon that they would of necessity be severely scourged, for seizing as of their own city Teletias, a Cleonaean youth, who had been crowned in the Pythian games, and then tearing him in pieces.[1] Accordingly Orthagoras, and after him Myron and Cleisthenes and their satellites, put an end to their lawlessness. But the Cleonaeans, not chancing to have the same curative treatment, came to naught.[2] Hear also Homer, when he says,

> "A son endowed with every virtue sprang
> From parentage that gave no sign of virtue."

This son of Copreus, of whom he thus speaks, achieved indeed no splendid or noble deeds; but the posterity of Sisyphus, and that of Autolycus, and that of Phlegyas, bloomed forth in the glories and virtues that belong to great kings. Pericles sprang from an infamous Athenian family,[3] and Pompey the Great in Rome was the son of Strabo,[4]

[1] History throws no light on this specific crime; but the Sicyonians had the reputation of being a licentious and otherwise vicious people. The curative process under Orthagoras and the dynasty that he founded lasted a full century.

[2] Of Cleonae we know very little except that it was, and now is not. Near its site is a hamlet of half a dozen houses that bears the name of Clenes. Nemea, where the Nemean games were held, was in its territory.

[3] One of his maternal ancestors had been cursed, and banished from Athens, a century and a half before his birth, for an insurrectionary enterprise.

[4] He was killed by lightning, which the people regarded as a retributive bolt from heaven. He deserved hatred, Cicero says, for his cruelty, treachery, and avarice.

whom the Roman people so hated that they cast his dead body out of doors and trod it under foot. What wonder is it then, if, as the farmer does not cut down the thorn-bush till he has taken from it the green shoots which he uses as salad, nor do the Libyans burn the cistus till they have collected the balsam which it yields, so God does not destroy the evil and thorny root of an honorable and royal race till the appropriate fruit springs from it? For it was better for the Phocians to have lost ten thousand of the cattle and horses of Iphitus, and a larger amount of gold and silver than was ever abstracted from Delphi, than that Odysseus[1] or Aesculapius[2] should not have been born, or that the world should have failed of the good and eminently useful men who have been the sons of wicked and depraved fathers.

8. But must we not think it better that punishments should take place in fitting time and way, than that they should be inflicted speedily and promptly? There was a fitness in the case of Callippus, who with the very same dagger with which he had procured the death of Dion while feigning to be his

[1] One tradition makes Odysseus the son of Sisyphus, and only the step-son of Laertes, who, however, married Anticleia before her son was born. Autolycus was the father of Anticleia, and it was he that stole the cattle of Iphitus.

[2] Aesculapius in Grecian fable was the son of Apollo by Coronis, the daughter of Phlegyas, who, in what might seem righteous indignation against the wanton god, set fire to his Delphian temple, having of course first ravaged it.

friend was himself killed by the friends of Dion;[1] and in that of the murderer of Mitius of Argos, who was killed in a riot, and whose brazen statue in the market-place fell with fatal issue on the man who had killed him. You, Patrocleas, must, I am sure, know about Bessus the Paeonian, and Aristo the Oetaean, the commander of the foreign soldiers.

No, by Zeus, said PATROCLEAS, I do not know, but I want to know about them.

Aristo,[2] said I, by leave of the tyrants,[3] took away the ornaments of Eriphyle deposited here,[4] and carried them as a present to his wife; but his son, being for some reason angry with his mother, set

[1] Dion obtained supreme power in Syracuse, though not the title of King, on the expulsion of Dionysius the younger. Callippus, his professed friend, was the leader of the band of malcontents that killed Dion, although he did not kill him with his own hand, perhaps shrinking from the act of murder on account of an oath which, when under suspicion, he had sworn at the altar of Persephone, that he would remain faithful to his friend. His aim was the place which Dion had held. It was his but a little while, and then, after a series of misfortunes and wanderings, he was killed at Rhegium with the same weapon that had been employed in the murder of Dion.

[2] Eriphyle received a golden necklace as a reward for betraying her husband Amphiaraus, who secreted himself to avoid going to the Theban war in which it was predicted that he should perish. His son Alcmaeon avenged his father by killing his mother, and then made of the necklace a sacred deposit in the temple at Delphi. Aristo was the commander of one of the bands of mercenaries hired by the pillage of the temple.

[3] The Phocian leaders who committed this sacrilege.

[4] In this temple.

the house on fire, and burned all that were in it. Bessus, it is said, killed his father, and escaped detection for a long time. But at length, going to supper among strangers, he shook down a swallow's nest with his spear, and killed the young birds; and when those present asked, as was natural, what had provoked him to do so strange a thing, he said, "Do they not, even of old, bear false witness against me, and cry out that I killed my father?" Those who heard him, marvelling at what he said, told the king, and, on investigation, Bessus suffered due punishment.

9. What I have said thus far has been said on the supposition that, as is generally thought, there is an actual delay in the punishment of the wicked. But as to what may yet be said on this point, it may be well for us to listen to Hesiod, who maintains, not, with Plato, that punishment is a suffering that follows wrong-doing, but that it is a twin birth with wrong-doing, springing from the same soil and the same root; for he says,

> "Bad counsel does most harm to him who gives it,"

and,

> "Who does another wrong himself most wrongs."

The cantharis,[1] by a certain contrast in the elements of its physical structure, is said to contain within itself the antidote for the wound which it makes.

[1] The Spanish fly, which was used for medicinal purposes in very early times, as it is now.

But — the converse of this — guilt, bringing with itself into being its own pain and punishment, not subsequently to, but in the very act of wrong-doing receives its penalty. The malefactor who is to be crucified carries his cross with his own body; and in like manner wickedness creates from itself, to be borne by itself, each several form of chastisement, being, so to speak, an expert artificer of a wretched life, attended by thronging fears and distressing emotions, by ceaseless remorse and constant perturbation. But some persons are like children, who, often seeing in the theatres malefactors in gold-embroidered tunics and purple mantles, crowned and dancing, admire and applaud them as happy beings, until they appear on the stage goaded and scourged, and with fire streaming from their gay and finely wrought apparel.[1] For many of the wicked, surrounded by large families, and possessed of places of high command and extended authority, are not visibly punished till they are seen slain or hurled down a precipice, which ought to be called, not punishment, but the end or consummation of punishment. As Plato says that Herodicus, the

[1] Such spectacles — never, so far as we know, witnessed in Greece — were not uncommon in Rome. Christians were thus exhibited and murdered on the stage in the sight of admiring and applauding multitudes; and we have no reason to doubt that other reputed malefactors were similarly dealt with. This treatise may have been written after Plutarch had been in Rome; at any rate, Roman customs were well known throughout the empire.

Selymbrian, being attacked with phthisis, an incurable disease, and being the first to unite gymnastics with the healing art, made death long for himself and for those similarly affected; so too such of the wicked as seem to escape immediate punishment receive, not after a long time, but during a long time, not a slower, but a longer punishment; nor are they punished when they grow old, but they grow old in a state of punishment. Yet it is only to you that I speak of a long time; for to the gods any period of human life is as nothing, and "now, not thirty years hence," is to them as it would be to us for a malefactor to be put to torture or hanged this evening, and not to-morrow morning. Besides, one is kept in life as in a prison that has no outlet or mode of escape; yet he may enjoy frequent feasts, may transact business, may receive presents and kindnesses, like the men who play with dice or at draughts in prison, with the rope hanging over their heads.

10. Indeed, why may I not say that those under sentence of death are not punished till their heads are cut off, — and that he who has been condemned to drink hemlock, and then goes about and remains unaffected till his legs grow heavy, is not punished until he is overpowered by the deadening of the muscles and the congealing of the blood, combined with the loss of consciousness, — if we confine the name of punishment to the last stage of punishment, and leave out of the account the sufferings,

and terrors, and apprehension, and remorse, which in the mean while prey upon every guilty soul? As well might we maintain that a fish that has swallowed the hook is not caught till we see it roasted by the cook or cut up on the table. For every wrong-doer is in the grasp of justice so soon as he has swallowed as a bait the pleasure connected with his sin, having a conscience resting heavily upon him, and driven hither and thither in the endeavor to expiate his guilt,

"As the impetuous tunny ploughs the sea."

Up to the time when the crime is committed, the well-known assurance and audacity of guilt are strong and efficient; but afterward the excitement subsides like a wind that dies away, and the mind, enfeebled and dispirited, becomes subject to fears and superstitions, — so that Clytemnestra's dream, as related by Stesichorus, is in conformity with experience and truth. The verses are:

"A dragon seemed to come with blood-smeared head,
And took the form of King Pleisthenides."[1]

Indeed, visions in sleep, noonday apparitions, oracles, peals of thunder, and whatever events can seem to take place by the agency of God, are fraught with tempests and terrors for those who are in this con-

[1] Agamemnon, the husband of Clytemnestra, whom she murdered on his return from Troy, was the son of Pleisthenes. Stesichorus wrote a tragedy entitled *Orcstes*, from which, undoubtedly, these verses are taken.

dition. Thus, it is said that Apollodorus[1] once in his sleep saw himself flayed by Scythians, then boiled, and his own heart speaking out of the caldron, and saying, "I have brought all this upon thee"; and again, that he saw his daughters on fire, their bodies in flames, running round him in a circle. It is said, too, that Hipparchus,[2] the son of Peisistratus, shortly before his death, saw Aphrodite sprinkling blood upon his face from a vial. The friends of Ptolemy surnamed Ceraunus[3] saw him summoned to the tribunal by Seleucus, with vultures and wolves for his judges, while he was distributing large portions of flesh to his enemies. Pausanias,[4] having sent to seize by force Cleonice,

[1] Apollodorus, king of the small state of Cassandreia, was regarded as having been unsurpassed in tyranny, cruelty, and debauchery. The mention of his daughters in this vision makes it probable that he was guilty of some horrible outrage of violence or lust of which they were the victims.

[2] The crime or type of depravity of which Hipparchus was guilty can be inferred only from the vision here reported.

[3] Ptolemy Ceraunus was the eldest son of Ptolemy Soter; but, on account of his violent passions and moral obliquity, his father designated a younger son as his successor. Ceraunus then emigrated to Macedonia, became intimate with Seleucus, murdered him treacherously, and himself assumed the sovereignty; but in less than a year he was defeated by the Gauls who then first invaded that region, was taken prisoner, and was put to death with the utmost barbarity.

[4] Plutarch tells this story with fuller details in his life of Cimon. The Pausanias referred to is the Spartan viceroy and general of that name. Byzantium, which had been a stronghold of the Persians, was held by the Lacedaemonians, under Pausanias, at the time of the retreat of the Ten Thousand.

a free-born maiden in Byzantium, that he might have her company by night, and then, in consequence of some unaccountable mental disturbance or suspicion, killing her when she arrived, often saw her in his dreams, saying to him,

"Come quick to judgment; lust works woe to man."

The vision not being discontinued, it is said, he set sail for the oracle of the dead at Heracleia, and there, by fitting propitiatory sacrifices and libations, he called up the maiden's soul;[1] and she, coming into his presence, told him that he should rest from these troubles on his arrival at Lacedaemon. As soon as he arrived there, he died.

11. Thus, if there is nothing for the soul after death, that is, if death is the end of all reward and punishment, one might be disposed to say that the Deity deals indulgently and leniently with those of the wicked who are soon punished and die early. For were it maintained that in their lifetime the wicked incur no other evil than the conviction that wrong-doing is utterly fruitless and graceless, and for the many and great conflicts of mind that it costs confers no benefit nor anything worthy of

[1] The rites differ; but the belief in necromancy has undergone no essential change from the days of the witch of Endor to the present time, and there have probably been in every age, as now, ceremonies which have brought credulous men and women into imagined communion with departed spirits. The history of necromancy shows many resemblances, and still more analogies, in different countries, ages, and degrees of culture.

endeavor, the perception of this alone is fatal to the soul's happiness. It is with the evil-doer as with Lysimachus,[1] who, compelled by thirst to surrender his person and his command to the Getae, having quenched his thirst and being at the same time made a prisoner, exclaimed, "Alas for my guilt in suffering myself to be deprived of so great a kingdom for so brief a pleasure!" It is, indeed, in a case like this, exceedingly difficult to resist the necessity created by a natural appetite. But when a man, either from inordinate desire for wealth, or from envy of those possessed of civic honor and power, or for the sake of some sensual gratification, commits an unlawful and abominable deed, and, after the thirst and madness of passion have subsided, sees in due time the vile and fearful traits of character which lead to crime established permanently within him, while he can discern in himself nothing useful, or serviceable, or profitable, is it not probable that the thought often occurs to him that for vainglory or for slavish and fruitless pleasure, he has set at naught the greatest and best things that are accounted right among men, and thus whelmed his life in shame and trouble? For as Simonides[2] said in jest that he found the chest of

[1] One of Alexander's generals, and after Alexander's death king of Thrace.

[2] Simonides is said to have been the first poet who eulogized the subjects of his verse from mercenary motives. As his panegyrics had great poetical merit, and were much sought and well

money always full, that of thanks empty, so the wicked, having a clear view of their own guilt, find it — after the indulgence which yields for the moment an empty pleasure — utterly devoid of hope, and always laden with fears and griefs, with cheerless memories, suspicion of what the future may bring, and distrust of the present. Thus, as we hear Ino say on the stage, repenting of what she has done, —

> "Dear women, tell me how, as at the first,
> As if this deed of mine were uncommitted,
> The house of Athamas may be my home," [1] —

so it is probable that the soul of every evil-doer discusses these things within itself, and considers how it can by any possibility evade the memory of its misdeeds, cast out from itself the consciousness of them, and, becoming pure, start as if from the beginning on a new life. For wickedness manifests neither courage, nor modesty, nor consistency, nor steadfastness in the objects of its preference, — unless, by Zeus, we admit that evil-doers are wise;

paid for, yet with few expressions of gratitude, he was wont to say that his chest of money was full, the chest designed for thanks empty.

[1] These verses are probably from a lost tragedy of Euripides. The myths about Ino are various, and mutually inconsistent. According to some she killed, according to others she endeavored to kill, the children of her husband, Athamas, by a former wife. Still others charge her with the murder of her own son or sons. She at length leaped into the sea, and emerged a goddess, under the name of Leucothea, — certainly a better name in heaven than she could have borne on earth.

but where avarice, and eager voluptuousness, and implacable envy, are associated with malice and depravity, there also, on examination, you may see beneath the surface superstition, and effeminate indolence, and dread of death, and an abrupt vacillation of impulses, and an arrogant pretence to undeserved honor. Men of this character fear those who blame them, and at the same time dread those who praise them, as those whom they have wronged by their hypocrisy, and as persons especially hostile to the wicked, as is evinced in their cordial commendation of those who seem to be good. Indeed, the hardness in depravity, as in bad iron, is brittle, and what seems in it to have the greatest power of resistance is easily broken in pieces. Hence, in process of time, as bad men come to the knowledge of themselves, they are depressed, and grow peevish, and hold their own manner of life in abhorrence. When a mean man restores a deposit intrusted to his care, or gives security for a friend, or with honorable ambition confers gifts and services on his country, and immediately repents and is in trouble for what he has done, because of the utter instability and vacillation of his mind, — and when some who are applauded in the theatre for their generosity groan as their love of glory is merged in their love of money, — can it be that those who, like Apollodorus,[1] sacrifice men in the

[1] Apollodorus is said to have bound his associates in some movement for his own aggrandizement by bringing them together

interest of their tyrannies and conspiracies, or like Glaucus,[1] the son of Epicydes, plunder the property of their friends, do not feel remorse, nor hate themselves, nor suffer grief, for the crimes that they have committed? I, indeed, if it is not irreverent thus to speak, do not think that those who work iniquity need any avenger among gods or men; but their own life suffices for their punishment, being utterly corrupted and kept in constant agitation by their guilt.

12. Consider now whether our discussion has exceeded a reasonable time.

TIMON replied,[2] — Perhaps so, with reference to the time that will yet be required; for I am going to bring forward the last doubt as a combatant held in reserve, since the others have been fairly conquered. What Euripides with the utmost boldness of speech

at a festival, and at its close giving them evidence that they had been feeding on human victims.

[1] Glaucus, a Lacedaemonian, had a high reputation for integrity, and on the ground of it received from a foreigner a deposit of a large sum of money. When the owner's sons claimed the deposit, he disclaimed all knowledge of it. But a threat of the Delphian oracle led him to make restitution afterward. Nevertheless the threat took effect, and he and his whole family perished.

[2] In this section Timon seems to cite indiscriminately the cases of delayed or protracted punishment by men which are confessedly foolish or wicked, and alleged instances of delayed punishment on the part of the gods. The *gravamen* of the objection is, "How can that be just or right for the gods to do, which when men do they encounter either ridicule or condemnation?"

inveighs against the gods for doing, namely, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, account us as tacitly charging upon them. Certainly, if those who have done wrong were themselves punished, there is no justice in chastising those who have done no wrong; for it is not right to punish even the evil-doers in their own person twice for the same offence; and if the gods, in their remissness failing to punish the guilty, afterward inflict penalties on the innocent, they do not fittingly make amends for their slow doing by unrighteous doing. Take the case of Aesop.[1] It is said that he came hither with money furnished by Croesus, intending to offer a magnificent sacrifice to the god of the temple, and to distribute among the citizens of Delphi four minas[2] apiece. But, as it is reported, having become disaffected toward the people here

[1] That Aesop was killed by the Delphians for the cause here stated there seems to be no doubt; nor yet that Idmon, a descendant of the man of the same name who had owned and emancipated Aesop, received a large sum of money from the Delphians by way of expiation for their crime, to which they had probably in the mean time ascribed every bad harvest and every epidemic. It must be remembered that, before the rotation of crops became the habit of agriculturists, bad harvests were very frequent, and that, in the absence of sanitary rules and precautions, dangerous epidemics prevailed at short intervals in all the cities of the old world. It was not unnatural that these calamities should have been regarded as retributive judgments where a gross crime had been committed.

[2] A *mina* was about the metallic equivalent of twenty dollars, but of course with a much larger purchasing power.

on account of some affront or quarrel, he made the sacrifice indeed, but sent the rest of the money back to Sardis, not thinking the men of Delphi worthy of the gift. They then raised against him the charge of sacrilege, and put him to death by throwing him from yonder cliff, which they call Hyampeia. From that time it is said that the god was angry with them, and made their soil unfruitful, and sent among them all kinds of strange diseases, so that they went round among the public assemblies of the Grecian cities, proclaiming with earnest entreaty that whoever would demand justice of them in behalf of Aesop should receive full satisfaction. But not until the third generation came Idmon, the Samian, not related to Aesop, except as the descendant of those who had bought him at Samos, and to him the Delphians made satisfaction in the ways prescribed, and were freed from their calamities. It was on that account, it is said, that the people changed the place of punishment for sacrilege from Hyampeia to the cliff called Nauplia. Now those who hold the memory of Alexander in the fondest regard, of whom I am one, do not approve of his sacking the city of Branchidae,[1] and destroying its inhabitants of all ages,

[1] A small town in Central Asia, built by the Branchidae, who were priests and custodians of the temple of Apollo Didymeus in an Ionian city bearing their name, near Miletus. The temple was burned by Darius, was rebuilt, and was burned again by Xerxes, on his retreat from Greece. The priests surrendered the treasures

because their great-grandfathers had treacherously delivered up the temple of Miletus. So Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse, derided and teased the Corcyraeans,[1] when they asked him why he ravaged their island, saying, "By Zeus, because your fathers showed hospitality to Odysseus." Again, when the people of Ithaca complained that his soldiers were stealing their sheep, he replied, "Your king not only did the like, but put out the shepherd's[2] eye." But is not Apollo more unreasonable than these men whom I have named, if he is now ruining the Pheneatae by stopping up the outlet of their streams, and putting their whole country under water,[3] because Hercules is said a thousand years ago to have

under their charge to Xerxes, followed him in his flight to escape punishment for sacrilege, and built the town which Alexander destroyed. His alleged motive for his cruel treatment of the Branchidae was revenge for the sacrilege and treason of their ancestors.

[1] It was at Scheria, according to Homer, that Odysseus was kindly received by Nausicaa, entertained sumptuously by King Alcinous, her father, and provided with the ship on board of which he reached Ithaca. The inhabitants of Corcyra maintained that their island was the Homeric Scheria, which very probably never existed except in the poet's brain.

[2] Polyphemus.

[3] The territory of Pheneus is so situated at the confluence of two mountain streams as to be of necessity liable to inundation. There was an old canal, said to have been constructed by Hercules, and designed to carry off any abnormal excess of water; but it had early become obstructed and useless, and Pliny says that there had been no less than five periods when the region had been entirely devastated by the overflow of the rivers.

stolen the oracular tripod and carried it to Pheneus? And was he less unreasonable in announcing to the Sybarites that they should see the end of their calamities, when by three destructive visitations they should have appeased the wrath of the Leucadian Hera?[1] Nor is it so very long a time since the Locrians ceased sending virgins to Troy.

> "With naked limbs, bare feet, and servile guise,
> At early dawn they sweep Athene's temple,
> Unveiled, while age remorseless steals upon them."

And all this because of the licentiousness of Ajax.[2] Now where is the reasonableness or rightfulness of

[1] There were three occasions on which the Sybarites incurred the special anger of Hera. Her statue was overturned in some civic commotion. Afterward the people of Sybaris killed thirty members of a delegation from their neighbors of Crotona, and cast out their bodies to be devoured by wild beasts. On this occasion, the goddess was seen by night with an angry and threatening mien. In the third place, a slave who had taken refuge at her altar was pursued and scourged by his master, who held his father's tomb as so much more sacred than her temple that he ceased beating the slave when he sought refuge there. Sybaris is known to have been twice destroyed before Plutarch's time. There may have been a third destruction of which we have no record; but there is nothing in the text to forbid our so construing it as to leave the threat still hanging over the city, and the third destruction still impending.

[2] The tradition was that Ajax was guilty of an outrage on Cassandra, the priestess of Athene. He on his return voyage was destroyed by shipwreck, and the Locrians were supposed to have suffered on account of his crime visitations of pestilence and other dire calamities. When they consulted the oracle, the reply was, that the guilt of Ajax could be expiated only by their sending annually to Troy, for a thousand years, two virgins to perform

these things? Equally little can we commend the Thracians[1] for still tattooing their wives, to avenge Orpheus; or the barbarians about the Po, who wear black, as they say, in mourning for Phaethon, which seems all the more ridiculous when we consider that, while those who lived when Phaethon perished cared nothing at all about the matter, their posterity of the fifth or the tenth generation are changing their garments and mourning for him.[2] Yet this is merely foolish, not atrocious or intolerable. But on what justifiable ground does the anger of the gods, suddenly disappearing, as some rivers do, break out again in a different place, on other people than the evil-doers, terminating only in extreme calamity?

13. As soon as Timon came to a pause, fearing that with a fresh start he might bring forth more and greater absurdities, I instantly asked him,—Do you really think that all these things are true?

If not all, said he, yet if some of them be true, do you not think that the discussion labors under the same difficulty?

menial service in the temple of Athene. The hero, the crime, and the expiation are, more probably than not, all mythical.

[1] The Thracian men were tattooed as well as the women, and it was probably for both men and women a preferred mode of ornament.

[2] I can find nowhere else any reference to this observance; but nothing is more probable than that Phaethon's name should have been attached to some religious anniversary in the region in which he was said to have perished.

Perhaps, said I; and so to persons in a high fever, whether they chance to wear one garment, or to be wrapped in many, the burning heat is nearly or quite the same, and yet it contributes to their relief to remove the multitude of coverings. But if the patient is unwilling to have this done, let him have his own way. Yet most of these stories seem like myths and fictions. But recall to mind the religious festival lately held here, when you saw the magnificent portion of the viands[1] which the heralds took from the table, proclaiming that it was due to the posterity of Pindar, and remember how solemn and sweet this token of honor seemed to you.

But, said he, who would not be delighted by the gracefulness of a commemoration so entirely Grecian and so simply archaic? unless he had, to borrow Pindar's own words, a black heart forged in a cold fire.

There is then no need, said I, of my citing a similar proclamation made in Sparta, "After the Lesbian singer,"[2] in honor and remembrance of the

[1] "Of the viands" is an interpolation of my own. At a feast a "portion" was "carried off," and I know not what it could have been, if not a part of the food and wine on the table. If there were none of Pindar's posterity at hand to receive the portion, there were undoubtedly hungry officials ready in this behalf to represent them.

[2] I suppose that the first place at a Spartan civic festival was formally assigned to Terpander, long dead, and that the most distinguished living guest was made to regard himself as second in honor.

ancient Terpander; for the principle is the same. But you,[1] I suppose, think yourselves superior to other Boeotians, as being of the race of the Opheltiadae;[2] you make similar claims among the Phocians[3] by virtue of your descent from Daiphantus;[4] and you, indeed, were the first to stand by me and help me in preserving for the Lycormaeans and the Satilaeans[5] their hereditary honor, and the right to wear crowns in public which belongs to the posterity of Hercules, — maintaining that lasting honors and favors are due to those descended from Hercules, because he, though a great benefactor to the Greeks, never received his due of gratitude, or any fitting recompense.

You remind us, said TIMON, of a truly noble contest, and of one in which it was especially becoming for a philosopher to take part.

Relax then, my friend, said I, the severity of your accusation, and do not take it so hard if some of the descendants of wicked and depraved people

[1] Ὑμεῖς. Plutarch is here addressing, not Timon alone, but two or all three of his interlocutors.

[2] Descendants of Opheltes. He came from Thessaly to Thebes, and brought with him a body of armed adherents. He founded a royal line in Boeotia.

[3] Delphi being in Phocis, the claims on the score of Daiphantus would be availing in all processions and festivities connected with the temple service.

[4] A victory that the Phocians under Daiphantus had gained five hundred years before was still celebrated in Plutarch's time.

[5] I can find elsewhere no notice of these races, or families.

are punished; or else do not welcome or commend the honor rendered to worthy parentage. For if we would retain the reward of virtue in the posterity of the virtuous, we cannot reasonably think that punishments for misdoings ought to fail and cease, but must suppose that they will run on at even pace with the rewards, giving retribution in each case in proportion to desert. But he who gladly sees the posterity of Cimon honored in Athens, yet is vexed and angry at the exile of the descendants of Lachares[1] or of Ariston,[2] is very stupid and feeble-minded, or rather has the presumption to take the place of a wrangler and railer against the Divine Being, — accusing him, forsooth, if the children's children of an unrighteous and wicked man seem to prosper, and again accusing him if the posterity of bad ancestors are suffered to decline and to become extinct, — indeed, finding equal fault with God when the children of a good father or those of a bad father fare ill.

14. Let these considerations serve you as defences against those who are so excessively bitter

[1] Lachares was a demagogue who early in the third century B. C. obtained virtually supreme power in Athens, plundered the Parthenon, stripped the statue of Athene of its ornaments, committed numerous acts of high-handed tyranny, and was finally expelled from the city on the charge of having taken measures for betraying it into the hands of Antiochus.

[2] Ariston was an Epicurean philosopher, who raised himself to a virtual tyranny in Athens, but surrendered to Sulla when he besieged the city.

and ôbjurgatory. But taking up again the beginning of the thread in our discussion concerning God, — obscure, indeed, and with many turnings and windings, — let us direct our way discreetly and deliberately toward what is probable and credible. For not even in the things which we ourselves do can we always state with confidence the actual and true meaning. Thus we cannot tell why we order the children of those who die of phthisis or of dropsy to sit with their feet in water till the corpse is buried, though it is believed that in this case they neither contract the disease at the time nor are liable to it afterward. Nor, again, can we tell the reason why, when a goat takes into his mouth a piece of snakeroot,[1] the whole flock stand still till the goatherd comes and takes it out of his mouth. There are properties of various objects that are transfused or transmitted in ways incredible as to velocity and distance. In these cases we are indeed more surprised at remoteness of time than of space. Yet it is really more amazing that Athens should have been infected throughout with a pestilence[2] that began in Aethiopia, and that Pericles should have died of it, and Thucydides should have been attacked by it, than that, if the Delphians and the Sybarites have been wicked, protracted punish-

[1] Ἠρυγγίτην, *eryngium*, now the name of a genus containing several species of snakeroot.

[2] The plague that raged in Athens early in the Peloponnesian war, of which Thucydides gives so remarkable an account.

ment should come upon their posterity. For all properties of objects have mutual action and reaction from their very beginning till now, and bear relations to one another of which, though we are ignorant of the cause, it none the less produces its appropriate effect.

15. Nevertheless, the public calamities of cities have obviously their reason in justice. For a city has unity and continuity like a living creature, not devesting itself of identity by the changes that occur at successive periods of its life, nor becoming a different being from its former self by the lapse of time, but always retaining a conscious selfhood with the peculiarities that belong to it, and receiving the entire blame or praise of whatever it does or has done in its collective capacity, so long as the community which constitutes it and binds it together remains a unit. But dividing it by successive periods of time so as to make of a single city many cities, or rather an infinite number of cities, is like making of one man many men, because he is now elderly, yet once was younger, and still earlier was a mere stripling. This might remind one of the Epicharmians, from whom the sophists derived the cumulative argument,[1] according to

[1] Plutarch gives an early specimen of this argument in his life of Theseus : "The ship wherein Theseus and the youth of Athens returned [from Crete] was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus ; for they took away the old planks as they decayed, putting new and stronger timber in

which he who used to be in debt now owes nothing, having become a different man, and he who was yesterday invited to supper to-day comes uninvited, being another person. However, different periods of life make greater changes in every one of us than they ordinarily make in cities. One who sees Athens would recognize it thirty years afterward; for the present manners, sports, industries, likings, and resentments of the people closely resemble those of former days. But after a considerable time, scarce a kinsman or friend would recognize a man's countenance and form; while the change of manners readily brought about in a person by differing fashions of intercourse, employment, experience, and legal obligation look strange and new even to one who has always known him. But yet the man is said to be one and the same man from the beginning to the end. The city in like manner remaining the same, we regard it as involved in the disgrace of its ancestry by the very right by which it shares their glory and their power. Else we shall throw everything into the river of Heracleitus, into which, he says, no one can enter twice, because changing nature is transposing and altering all things.

16. But if a city is one continuous entity, equally

their place, insomuch that this ship became a standing example among the philosophers for the logical question, as to things that grow; one party holding that the ship remained the same, and the other contending that it was not the same."

so is a race that springs from one original stock and carries along with it certain common tendencies derived from that stock; and that which is born is not, like a manufactured article, separated from him who produced it; for it exists from him, not merely by him, so that it possesses and bears within itself some part of him, which is properly the object of chastisement or of commendation. Not in mere sport I would say that it was more unjust for the Athenians to destroy the brazen statue of Cassander,[1] and for the people of Syracuse to cast beyond their borders the body of Dionysius,[2] than for the posterity of those men to suffer punishment. For there was nothing of the nature of Cassander in the statue, and the soul of Dionysius had already left the corpse; but in Nisaeus,[3] and Apollocrates,[4] and Antipater and Philip,[5] and equally in

[1] Athens had been under the government of men who had been virtually Cassander's viceroys. The city after his death came under the rule of Demetrius Poliorcetes, and it was probably by his order that the statue of Cassander was destroyed.

[2] Dionysius the elder.

[3] Nisaeus was the son of Dionysius the elder, and was sovereign of Syracuse for a short time while his brother Dionysius the younger was in exile. Aelian names him in a chapter specially devoted to eminent φιλοπόται, i. e. drunkards.

[4] Apollocrates was the son of Dionysius the younger, and grandson of the elder. His father in going into exile left him in command of the citadel of Syracuse, which he was soon compelled to surrender. He holds the third place, as Nisaeus the second, in Aelian's list of distinguished drunkards.

[5] These were both sons of Cassander. Philip succeeded his father as king of Macedonia, but died almost immediately upon

other sons of wicked parents, there was implanted, and remains continuously, the part of their parents that had the mastery over their lives, and in the children this is not quiescent or inactive, but they live by it, and are nourished by it, and order their conduct by it, and think as it prompts. Nor is it at all marvellous or absurd that, being the children of such men, they should possess their qualities. In fine, I would say that, as in the healing art, whatever is beneficial is therefore right, and as he would be ridiculous who should think it wrong in a case of hip-disease to cauterize the thumb, and when the liver is ulcerated to scarify the upper part of the abdomen, and when the hoofs of oxen are tender to anoint the tips of their horns,[1] equally is he ridiculous who thinks in the matter of punishment that anything else than the cure of wickedness is right, and who is vexed when the remedy is applied to some parts rather than to others, after the manner of those who open a vein to cure ophthalmia. Nor

his accession to the throne, leaving probably memory of his vices, of which Plutarch had knowledge, but no record of which has come down to our time. Antipater, his next younger brother, in some sort succeeded him, first murdering his mother, who favored the claims of her still younger son. He himself was murdered before he could obtain undisturbed possession of his kingdom.

[1] These obsolete modes of medical practice can now only provoke a smile ; but the argument is complete, if we will substitute for them the treatment cited at the close of the sentence, — blood-letting for ophthalmia, which, if not in rule now, was so thirty years ago.

does such a person seem to look beyond the range of his bodily senses; nor does he bear it in mind that a teacher in whipping one boy admonishes all, and that a general in the capital punishment of one out of ten brings all the guilty men under his command back to their duty. In truth not only is one part of the body cured through another part, but there are certain dispositions of mind and conduct, equally those that are evil and those that tend to reformation, as to which soul is influenced by soul more than body is affected by body. For from body to body the same affection and the same change seem to be transmitted; while in the case under consideration the soul, through the influence of the imagination, becomes worse or better in a degree corresponding to the intensity of hope or fear.

17. While I was still speaking, OLYMPICUS interrupted me, saying, — You seem to have, underlying this reasoning of yours, an hypothesis of prime importance, — the continued existence of the soul.

Yes, said I, inasmuch as you yourselves admit it, or rather did admit it; for the argument from the very beginning proceeded from the supposition that God deals with men according to their merits.

OLYMPICUS replied, — Do you think that it follows from God's dealing with us according to our merits, that souls are either absolutely incorruptible,

or destined at least to continue in being for a certain period after death ?[1]

I replied, — No, my good friend. God, forsooth, is so petty and so trifling,[2] that — as if we had nothing of the divine in us, nor anything closely resembling him, and stable and firm, but were, as Homer says, mere leaves, like those that wither and perish altogether — he makes such account of us as the women do of their gardens of Adonis,[3] which they tend and cultivate in earthen pots, — souls lasting for a day, blooming in a frail flesh that has no strong root of life, then at once extinguished by any casualty that may chance to occur. But if you choose, making no mention of other gods, look at this one of ours here, and say whether you suppose that he, knowing that the souls of the dying are instantly destroyed when they are exhaled from their bodies, like clouds or smoke-wreaths, should demand so many propitiations for those who die, and such tokens of great reverence and honor for

[1] The reference in this last clause is to the opinion largely held by the Stoics, that the soul is not immortal, but is destined to survive the body, and to live till the consummation of the existing universe, which, after completing a cycle of many thousands of years, will be destroyed by fire.

[2] This sentence is, as I believe, ironical. Some editors and translators make it interrogative ; but the grammatical construction, as it seems to me, is opposed to this view.

[3] This term, as applied to vessels or shallow earth-beds, where what is sown can only spring up and wither without coming to seed, occurs in Plato's Phaedrus. The very brief life and

the dead, thus deceiving and deluding those who believe in him. I therefore would not deny the continued existence of the soul, unless some one, like Hercules, should carry off the tripod of the Pythian priestess, and abolish and destroy the oracle. For while even down to our own time many such things are foretold by the oracle as are said to have been announced to Corax of Naxos,[1] it is unholy to deem the soul capable of dying.

Then PATROCLEAS said, — What was that prediction, and who was that Corax? Both the story and the name are unfamiliar to me.

By no means, said I; but I was to blame in using a by-name instead of the real name. For he who killed Archilochus in battle was named Calondas, as they say, and had Corax for a surname. He, having been first driven out of the temple by the Pythian priestess because he had killed a man sacred to the Muses, then employing prayers and entreaties with a statement of the case in his own

untimely end of Adonis may perhaps account for this peculiar use of his name.

[1] Several hundred years ago. Archilochus, the earliest Ionian lyric poet, flourished, and was killed in battle, in the seventh century B. C. This entire passage may be regarded as an *argumentum de concessis*, and as such it is perfectly legitimate. The inspiration of the Delphian oracle and priestess was believed in by many of those for whom Plutarch wrote; and to them he said, "Can you believe that all these oracular utterances about expiations for the dead and posthumous honors to be paid to them have had reference to beings that ceased to exist when they ceased to breathe?"

justification, was ordered to go to the residence of Tettix,[1] in order to propitiate the soul of Archilochus. This place was Taenarus;[2] for there it is said that Tettix the Cretan arrived with a fleet, built a city, and established himself hard by the oracle of the dead. In like manner, the Spartans were ordered by the oracle to propitiate the soul of Pausanias, and they sent for necromancers from Italy, who by their sacrifices drove the apparition of Pausanias from the temple.[3]

18. There is then, said I, one course of reasoning which confirms equally the providence of God and

[1] Or, "the home of the grasshopper"; for *tettix* (τέττιξ) means *grasshopper*. The oracle, as usual, was ambiguous. Calondas, *alias* Corax, is represented as not understanding it at first, but finding out afterward that a Cretan named Tettix had settled at Taenarus, or Taenarum, he inferred that his home was designated by the oracle.

[2] This place was on the southernmost cape of Greece, now Cape Matapan. The peninsula which forms this cape had a famous temple of Poseidon, was sacred to the infernal gods, and was the site of an avenue, through a cave, to and from the infernal regions, — the avenue by which Hercules dragged Cerberus to the light of day.

[3] Pausanias, the Spartan, after a career of mingled glory and shame, being detected in treasonable intrigues, took refuge in the temple of Athene. When he was nearly exhausted by hunger the Ephori dragged him out of the temple, and he died at its threshold. For their sacrilege the Delphian oracle ordered that he should be re-interred on the spot where he died, and that two brazen statues should be erected in honor of the goddess in her temple at the public charge. Very naturally, his ghost was supposed to haunt the sacred enclosure whence he had been taken to die. See p. 28, n. 4.

the continued life of the human soul, and neither can remain credible if the other is taken away. But to the soul existing after death there is a stronger probability that rewards and punishments are rendered, than there is that they should be fully rendered in this life.[1] For during this life the soul is, like an athlete, in perpetual conflict; but when the conflict is over, then what the soul has deserved is allotted to it. Yet whatever favors or whatever chastisements the soul, being there by itself, receives, are of no concern to us living here, nay, they are disbelieved and they are out of the field of our knowledge; but these penalties that pass on through children and remoter posterity, being manifest to men living here, check and restrain many of the wicked. There is, indeed, no punishment more shameful or more sorrowful than for men to see their posterity suffering on their account. Were the soul of an impious and lawless man to behold after death, not his statues overthrown, or any honors that he had received cancelled, but his children, or friends, or kindred, or family, suffering great misfortunes and receiving punishment on his account, such a soul would not choose again to be depraved and profligate, — no, not even to obtain honors like those which belong

[1] The clause, "than there is that they should be fully rendered in this life," has nothing in the original to correspond to it; but it is necessary in order to convey the obvious meaning of the sentence.

to Zeus. To show this I have a story to tell, which I lately heard; but I hesitate, lest you may think it a myth, while I want to confine myself to what is reasonable.

Do not hesitate by any means, said OLYMPICUS, but tell the story.

The others made the same request.

Then, said I, permit me to finish my reasoning, and afterward we will take up the myth, if indeed it be a myth.

19. Bion[1] says that God in punishing the children of the wicked is more ridiculous than a physician who should administer medicine to a grandson or a son for his grandfather's or his father's illness. But the two things are in some respects unlike, though in others alike and similar. It is true, indeed, that one person's being medically treated does not remove another's illness, nor is one who is suffering from ophthalmia or from fever relieved by seeing another person anointed or plastered; but the punishments of the wicked are inflicted in the sight of all, because it is the office of justice reasonably administered to restrain some by means of the penalties endured by others. But the point

[1] Probably, as it seems to me, not Bion the poet, but a philosopher of that name, — a man of infamous character, an atheist in his professed belief, and remarkable for pithy and epigrammatic sayings, full of bitter humor and biting sarcasm, some of which are still extant. Horace speaks of those who find pleasure in *Bioneis sermonibus et sale nigro.*

in which Bion's comparison really applies to the subject under discussion escaped his discernment. When a man seized with a stubborn, but not necessarily incurable illness, yields up his body to the disease by intemperance and effeminacy, and dies in consequence, if his son, though not seeming to be ill, yet barely has a tendency to the same disease, his physician, or kinsman, or apothecary, or judicious master, putting him upon a rigid diet, taking from him stimulants, delicacies, strong drinks, and opportunities for sensual indulgence, employing medicaments continually, and disciplining his body by gymnastic exercises, excludes and expels the disease, not suffering the minute seed of a grievous bodily affection to grow into an appreciable magnitude. Do we not thus give our advice, thinking it fitting for the children of diseased fathers and mothers to take care of themselves, to be on their guard, and not to lose thought of their inherited hability to disease, but promptly taking the inborn malady in hand, to expel it at the beginning, while it is easily removed and has no fixed seat?

This is perfectly true, they say.

You grant then, I continue, that we do, not what is absurd, but what is necessary, — not what is ridiculous, but what is beneficial, — when we prescribe gymnastic exercises, diet, and medicine for the children of epileptics, or of hypochondriacs, or of sufferers from the gout, not because they are ill, but to prevent them from being ill. For a body born

of a diseased body is deserving, not indeed of punishment, but of medical treatment and of vigilance, which if any one sees fit to call the punishment of timidity and feebleness, his opinion is of no account. If then it is worth our while to cherish and to preserve the body born of a diseased body, ought we to permit the congenital likeness of wickedness to spring up and come to growth in a young character, and to wait till, having its issue in vicious passions, it becomes openly manifest, and, as Pindar says, displays the malignant fruit of the inmost soul?

20. In this matter God in his wisdom does not even transcend the sentiment expressed by Hesiod,[1]

> "From suppers of the gods the marriage-bed
> Approach, and not from rites funereal,"

implying that not only wickedness or virtue, but sadness, and happiness, and all other properties whatsoever, are transmitted from parents, so that those who would be responsible for bringing children into the world should be cheerful, and sweet-tempered, and genial. However, it is not the result of Hesiod's maxim nor the work of human wisdom, but of God, to discern and discriminate likenesses

[1] Or, "Is not God wiser than Hesiod?" With this interrogative construction, which the sentence will bear, the sense is, — "Hesiod teaches the hereditary transmission of character as a fact; God, still more, traces these inherited traits before they appear to human view." According to the rendering that I have given, the sense is, — "The transmission of character from father to son is recognized not only by God in his providence, but equally by wise men, as, for instance, by Hesiod."

and differences, before they become conspicuous by men's falling through the force of passion into great transgressions. The young of bears and wolves and monkeys, indeed, show at once their inborn disposition, without cover or concealment. But a man's nature, conforming to customs, opinions, and laws, conceals what in it is evil, and often imitates the good, in such a way as either altogether to wipe off and get rid of the native plague-spot of wickedness, or else to keep it long concealed, craftily veiling itself and escaping our notice, so that we are scarcely aware of his depravity when assailed as with a blow or sting by successive instances of his wrong-doing, — imagining, as is our wont, that men become wholly unrighteous when they first perform an unrighteous act, or licentious when they first gratify lust unlawfully, or cowards when they first flee from danger, — a simplicity that may be compared to one's thinking that the stings of scorpions grow when they first use them, or that the poison is generated in vipers at the moment when they bite. No bad man becomes and first appears bad at the same time; but one has the evil in him from the beginning, and puts it into practice, availing himself of opportunity and ability, the thief in stealing, the tyrant in exercising despotic rule. But God is not ignorant of any man's disposition and nature, inasmuch as he discerns the soul even more than the body; nor does he wait to punish till violence has been committed by the hands,

effrontery uttered by the voice, or lasciviousness actualized in fleshly deed. For he does not avenge himself on the wrong-doer as himself suffering wrong, nor is he angry with the robber as having been himself robbed, nor does he hate the adulterer as injured in his own honor; but he often punishes beforehand the adulterers, and the avaricious, and the unrighteous, to cure them, thus removing guilt, as physicians attempt to cure epilepsy, before the fit seizes the patient.

21. We were scandalized a little while ago because the punishment of the wicked is late and slow; yet now we equally call the Divine Providence in question, because for some it checks the vicious temperament and disposition before they become guilty; leaving it out of mind that the potential evil might be worse and more fearful than the crimes that are actually committed, and that which is concealed, than that which is in open view; and unable to comprehend the reasons why it is better to suffer some to do wrong, and to forestall others who are also evilly disposed, — just as medicines are unsuitable for some sick persons, while they are beneficial to some even who are not ill, yet in a more perilous condition than those who are. Nor do the gods visit all the transgressions of the fathers on the children; but if a good man is the son of a bad man, as one in sound health may be the son of an invalid, he is released from the penalty due to his race, as one taken by

adoption out of a guilty family. But for a youth who becomes conformed to the likeness of a depraved race, it is certainly fitting that he should receive the punishment of guilt as a due heritage. On the other hand, Antigonus was not punished for the sins of Demetrius,[1] nor, to cite other cases of bad men, was Phyleus made to pay the penalty for Augeas,[2] nor Nestor for Neleus;[3] for they, though the children of bad men, were good men. But as for those whose nature loves and cherishes the inborn evil, justice has its course, pursuing with penalty the sinful likeness that is in them. More-

[1] Demetrius Poliorcetes, king of Macedonia, who was guilty of great crimes, and in a not over-virtuous age was distinguished for unbounded licentiousness. He died in captivity, having surrendered to Seleucus, king of Syria, after expulsion from his own kingdom and a series of consequent disasters. Antigonus, his son, was a man of eminent virtue, had a diversified, but on the whole a prosperous career, and died at the age of eighty, after a reign of nearly half a century.

[2] Augeas, having made a contract with Hercules by which a tenth part of his cattle were to be the price for cleansing his stables in a day, refused to pay the price; and Hercules waged with him a war in which he and all his sons but Phyleus perished. Hercules placed Phyleus on his father's throne, as king of the Epeians in Elis. The father's story is, of course, mythical, and the son hardly falls within the domain of authentic history.

[3] The chief offence charged in Grecian myth against Neleus was his refusing to perform expiatory rites for Hercules after he had killed Iphitus, whose father was the friend of Neleus. Hercules, according to some traditions, made war on Pylos, the kingdom of Neleus, and killed him, with all his sons except Nestor.

over, as the warts and birth-stains and freckles of fathers, not appearing in their own children, crop out again in the children of their sons and daughters; as a certain Greek woman, giving birth to a black child, when accused of adultery, discovered that she was descended in the fourth generation from an Aethiopian; as among the children of Pytho the Nisibian, said to belong to the Sparti,[1] the one who died lately bore the impress of a spear on his body, — a race-mark after so many ages rising and emerging as from the depths of the sea, — so not infrequently earlier generations conceal and merge ancestral habits and dispositions, while afterward and through later generations the inherited nature comes to flower, and reproduces the family tendency to vice or to virtue.[2]

[1] *Sparti*, from σπείρω, *the sown men*, i. e. the armed men that sprang from the teeth of the dragon sown by Cadmus, from whom the oldest families in Thebes — a large part of the Boeotian aristocracy — were said to have descended. Something like this mythical birthmark had probably made its appearance on the body of a member of one of these ancient families. Nisibis was a Syrian city with an extensive commerce, with many Greek, and probably some Boeotian immigrants.

[2] It may be that, in cases where the inheritance of a morbid physical constitution, or of proclivity to moral evil, seems to lapse in the first generation and to reappear in the second, the children of the diseased or depraved father have the physical or moral traits of their father, but are made and kept vigilant and faithful in self-care and self-discipline by the memory of their father's infirmities or sins; while their children have the inheritance without the warning.

22. After saying these things, I was silent. But OLYMPICUS, smiling, said, — We are not ready to express our parting commendation of your reasoning, lest we may seem fully satisfied with your arguments, and lose the story. When we have heard that, we will pronounce our final sentence.

Then I spoke as follows :[1] — The Solian,[2] Thespesius, an associate and friend of that Protogenes who was here with us,[3] having led a very dissipated life in his youth, and in a short time squandering his property, for a while on account of his impoverished condition became desperately wicked, and, repenting of his wastefulness, sought in evil ways to become rich again, like those profligates who, when they have wives, do not keep them, but after divorcing them endeavor to corrupt them when they are married to other men. Abstaining from nothing vile that promised pleasure or profit, he got together in a short time a property by no means large, and the most ample reputation for depravity. But he was most widely known in connection with a certain response that was brought from the oracle

[1] If Plutarch made this story, as he probably did, it was undoubtedly suggested by the story, unlike in its details, yet with not dissimilar purpose, which Plato tells of Er, the Pamphilian, in the tenth book of *The Republic*.

[2] Soli was a considerable city in Cilicia.

[3] Μεθ' ἡμᾶς, *after us*, is the reading in all the manuscripts and older editions ; μεθ' ἡμῶν, *with us*, is a conjectural emendation which the sense seems to require.

of Amphilochus.[1] He sent thither, it is said, to ask the god whether he should be better off[2] for the rest of his life. The reply was that he would do better after he died. And this event in some sort happened to him not long afterward. Falling from a precipice and striking his neck on the ground, receiving no wound, but only a shock, he became as one dead, and the third day had already arrived for his funeral. But then, being suddenly aroused from his swoon and returning to himself, he made an incredible change in his manner of life; for the Cilicians know of no other person in his time more honest than he in keeping his engagements, more religiously devout, more resolutely hostile to his enemies,[3] or more loyal to his friends, so that those about him wanted to know the cause of the change,

[1] Amphilochus was one of the heroes of the Trojan war. He was the son of a seer, and was believed to be endowed with the gift of prophecy. The oracle bearing his name at Mallos in Cilicia was said to have been founded by him, and it had a wider and more enduring reputation for veracity than any other ancient oracle.

[2] Εἰ βέλτιον βιώσεται. The question related to his property, — to his means of comfortable living. I therefore use in translating it the familiar colloquialism, *better off*. The answer has a moral significance. Βέλτιον is an ambiguous word, — applicable equally to condition and to character.

[3] "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy," was sound ethical doctrine, equally with Gentile and with Jew, until men saw in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ the qualities of character which had been most despised, transfigured and glorified.

thinking that such a revolution in one's habits could not have taken place by chance. And they were right, as he told his story to Protogenes and to other equally intimate friends. When his body became unconscious, the feeling at first was such as a pilot would have if he were hurled from his ship into the sea. Then, being somewhat recovered, he seemed to breathe with entire freedom, and to look round in every direction, as if his soul had been a single open eye. He saw nothing that he had ever seen before; but he beheld immensely large stars, at vast distances from one another, emitting a lustre marvellous in tint, and shooting forth rays, on which the soul was borne on the light as in a chariot, in perfect quietness, easily and swiftly.

But — omitting the greater part of what he saw — he said that the souls of the dying rose from beneath like fiery bubbles through the parted air. Then, the bubbles gradually bursting, they came forth, having a human form, but of diminutive size. But they did not move alike; for some sprang forth with wonderful agility, and mounted straight upward, while others, whirling round in a circle like spindles, tending now downward and then again upward, were borne with a complicated and confused movement that could hardly be arrested even in a very long time. He did not, indeed, know who many of these souls were; but seeing two or three whom he recognized, he tried to join

them and talk with them. They, however, neither heard him, nor were in possession of their right mind; but, demented and shy, shrinking from sight and touch, they at first flitted round by themselves; then, meeting many souls in the same condition and mingling with them, they moved in all directions without aim or purpose, and gave utterance to inarticulate sounds like battle-cries mingled with strains of lamentation and terror. Others from above, in the zenith of the circumambient heavens, appeared refulgent, and often approached one another in a kindly way, yet avoiding those troubled souls; and they seemed to signify annoyance by shrinking within themselves, and pleasure and approval by the expansion and enlargement of the forms in which they moved.

Among these he said that he saw the soul of a kinsman of his, yet at first was not sure of his identity, as he himself was but a boy when this man died; but the soul, drawing near him, said, "Hail, Thespesius." When he marvelled at this, and replied that his name was not Thespesius, but Aridaeus, the soul said, "It was Aridaeus, but from henceforth it is Thespesius;[1] for you are not yet dead; but by a certain allotment of the gods you come hither with your perceptive faculties, while you have left the rest of your soul, like an anchor, in your body. Let it be a token of this to you, both now and hereafter,

[1] Thespesius means *divine.*

that the souls of the dead neither cast a shadow nor wink."[1]

Thespesius on hearing this became more self-collected in mind, and, taking a closer look, he saw that there moved along with him a certain dim and shadowy line, while those about him were surrounded with light, and transparent within. However, they were not all equally so. Some, indeed, like the clearest full moon, emitted continuously a uniform and unflickering light; but of the others, some had their bodies streaked with what looked like scales and flabby scourge-marks; some were very much discolored, and disgusting to the sight, like snakes branded all over with black spots; and others, still, had slight scars. The kinsman of Thespesius (for there is nothing to forbid one's giving human titles to disembodied souls), explaining these appearances one by one, told him that Adrasteia, daughter of Necessity[2] and Zeus, holds the highest place of all, ordaining punishment for wrong-doings of every kind, and that of the guilty there was never either great or small that could escape her, whether by craft or by force. But a different mode of punishment is assigned to each of the three custodians and executive ministers that have the

[1] Plutarch (Greek Questions, 39) writes: "The Pythagoreans say that the souls of the dead neither give a shadow nor wink."

[2] Ἀνάγκη. This mythical parentage may account for the name of Adrasteia, which is probably derived from διδράσκειν, *to escape*, with the α privative, and thus means *unescapable*.

guilty in charge. The first of these, swift Poena,[1] takes in hand those who are punished at once while in the body and by means of their bodies, yet in a somewhat mild way, and passing over many things that need cleansing. Those the cure of whose guilt is a heavier task the Deity gives over after death to Dice.[2] But as for those whom she rejects as utterly incurable, Erinnys,[3] the third and sternest of Adrasteia's subordinate ministers, chasing them as they wander and flee in different directions, removes them all from sight in misery and wretchedness, and plunges them into a destiny too horrible to be told or seen. Of the other chastisements, he compared that of Poena in the earthly life to certain modes of punishment practised by barbarians. For as among the Persians they strip off and beat the clothes and the turbans of those that are punished,[4] while the culprits beg with tears that the

[1] *Punishment.*

[2] *Justice.*

[3] One of the Erinnyes, or Furies. There are different myths as to their number, though there were commonly said to be three. Their name is probably derived from ἐριννύειν, *to be in a rage.* They were in Grecian fable the type of implacable anger and unrelenting vengeance.

[4] Plutarch in his *Apophthegms,* says of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who was not an unwise, but an over-indulgent king: "He first ordained as a punishment for his nobles who had offended, that they should be stripped and their garments scourged instead of their bodies; and whereas their hair should have been plucked out, that the same should be done to their turbans." We do not learn that his example was followed by any of his successors, or

scourge may be laid aside, — so punishment by loss of wealth or by bodily suffering has not an intensely penetrating power, nor does it lay hold on the guilt in its own interior seat, but is inflicted generally for appearance's sake, and to make an impression on the bodily senses.[1] But him who comes hither from these punishments uncorrected and uncleansed Dice takes in hand, open and naked as he is in soul, having nothing whereby to conceal or hide or cover his depravity, but beheld in every direction and by all and in his entire selfhood, and shows him first to his good parents, if good they are, as being despicable to his progenitors and unworthy of them. If they too are bad, he, seeing them punished, and being seen by them, is released only after having long expiated every one of his crimes by pains and sufferings which in magnitude and severity exceed those which come through the body alone, as much as reality is more substantial than a dream. But the scars and scourge-marks after punishment remain in some more conspicuous; in others, less so. "See," said he, "those motley colors of every kind in the souls, — that dark and squalid dye, the pigment of meanness and avarice, — that blood-red and fiery hue, of cruelty and bitterness; where there is a bluish tint, intemperate

that he employed this method as to criminals in general. But the illustration is a happy one.

[1] In these forms of punishment, it is the soul's clothes, i. e. the body, not the soul itself, that is punished.

indulgence in sensual pleasure has as yet hardly been rubbed off; while the malevolence that is united with envy discharges that violet-colored and ulcerous secretion, as the cuttle-fish emits his ink. For, as on the earth the wickedness of the soul controlled by the passions, while the soul controls the body, produces certain shades of complexion, so here such tints mark the last stage of the process of cleansing and correction, by which, the evil affections being altogether expelled, the soul becomes of clear complexion and of a uniform color. But so long as these evil affections remain in a man, certain revivals of the passions take place, accompanied by palpitation and excitement, in some souls slight and soon quenched, in others intensely strong. Of these last some, punished again and again, at length attain a suitable habit and disposition; but others by the force of ignorance and the fascination of sensual pleasure are carried back earthward into the bodies of beasts. For they are inclined to seek this new and lower birth by the predominance of the physical tendency, while reason is feeble, and their mental vision dull. Having in their spiritual state no longer the organs requisite for vicious indulgence, they still crave to satisfy their desires by sensual pleasure, and to give them full play by means of a body.[1] Here, indeed, there is nothing but a certain fruitless shadow and dream of sensual pleasure which has no realization."

[1] The body of a brute.

When the friend of Thespesius had thus spoken, he led him rapidly to a certain place that appeared immense, toward which he moved directly and easily, transported on light-beams as on wings, — until, coming to a large and deep cavern, he was deserted by the force that had borne him, and he saw other souls there in a like condition. Clustering together like birds, they flew round the chasm in a circle, but did not dare to cross it. Within, it resembled the caves of Bacchus,[1] like them diversified with boughs of trees, and living green, and flowers of every hue; and it exhaled a soft and mild breeze, wafting up odors of wonderful sweetness, and producing an effect similar to that which wine has on those who drink it freely. The souls filled with these sweet perfumes were dissolved in mirth, and kept embracing one another, and jollity and laughter, and every Muse of sport and gladness, had possession of the place all around. The spirit said that by this opening Dionysus[2] went up to the gods, and afterward led Semele up by the same way, and that the place is called

[1] There were in Naxos, on Parnassus, and elsewhere various caves dedicated to Bacchus, i. e. to mirth and jollity; and the mouths of these caves were, of course, decked with all of verdure and bloom that could make them charming and attractive.

[2] Dionysus as the son of Zeus had a right to leave the abode of the dead, and to claim his seat on Olympus. His mother Semele, being a mortal woman, had no such right; but he rescued her from the dead, and bore her to Olympus, where she became a goddess under the name of Thyone.

Lethe.[1] He did not suffer Thespesius to remain there, though he wanted to stay, but took him away by force, teaching him at the same time, and telling him how the mind is melted and soaked by sensual pleasure, while the unreasoning and body-like part of the soul, being thus nourished and made fleshly, calls up the remembrance of the body, and from that remembrance wakes a desire and longing that draw it toward another birth, or genesis,[2] which is so called as being an inclination toward the earth in the soul that is thus weighed down and water-logged. Then, passing in another direction by as long a route as that previously traversed, Thespesius seemed to see from afar a vast basin, and rivers pouring into it, one whiter than the sea-foam or snow, another purple like that which Iris paints on the rainbow, others still with various tints, which, as beheld from a distance, had each its own peculiar lustre. But when he drew near, the circumambient air being more rarefied and the colors fading, the basin lost all of its surpassing beauty except its whiteness. He then saw three daemons sitting together in a triangle, mixing the rivers with one another in certain proportions.

The spirit-guide of Thespesius told him, that Orpheus advanced thus far when he was seeking his

[1] *Oblivion.*

[2] **Γένεσις.** According to this derivation **γένεσις** comes from **γῆ**, *the earth*, and **νεύειν**, *to incline toward*, — a fanciful derivation, the genuineness of which there is good reason to doubt.

wife's soul, and, failing in memory, carried back to men a false report that there was in Delphi an oracle that was the common property of Apollo and Night, while in fact Night has nothing in common with Apollo. "But the oracle here," said the spirit, "is common to Night and the Moon, having no earthly limits, but wandering everywhere among men in visions and spectres. From this are dispersed dreams, mingled, as you see, blending the simple and the true with the false and the grotesque. But you do not see," said he, "the oracle of Apollo, nor can you see it; for the earthly part of your soul cannot release or loose itself for an upward flight, but tends downward as not yet wholly undetached from the body." At the same time, his guide, leading him on, attempted to show him the tripod, shining upon Parnassus through the bosom of Themis;[1] yet, though he wanted to see it, he could get no distinct view of it because of its intense brilliancy. But, in passing, he heard the shrill voice of a woman, uttering in rhythm among other things what sounded to him like the prediction of the time of his own death. The spirit said that it was the voice of a Sibyl,[2] who, borne

[1] Themis preceded Apollo as the inspirer of the Delphian oracle.

[2] The ancients imagined, as we easily may, something like the outlines of a human face in the disk of the moon, and among their myths, or rather poetical fancies, was this of a Sibyl revolving with the moon, and singing, as she rides across the firmament, the fate of men and nations.

round on the face of the moon, sang of things to come. Then he, while he wished to hear more, was forcibly driven, as on successive eddies, in a direction opposite to that in which the moon was rushing on her course. But among the predictions which he caught in passing was one about Vesuvius,[1] and about the destruction of Dicaearchia[2] by fire, and also a scrap of verse about the then reigning Emperor,[3] —

"Good though he be, disease shall soon dethrone him."

After this, they turned to the inspection of those undergoing punishment, and indeed from the very outset they had only mournful and pitiable spectacles. Thespesius, without expecting it, happened among friends and kinsmen and associates under punishment, who in horrible suffering, and under penalties equally shameful and painful, addressed to him their lamentations and wailings.

At length his eyes fell on his own father, coming up from an abyss, covered with scars and scourge-marks, stretching out his hands to him, and not permitted to keep silence, but forced by those presiding over his punishment to confess his blood-guiltiness in the case of certain guests of his who had money, and whom he had killed by poison. There, on earth, he had concealed the deed from

[1] The great eruption of A. D. 79.
[2] The earlier name of Puteoli.
[3] Vespasian, who died in A. D. 79.

all; but being here convicted, he was now enduring such sufferings as his son saw, and they were leading him where he would suffer still more. From amazement and dread, Thespesius dared not offer supplication or intercession for his father; and desiring to return and flee, he no longer saw his gentle and familiar guide. But, forced forward by certain fearful-looking beings, as if it were necessary for him to advance, he saw that the shades of those who had been openly wicked or who had been punished in this world were not so severely dealt with as others, nor in the same way, having been made aimlessly and slavishly vicious by the unreasoning and passion-driven element of the soul; while as for such as had lived all their days in secret vice, disguised under the pretence and reputation of virtue, others standing round them, as ministers of justice, compelled them with toil and pain to make the soul's interior outermost, which they did, wriggling and twisting themselves in unnatural ways, as the sea-polyps, when they have swallowed the hook, turn themselves inside out. Some of them the tormentors flayed, and then laid them open, showing them inwardly ulcerated and scarred with the depravity in their minds and in the governing principles of their lives. Thespesius said that he saw other souls interwreathed like vipers, two, three, or more together, and devouring one another from remembered enmity and ill will for what they had suffered or done in life.

There were also lakes lying side by side, one of boiling gold, one of lead intensely cold, another of rough iron; and certain daemons, like metal-workers, with their instruments took up and thrust in the souls of those who had been guilty through greed and cupidity. When in the gold they had become fiery and transparent by burning, these daemons plunged them into the lake of lead; and when they had there become frozen like hail, they were transferred to the lake of iron. There they were made horribly black, and were so fractured and bruised by the hardness of the iron, as to look like different beings; and then in this deformed condition they were carried again to the lake of gold, enduring intense torment in these successive transportations. But those suffered most horribly of all who thought that they had been at length released from the hands of justice, yet who were again apprehended for fresh punishment. These were they the punishment of whose guilt passed on to some of their children or descendants. When one of these comes and meets them, he falls upon them with anger, and cries out against them, showing the tokens of his sufferings, reviling and pursuing the souls that long to escape and hide, yet are unable so to do; for the ministers of justice run after them to subject them to fresh chastisement, and push them on, while they from the beginning lament bitterly, well knowing the punishment that awaits them. He said too that some, indeed many,

of the souls of the descendants of bad men clustered together, sustained in this posture like bees or bats, and venting in shrieks their indignation at the remembrance of what they had suffered on account of their parents or ancestors.

Last of all, he saw the souls destined to a second birth, by main force, bent and transformed into all sorts of beasts by artificers who fashioned them by appropriate tools and by blows as upon an anvil, compressing all their parts, reversing some, planing down some, and utterly destroying some, so as to fit them for habits and modes of life other than human. Among these appeared the soul of Nero, having already endured other torments, and now pierced with red-hot nails. The artificers had taken this soul in hand, and given it the form of Pindar's viper,[1] a form in which the creature after being conceived eats its way to life through its mother's bowels; when, as Thespesius said, a light suddenly shone forth, and from the light came a voice commanding that he should be transformed into another more gentle brute, — one of those croaking creatures that burrow about swamps and ponds;[2] for though he had been punished for his

[1] Nero's matricide is here referred to. Plutarch, no doubt, had in his mind some then well-known figure or description in a poem of Pindar now lost.

[2] Some interpreters suppose that this creature is a swan. I have no doubt that it is a frog. Even had not the empire passed entirely out of the possible reach of the Caesars, I do not believe

wrong-doings, yet something of mercy was due to him from the gods, because he had emancipated the Greeks,[1] of all his subjects the best race and dearest to the gods.

Thus far Thespesius saw; but when he was about to return to the earth, he was in utter desperation through terror. For a certain woman, of marvellous form and stature, laying hold of him, said, "Come hither, that you may remember these things the better," and she was about to strike him with a red-hot wand such as the encaustic painters use, when another woman prevented her. Then he, as if suddenly forced through a tube by an intensely strong and powerful wind, alighted on his own body, and awoke hard by his own tomb.

that Plutarch would have shown any tenderness to Nero's memory, and certainly there was no conceivable motive for it under the reign of Titus or Domitian. There is a fine satire in this final destiny of Nero. He has been horribly punished, and has been tortured into the likeness of the reptile regarded by the ancients as the only matricide in their zoölogy; and now for the one good act of his reign a little mercy is shown him. He had prided himself and annoyed his subjects as a singer, and now he is transformed into the singer that is a perpetual annoyance to all dwellers near swamps and ponds.

[1] He freed the province of Achaia from taxes, and endowed it with certain political rights and privileges. Vespasian restored the province to its previous condition.

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