

T H E I O:

A DIALOGUE

CONCERNING

P O E T R Y:

INTRODUCTION

to

T H E I O.

THE general subject, says Mr. Sydenham, of this Dialogue, is Poetry; but various titles are found prefixed to the copies of it, assigned probably by the antients. Some style it a Dialogue “concerning the Iliad:” while others, aiming to open the subject more fully and distinctly, entitle it, “Of the Interpretation of the Poets:” and others again, with intention to express the design or scope of it in the title, have invented this, “Concerning the Mark or Characteristic of a Poet.” But none of these titles, or inscriptions, will be found adequate or proper. The ¹ first is too partial and deficient. For the Dialogue, now before us, concerns the Odyssæy as much as the Iliad, and many other poets no less than Homer. As to the next title, the Interpretation or Exposition of the Poets, is but an occasional or accessory subject, introduced only for the sake of some other, which is the principal. The last title is erroneous, and mistakes the main drift and end of this Dialogue,

¹ “Concerning the Iliad.” This however appears to be the most antient, being the only one found in Laertius; and the others being too precise and particular to be of an earlier date. For the titles of all the profaic works of the antients, whether dialogues, dissertations, or methodical treatises, written before the age of Plutarch, were as general and as concise as possible, expressing the subject usually in one word. The title that we have chosen appears not indeed in any of the copies of this Dialogue; but perhaps may be supported by the authority of Clemens of Alexandria, a writer little later than Laertius. For citing a passage out of the *Io*, he has these words, *περι μεν ποιητικης Πλατων—γραφης*. *Stromat.* l. vi. near the end. Though it must be owned not absolutely clear, whether he means it as the known title of the Dialogue, or as the subject only of the passage there quoted.—S.

which

which is by no means so slight or unimportant, as merely to show that enthusiasm¹, or the poetic fury, is the characteristic of a true poet; but makes a part of the grand design of Plato in all his writings, that is, the teaching true wisdom: in order to which, every kind of wisdom, falsely so called, commonly taught in the age when he lived, was to be unlearned. The teachers, or leaders of popular opinion among the Grecians of those days, were the sophists, the rhetoricians, and the poets; or rather, instead of these last, their ignorant and false interpreters. Men of liberal education were misled principally by the first of these: the second sort were the seducers of the populace, to whose passions the force of rhetoric chiefly is applied in commonwealths: but the minds of people² of all ranks received a bad impression

¹ Yet only in this light was the *Io* considered by Ficinus, as appears from his Commentary on this Dialogue. And his representations of it have been blindly followed by all who have since his time written concerning it, as Janus Cornarius in his seventh Eclogue, Serranus in his Argument of the *Io*, and Franciscus Patritius in his Dissertation de Ordine Dialogorum. Nor must we conceal from our readers the opposite opinion of a very ingenious friend, who supposes Plato to have no other view in this Dialogue, than to expose *Io* to ridicule, and to convince him of his own ignorance. Whatever, therefore, is said, on the subject of enthusiasm in poetry, appears to him wholly ironical, and Socrates to be absolutely in jest, throughout the Dialogue. To this conjecture we shall only say, in the words of Horace, which a reader of Plato ought always to have in mind,

—— *Ridentem dicere Verum*
Quid vetat —— ?

What hinders, but that serious truth be spoke
In humour gay, with pleasantry and joke ?

As to the other opinion, that which is generally received, we contend not that it has no foundation, nor even at all dispute the truth of it; but deny only the importance of that truth to the *Io*. For though the immediate and direct end of Plato, in this Dialogue, was to prove that the wisdom, which appears in the writings of the elder poets, especially in those of Homer, was not owing to science: yet another thing, which he had obliquely in his view, was the intimating to his readers, to what cause positively it was owing that so many profound truths were contained in those ancient poems. The cause assigned by the philosopher is some universal and divine principle, operating in various ways: partly acting only occasionally, in which respect he terms it, agreeably to the language of those days, the inspiration of the muse; and partly with a continual and constant energy, being a divine genius, but limited, and confined to certain subjects, operating differently in different persons; though in Homer, most of all men, exerting its full force, and the most according to its own nature, that is, universal and divine — S.

² As soon as boys had been taught letters, they were introduced to the reading of the poets; their minds were charged with the memory of shorter poems, and of many passages from the longer;

impression from those of the last-mentioned kind. To prevent the ill influence of these, is the immediate design of the Io; and the way which the philosopher takes to lessen the credit of their poems is not by calling in question the inspiration of the poet, or the divinity of the Muse. Far from attempting this, he establishes the received hypothesis, for the foundation of his argument against the authority of their doctrine: inferring, from their inability to write without the impulse of the Muse, that they had no real knowledge of what they taught: whereas the principles of science, as he tells us in the Philebus, descend into the mind of man immediately from heaven; or, as he expresses it in the Epinomis, from God himself, without the intervention of any lower divinity. The true philosopher, therefore, who attends to this higher inspiration, he alone possessing that divinest science, the science of those principles, is able to teach in a scientific way. But Plato, of all the polite writers among the ancients the most polite, makes not his attack upon the poets themselves directly: for, as the disaffected to any government, so long as they retain their respect for it, strike at the sovereigns only in the persons of their ministers; in the same respectful manner does the courtly Plato seem to spare those sacred persons, the anointed of the Muses, making free with the rhapsodists only, their interpreters. This he does in the person of Io, one of that number, who professed to interpret the sense of Homer; proving out of his own mouth, that he had no true knowledge of those matters, which he pretended to explain; and insinuating at the same time, that the poet no less wanted true knowledge in those very things, though the subjects of his own poem. For every thing that he says of the rhapsodists and of rhapsody, holds equally true of poets¹ and of poetry.

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longer; and they had masters appointed to explain, criticise, and comment upon what they had learnt. From the poets consequently did the youth imbibe principles of manners, and general opinions of things: their odes were as commonly sung as ballads among us; and their verses were cited, not only to grace conversation, but even to add weight to grave discourses. Justly therefore does Aristides the orator call them *κοινους των Ελληνων τροφειας και διδασκαλους*, "the common tutors and teachers of all Greece." Aristid. tom. iii. p. 22. ed. Canter.—S.

¹This appears to have been so understood by the poets themselves of those days. For what other provocation Socrates could have given them than by some such talk as Plato in this Dialogue puts into his mouth is not easy to conceive. The enemies that Socrates had made himself by his freedom

The pursuit of this argument naturally leads to a twofold inquiry: one head or article of which regards the sciences, the other concerns the arts. By this partition does Plato divide his *Io*; throwing, however, here, as he does every where else, a graceful veil over his art of composition, and the method with which he frames his dialogues; in order to give them the appearance of familiarity and ease, so becoming that kind of writing: in the same manner as he always takes care to conceal their scope or design; that, opening itself unexpectedly at last, it may strike the mind with greater efficacy. Upon the article of science, Plato represents the poets writing through the inspiration of the Muses, of all things, whether human or divine; of morals, politics, and military affairs; of history, and antiquities; of meteorology, and astronomy; in fine, of the whole universe; yet without any intimate acquaintance with the nature of those things, and without having had any other than a superficial view. Under the other article, that of art, Plato shows that the poets describe, and in description imitate, the operations and performances of many of the arts, though in the principles of those arts uninstructed and ignorant; as having skill in one art only, that, through which they so describe and imitate, the art of poetry: while every other artist hath skill in some one other, his own proper, art; and to the true philosopher, as he tells us in his Dialogue called the Politician, belongs the knowledge of that art, in which are comprehended the principles of all the rest. Hence it follows, that of such poetical subjects as have any relation to the arts, whether military or peaceful, whether imperial, liberal, or

dom of speech, as we are informed by himself in his Apology, reported to us by Plato, were of three sorts; the politicians, the rhetoricians, and the poets. That the former sort repented his exposing their conceited ignorance, and vain pretensions to political science, is told us by Laertius, b. ii. and is indeed abundantly evident from Plato's *Meno*. That Socrates treated the rhetoricians in the same manner, will appear very sufficiently in the *Gorgias*. Is it not then highly probable, that the resentment of the poets was raised against him by the same means; and that they well understood his attack upon the rhapsodists, a set of men too inconsiderable for any part of his principal notice to be intended against themselves? We should add to this argument the authority of Athenæus, were it of any weight in what regards Plato. For he gives this as one instance of Plato's envious and malignant spirit, which his own malignity against the divine philosopher attributes to him, that in his *Io* he vilifies and abuses the poets. See *Athen. Deipnosoph.* l. xi. p. 506.—S.

mechanical,

mechanical, the knowing in each art are respectively the only proper judges. Such is the design, and such the order of this Dialogue. As to its kind, it is numbered by the antients among the peirastic: but according to the scheme proposed in our synopsis, the outward form or character of it is purely dramatic: and the genius of it is seen in this, that the argumentation is only probable; and in this, also, that the conclusion leaves the rhapsodist Io perplexed and silenced, bringing off Socrates in modest triumph over the embarrassment of his half yielding adversary ¹.

¹ See what has been already observed concerning the Io, in the note at the beginning of the tenth book of the Republic, in which we have given, from Proclus, a copious and admirable account of the different species of poetry, and the nature of poetic fury.—T.

T H E I O.

THE PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE.

SOCRATES AND IO.

SCENE'.—ATHENS.

SOCRATES.

JOY be with Io². Whence come you now? what; do you come directly from home, from Ephesus?

Io.

¹ The scene, though not precisely marked out to us by Plato, evidently lies within the city; and some circumstances make it probable to be the public streets; where Socrates, in passing along, casually met with Io. Not to insist on that of Io's recent arrival at Athens, nor on that other of the seeming haste of Socrates, expressed in his postponing Io's impertinent harangue, and his endeavouring to draw the conversation into a narrow compass, circumstances perhaps ambiguous: one more decisive is the restriction of the number of persons composing the Dialogue to those two. For whenever Plato lays his scene in some public place, frequented for the sake of company, exercise, or amusement; many persons are made parties, or witnesses at least, to the conversation; and this out of regard to probability; because a conversation-party, consisting of more than two persons, may naturally be supposed the most frequent in places, where few of the assembly could fail of meeting with many of their acquaintance. Another circumstance, contributing to determine where the scene lies, is the brevity of this Dialogue. For Plato, to his other dramatic excellencies, in which he well might be a pattern to all dramatic poets, adds this also, to adjust the length of the conversation to the place where it is held: a piece of decorum little regarded even by the best of our modern writers for the stage. Accordingly, the longest conversations, related or feigned by Plato, we may observe to be carried on always in some private house, or during a long walk into the country; unless some peculiar circumstance permits the discourse to be protracted in a place otherwise improper. For the same reason of propriety, the exchange, where much talk would be inconvenient; or the street, where people converse only as they pass along together, and sometimes, removed a little from the throng, standing still a while, is generally made the scene of the shortest dialogues. And in pursuance of the same rule, those of middling length

Io. ³ Not so, Socrates, I assure you; but from Epidaurus⁴, from the feasts of Æsculapius⁵.

Soc. The people of Epidaurus, I think, upon this occasion, propose a trial of skill among the rhapsodists⁶, in honour of the god. Do they not?

Io. They do; and a trial of skill in every other branch of the Muse's art?

Soc.

length have for their scene some public room, a gymnastic or a literary school, for instance, in which were seats fixed all round, for any of the assembly to sit and talk; but in a place of this kind the conversation must be abridged, because liable to interruption; besides that decency, and a regard to the presence of the whole assembly, regulate the bounds of private conversation in those detached and separate parties, into which usually a large company divides itself; appointing it to be confined within moderate compass. As this note regards all the dialogues of Plato, the length of it, we hope, wants no apology.—S.

² To wish joy, was the usual salutation of the antient Greeks, when they met or parted: as ours is, to hope or wish health; an expression of our courtesy, derived to us from the old Romans.—S.

³ As much as to say, "It is not so bad with me neither, as to be obliged ever to be at home." Plato makes him express himself in this manner, partly to shew the roving life of the rhapsodists, inconsistent with the attainment of any real science; but chiefly to open the character of Io, who prided himself with being at the head of his profession, and consequently in having much business abroad. The very first question therefore of Socrates, who knew him well, is on purpose to draw from him such an answer: as the questions that follow next are intended to put him upon boasting of his great performances. Nothing in the writings of Plato, not the minutest circumstance, is idle or insignificant. It would be endless to point out this in every instance. Scarce a line but would demand a comment of this sort. The specimen, however, here given, may suffice to show, with what attention so perfect a master of good writing ought to be read; and with such a degree of attention, as is due, the intelligent reader will of himself discern, in ordinary cases, the particular design of every circumstance, and also what relation it bears to the general design of the whole Dialogue.—S.

⁴ In this city was a temple of Æsculapius, much celebrated for his immediate presence. An annual festival was here likewise held in honour to that god.—S.

⁵ Εκ των Ασκληπειων. Ficinus seems to think, this means the worshippers of Æsculapius. Bembo translates it "*da Figliuoli di Esculapio*," an appellation given only to physicians. Seranus interprets it in the same sense that we do, and that this is the true one, appears from Jul. Pollux, Onomast. i. l. c. 13.—S.

⁶ These were a set of people, whose profession somewhat resembled that of our strolling players. For they travelled from one populous city to another, wherever the Greek was the vulgar language, rehearsing, acting, and expounding the works of their antient poets, principally those of Homer. They resorted to the feasts and banquets of private persons, where such rehearsals made part of the
entertainment;

Soc. Well; you, I presume, were one of the competitors: What success had you?

Io. We came off, O Socrates, with the chief prize.

Soc. You say well: now then let us prepare to win the conquest in the Panathenæa¹.

Io. That we shall accomplish too, if fortune favour us.

Soc. Often have I envied you rhapsodists, Io, the great advantages of

entertainment; and in the public theatres performed before the multitude. Especially they failed not their attendance at the general assemblies of the people from all parts of Greece; nor at the religious festivals, celebrated by any particular state. For on these solemn occasions it was usual to have prizes proposed to be contended for, not only in all the manly exercises fashionable in those days, but in the liberal arts also; of which even the populace among the Grecians, then the politest people in the world, were no less fond. The principal of these was poetry: (see the *feco* of Mr. Harris's three Treatises :) and poets themselves often contended for the prize of excellence in this art. But poets were rare in that age. Their places therefore on these occasions were supplied by the rhapsodists; who vied one with another for excellence in reciting. Whoever desires a more particular account of the rhapsodists, so often mentioned in this Dialogue, than can be given within the compass of these notes, may consult the commentary of Eustatius upon Homer, with the notes of the learned Salvini, v. i. p. 15, &c. as also a treatise of H. Stephens de Rhapsodis.—S.

¹ This was a festival kept at Athens yearly in honour of Minerva, who was believed by the Athenians to be the divine protectress of their city. Every fifth year it was celebrated with more festivity and pomp than ordinary; and was then called the Great Panathenæa, to distinguish it from those held in the intermediate years, termed accordingly the *Lefs*. We learn from Plato, in his Hipparchus, from whence Ælian almost transcribes it in his Various Hist. l. viii. c. 2. that there was a law at Athens, appointing the works of Homer to be recited by the rhapsodists during the solemnization of this festival: in order, says Isocrates in his Panegyrical Oration, to raise in the Athenians an emulation of the virtues there celebrated. From a passage in the Oration of Lycurgus the Orator it appears, that this law regarded only the Panathenæa. On this very solemn occasion it is highly probable, that Io was come to Athens on purpose to show his abilities, and contend for the prize of victory. We cannot help observing by the way, that many writers, ancient as well as modern, express themselves as if they imagined the Greater and the *Lefs* Panathenæa to be two different festivals: see in particular Castellan. de Fest. Græc. p. 206, 7. whereas it is clear from the words of Lycurgus, that there was but one festival of that name, though held in a more splendid manner every fifth year. As they nearly concern the subject now before us, we present them to the learned reader at full length: οὗτω γὰρ ὑπελάθον ἡμῶν οἱ πατερες, σπουδαῖον εἶναι ποιητῆν (sc. τὸν Ὅμηρον) ὥστε νόμον εἰέντο, καθ' ἑκάστην πενταετηρίδα τῶν Παναθηναίων, μόνου τῶν ἀλλῶν ποιητῶν βραβεύεσθαι τὰ ἐπη. P. 223. of Dr. Taylor's edition. "Your ancestors had so high an opinion of the excellence of Homer, as to make a law, that in every fifth year of the Panathenæa his poems, and his only, should be recited by the rhapsodists."—S.

your

your profession. For to be always well dressed¹, and to make the handsomest appearance possible, as becomes a man, no doubt, who speaks in public; to be conversant, besides, in the works of many excellent poets, especially in those of Homer, the best and most divine of them all; and to learn, not merely his verses, but his meaning, as it is necessary you should; these are advantages highly to be envied. For a man could never be a good rhapsodist unless he understood what he recited: because it is the business of a rhapsodist to explain to his audience the sense and meaning of the poet; but this it is impossible to perform well, without a² knowledge of those things, concerning which the poet writes. Now all this certainly merits a high degree of admiration.

IO. You are in the right, Socrates. And the learning this I have made my principal business. It has given me indeed more trouble than any other branch of my profession. I presume therefore there is now no man living,

¹ The rhapsodists often used to recite in a theatrical manner, not only with proper gestures, but in a garb also suitable to their subject: and when they thus acted the *Odyssæy* of Homer, were dressed in a purple-coloured robe, ἀλιουργη, to represent the wanderings of Ulysses by sea: but when they acted the *Iliad*, they wore one of a scarlet colour, to signify the bloody battles described in that poem. Upon their heads they bore a crown of gold; and held in their hands a wand made of the laurel-tree, which was supposed to have the virtue of heightening poetic raptures; being, we may presume, found to have, like the laurel with us, though a different kind of tree, somewhat of an intoxicating quality. See Eustathius on Homer's *Iliad*, b. i. and the scholiast on Hesiod's *Theogony*, v. 30. This little piece of information, we imagine, will not be disagreeable to our readers: although in this passage, we must own, the common dress of the rhapsodists, when off the stage, seems rather to be intended; and the finery of Io, at that very time of his meeting with Socrates, resembling probably that of our itinerant quack-doctors, to be here ridiculed.—S.

² This whole speech of Socrates is ironical. For Xenophon, in whose writings Socrates is a graver character, with a less mixture of humour than in those of Plato, introduceth his great master expressly declaring, that no sort of people in the world were sillier, πηθιατεροι, than the rhapsodists: and Maximus Tyrius calls them a race of men utterly void of understanding, τὸ πᾶν ἐψευδῶν γένος τὸ ἀνοητάτατον. *Diff.* xxiii. We are to observe however, that notwithstanding this, and our comparison of their manners and way of life with those of mountebanks and strolling players, yet they held a much higher rank in common estimation, equal to that of the most judicious actors in the theatres of our metropolis, or the most ingenious professors of any of the polite arts: were fit company for persons even of the first rank, and guests not unbecoming their tables. We are not therefore to be surpris'd at seeing Socrates so highly compliment Io, and treat him with so much outward respect, as he does through the whole *Dialogue*.—S.

who differs upon Homer so well as myself: nay, that none of those ¹ celebrated persons, ² Metrodorus of Lampfacus, ³ Stefimbrotus the Thasian, Glauco ⁴, nor any other, whether antient or modern, was ever able to show in the verses of that poet so many and so fine ⁵ sentiments as I can do.

Soc.

¹ The persons here mentioned were not rhapsodists, but critics, or as they were afterwards called grammarians; to whose profession antiently belonged the interpreting or explaining of their elder poets. See Dion. Chryf. Orat. liii. p. 553.—S.

² We are told by Diog. Laertius, in his life of Anaxagoras, that this Metrodorus was the first who applied himself to compose a work expressly concerning the philology of Homer; meaning without doubt, as appears from Tatian, *Λογ. προς Έλληνας*, that he explained Homer's theology from the various operations and phænomena of nature: and further, that he was intimate with Anaxagoras, and improved the moral explications of Homer, which had been given by that philosopher. If all this be true, Metrodorus must have been a great philosopher himself. For to have done this to the satisfaction of such a man as Anaxagoras, the master of Socrates, required certainly no mean degree of knowledge in the nature of man and of the universe. What is more probable is, that Metrodorus having been instructed by Anaxagoras in this knowledge, applied it to the giving a rational account of Homer's mythology, which was understood and received in a literal sense by the vulgar. The book which he composed on this subject, as we learn from Tatian, was entitled *περι Όμηρου*, "Concerning Homer."—S.

³ Stefimbrotus is mentioned with honour by Socrates himself in Xenophon's Symposium, as a master in explaining Homer: and his abilities of this kind are there set in contrast with the ignorance of the rhapsodists. As to the time when he lived, we learn from Plutarch, in his Life of Cimon, that he was exactly of the same age with that general. The work, for which he seems here to be celebrated, was entitled *περι της ποιησεως Όμηρου*, "Concerning the poetry of Homer," as appears, we think, from Tatian, § 48.—S.

⁴ We cannot find this Glauco mentioned by any of the antients, unless he be the same person cited as a grammarian, under the name of Glauco of Tarsus, by an old Greek scholiast upon Homer in the Medicean library, never published. See the passage to which we refer, in Luc. Holsten. de Vita et Scriptis Porphyrii, c. vii. But he appears, we think, from the specimen of his criticisms there given, to have been a grammarian of a much later age: we are inclined, therefore, to suspect a misnomer in this place, and instead of *Γλαυκων* would choose to read *Γλαυκος*, if any manuscript favoured us; believing that the person here mentioned is Glauco of Rhegium, who flourished about this time, and wrote a treatise *περι ποιητων*, as we are informed by Plutarch, t. ii. ed. Par. p. 833. C. or as the title of it is elsewhere by the same author given us more at large, *περι των αρχαιων ποιητων τε και μουσικων*, t. ii. 1132. E. See Junius de Scriptor. Hist. Philof. l. ii. c. 4. § 4. But certainly much mistaken is J. Alb. Fabricius, Bibl. Gr. l. ii. c. 23. n. 37. in supposing the Glauco, here mentioned, to have been a rhapsodist. That very learned and worthy man was used to read too hastily; and did not therefore duly observe amongst what company Glauco is here introduced.—S.

⁵ We learn from Plato, in this Dialogue, that the rhapsodists not only recited the poems of Homer, but professed to intrepert hem too. For the multitude every where, having heard that profound secrets

Soc. I am glad, Io, to hear you say so: for I am persuaded you will not be so ill-natured as to refuse the exhibiting before me your abilities in this way.

Io. My illustrations of Homer are indeed, Socrates, well worth your attention. For they are such as, I think, entitle me to receive from the admirers¹ of that poet the ²crown of gold.

Soc. I shall find an opportunity of hearing you descant on this subject some other time. For the present, I desire only to be informed of this; whether you are so great a master in explaining Homer alone, or whether you shine no less in illustrating ³Hesiod and Archilochus.

Io.

secrets of wisdom lay concealed there, thought there was no reason why they should not be made as wise as their betters; and were eager to have those hidden mysteries opened and revealed to them. The philosophers, and those who had studied under them, knew the bulk of the people to be incapable of apprehending those things rightly; or of receiving any real benefit from such revelation; which they considered consequently as a profanation of the truth. The Athenians, therefore, being in a state of democracy, encouraged the rhapsodists to undertake the unfolding to them that secret wisdom, reported to be wrapped up in the fables and allegories of Homer. The rhapsodists accordingly indulged their curiosity; collecting, as well as they were able, every meaning which had been attributed to that poet by grammarians, critics, or philosophers. Thus the people became perplexed with a multiplicity of different opinions, infused into them by men who had never studied the nature of things. See also Mr. Pope's first or introductory note on Homer's Iliad.—S.

¹ Ἰπὸ Ὀμπεδῶν. This word in its original sense signified only those who were supposed to be descended from Homer, or from some of his kindred, and were the fathers or founders of that rhapsodical way of life before described. The title was afterwards extended to all their successors in that profession. See the scholiast on Pindar's second Nemæan Ode; and Athenæus, p. 620. H. Stephens seems to think these rhapsodists of Homer to be the persons chiefly intended in this passage. If so, it ought to be translated, or rather paraphrased, thus; "For all the interpreters of that poet ought, I think, to yield me the preference and the prize, consenting to crown me with the golden crown." But believing the word capable of being extended to that larger meaning given it by the old translators, we have ventured to follow them in it, as being a more rational one; the other sense making the arrogance of Io too extravagant and absurd.—S.

² This means not the crown, before mentioned, to have been worn by the rhapsodists at the time of their rehearsal: for so his boast would amount to no more than the pronouncing himself worthy of his profession; a speech too little arrogant for the character of Io: but it means the prize, bestowed on the most excellent performer on this occasion. For that this was a crown of gold, may be seen in Meursius's Panathenæa, c. xxv.—S.

³ These two poets are singled out from the rest of the poetic tribe, because their poetry, next to that of Homer, was the most frequently recited by the rhapsodists. This is fairly deducible from the words of Chamælion, cited by Athenæus. Not only, says he, were the poems of Homer

Io. By no means: for I own my powers confined to the illustrating Homer. To execute this well, is merit enough, I think, for one man.

Soc. But in the writings of Homer and of Hesiod are there no passages in which their sentiments and thoughts agree?

Io. There are, I believe, many passages of that kind.

Soc. In these cases now, are you better able to explain the words of Homer, than those of Hesiod?

Io. Equally well to be sure, Socrates, I can explain the words of both, where they agree.

Soc. But how is it with you, where, in writing on the same subject, they differ? For instance, Homer and Hesiod both write of things that relate to divination.

Io. True.

Soc. Well now; the passages in either of these poets, relating to divination; not only where he agrees with the other, but where he differs from him: who, think you, is capable of interpreting with most skill and judgment, yourself, or some able diviner?

Io. An able diviner, I must own.

Soc. But suppose you were a diviner, and were able to interpret rightly the similar places in both; would your abilities, do you imagine, fail you, when you came to interpret the places in either of them, where he differed from the other?

Io. I should certainly in that case have equal skill to explain both of them.

Soc. How comes it to pass then, that you interpret Homer in so masterly

style by the rhapsodists, but those of Hesiod too, and of Archilochus; and further, (that is, sometimes,) the verses of Minnermus, and of Phocylides. *Ου μόνον τα Όμηρου, αλλά και τα Ησίοδου και Αρχιλοχου. επι δε, Μίνερμου και Φωκυλίδου. Deipnosoph. l. xv. p. 620.* The first of these two, Hesiod, is well known; and as he comes nearest to Homer in point of time, of all the poets, any of whose works are yet remaining entire; so is he confessedly the next to him in point of merit, among those who wrote in heroic measure. Archilochus was the first who composed poems of the Iambic kind, in which he is said to have been superior to all, who came after him. (See Athenæus's introduction to his Deipnosoph.) Upon which account Paterculus joins him with Homer; mentioning these two poets, as the only instances of such as advanced those arts, which they invented themselves, to the utmost pitch of perfection. Dion Chrysostom goes beyond this in the praises of Archilochus, putting him in the same rank with Homer, as a Poet; *δυσ γαρ ποιητων γε γοντων εξ άπαντος του αιωνος, ος ουδενα των άλλων συμβαλειν αξιον, Όμηρου τε και Αρχιλοχου, κ. τ. λ. Dion Orat. xxiii. p. 397.* "In all the course of time there have been but two poets, with whom no other is worthy of comparison, Homer and Archilochus."—S.

a manner,

a manner, yet not Hesiod, or any other of the poets? Are the subjects of Homer's writings any thing different from the subjects of other poems, taken all together? Are they not, in the first place, war and military affairs; then, the speeches and mutual discourse of all sorts of men, the good as well as the bad, whether they be private persons or public; the converse also of the gods one with another, and their intercourse with men; the celestial bodies, with the various phænomena of the sky and air; the state of souls departed, with the affairs of that lower world; the generation of the gods, with the descent and race of the heroes? Are not these the ¹ subjects of Homer's poetry?

Io. They are, Socrates, these very things.

Soc. Well; and do not the rest of the Poets write of these very things?

Io. They do, Socrates: but their poetry upon these subjects is nothing like the poetry of Homer.

Soc. What then, is it worse?

Io. Much worse.

Soc. The poetry of Homer, you say then, is better and more excellent than that of other poets.

Io. Better indeed it is, and much more excellent, by Jupiter.

Soc. Suppose now, my friend Io, out of several persons, all in their turns haranguing before an audience upon the nature of numbers, some one made a better speech than the rest; might not one of the auditors be capable of finding out that better speaker, and of giving him the preference due to him?

Io. There might be such a one.

Soc. Would not the same auditor, think you, be a judge of what was said by the worse speakers? or must he be a different person, who was a proper judge of these?

Io. The same person, certainly.

Soc. And would not a good arithmetician be such a person, thus equally able in both respects?

¹ As, in describing the shield of Achilles, Homer has presented us with a view of human life, and of the whole universe, in epitome; so Plato here finely sums up, in the concise manner possible, those very things, as the subjects of the Iliad and the Odyssey; giving us to behold in them a picture of all human affairs, whether in peace or war; of all nature, whether visible or invisible; of the divine causes of things; of the heroic virtues among men, and the greatness of families in antient days from thence arising. S.

Io. Without doubt.

Soc. To put another case to you : suppose among many persons, severally differing upon food, what sorts of it were wholesome, there should be one who spoke better than the rest ; would it belong, say you, to one of the hearers to distinguish accurately the better speaker, while it was necessary to look amongst the rest of the audience for a fit judge of the meaner speakers ? or would the speeches of them all be examined judiciously, and their different merits and demerits be estimated justly by the same person ?

Io. By the same person, beyond all doubt.

Soc. Of what character must this person be, who is thus qualified ? What do you call him ?

Io. A physician.

Soc. And do not you agree with me, that this holds true universally ; and that in every case, where several men made discourses upon the same subject, the nature both of the good and of the bad discourses would be discerned by the same person ? For if a man was no proper judge of the defects in the meaner performance, is it not evident that he would be incapable of comprehending the beauties of the more excellent ?

Io. You are in the right.

Soc. It belongs to the same person, therefore, to criticise with true judgment upon all of them.

Io. No doubt.

Soc. Did not you say that Homer, and the rest of the poets, for instance, Hesiod and Archilochus, write concerning the same things, though not in the same manner ? the compositions of the one being excellent, you say, while those of the others are comparatively mean.

Io. I said nothing more than what is true.

Soc. If then you can distinguish and know the compositions which excel, must not you necessarily know those which fall short of that excellence ?

Io. I own it appears probable, from your argument.

Soc. It follows therefore, my good friend, that in affirming Io to be equally capable of explaining Homer and every other poet, we should not miss the truth : since he acknowledges one and the same person to be an able judge of all such as write concerning the same things ; admitting at the same time the subjects of almost all poetical writings to be the same.

Io. What can possibly be then the reason, Socrates, that whenever I am
present

present at an harangue upon any other poet, I pay not the least regard to it ; nor am able to contribute to the entertainment, or to advance any thing upon the subject in my turn, worth the regard of others ; but grow downright dull, and fall asleep : yet that as soon as any mention is made of Homer, immediately I am roused, am all attention, and with great facility find enough to say upon this subject ?

Soc. It is not in the least difficult, my friend to guess the reason. For to every man it must be evident, that you are not capable of explaining Homer on the ¹ principles of art, or from real science. For if your ability was of this kind, depending upon your knowledge of any art, you would be as well able to explain every other poet : since the whole, of what they all write, is poetry ; is it not ?

Io. It is.

Soc. Well now ; when a man comprehends any other art, the whole of it, is not his way of considering and criticising all the ² professors of that art, one and the same ? and does not his judgment in every case depend on the same principles ? Would you have me explain myself upon this point, Io ? do you desire to know the meaning of my question ?

Io. By all means, Socrates. For I take great pleasure in hearing you wise men talk.

Soc. I should be glad, Io, could that appellation be justly applied to me ; but you are the wise men, you rhapsodists and the ³ players, together with the poets, whose verses you recite to us. For my part, I speak nothing but the simple

¹ The Italian translator has strangely omitted this latter part of the sentence, though very material to the sense.

² In the Greek we read “ περι ἅπασων των τεχνων.” But if Socrates does indeed, as he undertakes to do, explain the meaning of this sentence in what follows, his own explanation requires us to read “ περι ἅπαντων των τεχνων,” or rather τεχνικων, this being the word always used by Plato to signify *artists*. The argument however would bear the reading with less alteration, “ περι ἅπασων των τεχνουσιων,” that is, all the performances in that art. Either way we are thus freed from the necessity, which Ficinus was under, from his retaining the common reading, to insert many words of his own, in order to preserve the justness of the reasoning, and make this passage agreeable to the sequel — S.

³ Plato in other places besides this, as hereafter in this Dialogue, in the 3d book of the Republic, and in the 2d book of the Laws, joins together the arts of rhapsody and of acting plays, as being

simple truth, as it becomes a mere private man to do. For the question, which I just now asked you, see how mean a matter it concerns, how common, and within the compass of every man's reach to know, that which I called ¹ one and the same way of criticising, when a man comprehends the whole of any art. To give an ² instance of such comprehensive skill; painting is an art, to be comprehended as one kind of skill, whole and entire; is it not?

Io. It is.

Soc. Is there not a difference, in degree of merit, between the several professors of that art, whether you consider the ancients or the moderns?

Io. Undoubtedly.

Soc. Now then, do you know any man who is an able critic in the

arts of near affinity. That affinity between them was greater than one would be apt to imagine, and appears in a strong light from what Eustathius says of the rhapsodists, that "frequently they used to act in a manner somewhat dramatic." Hence in the feast of Bacchus, principally celebrated with dramatic entertainments, the rhapsodists had antiently a share: and one of the festival days was called *εορτη των ραψωδων*. See Athenæus, l. v. p. 275. Hesychius therefore with great propriety explains the word *ραψωδοι* rhapsodists, by this description *υπεκριται επων*, actors of epic poems.—S.

¹ Socrates here, in the way of irony, after his usual manner, insinuates some very important doctrines of his philosophy, leading us up even to the highest. For, observing that all the arts depend on certain uniform and stable principles, he would have us infer, in the first place, that every art, properly so called, or as it is distinguished from science on the one hand, on the other from mere habit and experience, is built on science; and that no person can be justly called an artist, or a master of the art which he professes, unless he has learnt the epistemonical or scientific principles of it: in the next place, that science is a thing stable, uniform, and general; guiding the judgment with unerring certainty, to know the rectitude and the pravity of every particular, cognisable from the rules of any art depending thus on science: further, that every science hath certain principles, peculiar to it, uniform and identical: and lastly, that all the sciences are branches of science general, arising from one root, which in like manner is uniform, and always the same.—S.

² *Λαβωμεν τω λογω*. Serranus very absurdly translates it thus, "*adhibita ratione comprehendere*." Ficinus imperfectly thus, "*exempli causa*," followed by the Italian, "*come per esempio*." So also Cornarius, "*veri causa*." True it is, that *λαβει τω λογω*, frequently signifies *take an instance*. But in this place, *λαβωμεν* refers to the word *λαβει*, *comprehend*, in the preceding sentence; and *λογω* is opposed to an actual comprehending of any art. Thus, to omit many passages in Plato's Republic; in the third book of his Laws, *λογω κατακειζειν την πολιν* is opposed to the actual founding of a city: and again in his Theætetus, *ι α μη στησωμεν αυτους τω λογω* is in opposition to an actual settling, or fixing. Euripides with the same meaning opposes *λογω* to *εργω* in this verse of his Cyplops, *Γενσαι μεν, υ, α μη λογω παινης μονον*.—S.

works

works of ¹ Polygnotus, the son of Aglaophon; and can show, with great judgment, which of his pieces he executed well, and which with less success; yet in the works of other painters hath no critical skill; and whenever their performances are brought upon the carpet to be examined and criticised, grows dull and falls asleep, or is unable to contribute his quota to the conversation: but as soon as occasion calls him to declare his judgment about Polygnotus, or any other particular painter whatever, immediately is roused, is all attention, and finds enough to say upon this subject? Know you any such man?

Io. Really I do not.

Soc. Well now; in the statuary's art how is it? Did you ever see any man, who upon the works of ² Dædalus, the son of Metion, or Epeius, son to Panopeus, or Theodorus the Samian, or any other single statuary, was able to display great judgment in showing the excellent performances of so great a master; yet with regard to the works of other statuaries, was at a loss, grew dull, and fell asleep, because he had nothing to say?

Io. I confess I never saw such a man neither.

Soc. Nor is it otherwise, I imagine, with regard to ³ music, whether we

¹ This excellent artist was, in the days of Socrates, the Homer of the painters; and is here for this reason singled out from the rest of his profession, as the most proper for the comparison; which was intended to show, that the same circumstance attended both the arts, of poetry and painting; this, that true critical skill, to judge of the performances of the best artist, inferred equal judgment with regard to all of inferior class. Polygnotus was the first painter, who gave an accurate and lively expression of the manners and passions, by proper attitudes, and every variety of countenance. He distinguished himself also by giving his portraits what we call a handsome likeness: and, besides many other improvements which he made to his art, invented the way of showing the skin through a transparent drapery. See Aristotle's Politics, b. viii. c. 5. and his Poetics, c. 2. and 6. Pliny's Nat. Hist. b. xxxv. c. 9. and Ælian's Var. Hist. b. iv. c. 3.—S.

² Plato here has purposely chosen for his instances three statuaries, famous for their excellence in three very different ways, to make his reasoning more just and less liable to exception; when he is proving, by induction, the sameness of the art of criticising upon all the poets, however different in their kinds. Dædalus then was particularly admirable for his wonderful automats, or self-moving machines, mentioned by Plato in his Meno. Epeius is well known to the readers of Homer's Odyssey, and Virgil's Æneid, for that vast work of his, the Trojan horse, of a size so stupendous. And the excellence of Theodorus consisted in the extreme minuteness and subtilty of his works. See Pliny's Nat. Hist. b. xxxiv. c. 8.—S.

³ In this word the ancients comprehended all those arts, which have any relation to the muses.

Every

we consider ^f wind-instruments, or those of the string-kind; and these last, whether alone, or ² accompanied by the voice; so likewise in rhapsodical recitals; you never, I presume, saw a man, who was a great master

Every species of poetry, known at that time, is included in what follows. For *Αυλησις* includes dithyrambic poetry and satire. *Κιθαρσις*, joined with *αυλησις*, implies comedy and tragedy; because in these the *αυλος* and the *κιθαρα* were the instruments principally used: thus Maximus Tyrius; *αυληματα, η κιθαρσιματα, η ει τις αλλη εν Διονυσου μουσα τραγικη τις και κομωδιικη*. Differt. vii. *Κιθαρωδια* means all Lyric poetry, or that, which the musician sung to his own instrument, the *κιθαρα*, or the *λυρα*. And *Ραψωδικα* comprehends all poems, usually recited, whether composed in heroic, elegiac, or other measure. We see here then, in what arts were those *αγωνες*, or trials of skill, before mentioned, proposed at the feasts of Æsculapius. True it is, that Plato, in different parts of his writings, useth the word music in different senses. In some places he means by it not only all harmony, whether instrumental or vocal, but all rhythm, whether in sound or in motion: The following remarkable instance of this occurs in his First Alcibiades: ΣΩΚ. Ειπε πρωτον, τις η τεχνη, ης το κιθαριζειν, και το αδειν, και το εμβαλλειν ορθως, συναπασα τις καλειται; ουπω δυνασαι ειπειν; ΑΛΚ. Ου δεηται. ΣΩΚ. Αλλ' ουδε πειρω. τινες αι θεαι, ων η τεχνη; ΑΛΚ. Τας Μουσας, ω Σωκρατες, λεγεις; ΣΩΚ. Εγωγε. ορα δη' τινα απ' αυτων επωνυμιαν η τεχνη εχει; ΑΛΚ. Μουσικη μοι δοκει λεγειν. ΣΩΚ. Λεγω γαρ. In other places, he confines it to melody alone. Thus, for instance, in his Gorgias, music is defined to be an art conversant *περι των μελων ποιησιν*. Sometimes he enlarges it, so as to take in profane eloquence; and sometimes so widely, as to comprehend all the liberal arts. There are passages where it is made to signify virtue; and a few, in which it is applied to the sublimer parts of philosophy. These last metaphorical uses of the word are sufficiently accounted for by Plato himself on proper occasions: the rest we shall take notice of, and vindicate, in their due places. But in the sentence now before us, that enumeration of the species of music fixes the meaning of the word, and limits it to the common acceptation. That *Μουσικη* has the same meaning in the beginning of this Dialogue, where we have translated it, "the Muse's art," is plain from the nature of the subject in that place. For every thing else, comprehended in the larger sense of the word, would there be foreign to the purpose; as being, if we except medicine, nothing to Æsculapius.—S.

¹ The Greek is *ουδε εν αυλησει γε, ουδε εν κιθαρσει*. *Αυλος* is known to be a general term for all wind-instruments. *Επιπνευμενα οργανα, το μιν συμπαν, αυλοι και συριγγες*, says Jul. Pollux, Onomastic. l. iv. c. 9. And because the *Κιθαρα* stood at the head of all stringed instruments, it is sometimes taken for them all. Accordingly Maximus Tyrius expresses all instrumental music by these two kinds, *αυληματα και κιθαρσιματα*. Differt. xxxii. See likewise Aristotle's Poetics, ch. i. and Plato's Lesser Hippias, p. 375. ed. Steph. But these two being wholly distinct, the one from the other, we are not to imagine that ever they were either confounded together, and used promiscuously, the one for the other; or that both of them were sometimes signified by the word *αυλος*, as a common term for all instruments of either kind. We make this observation, to prevent the young scholar from being misled by Hesychius, who explains the word *Αυλος* thus, *κιθαρα η συριγγη*: for which egregious mistake his late learned editor has but lamely apologized.—S.

in criticising on ³ Olympus, or on Thamyris, or on Orpheus, or on Phemius the rhapsodist of Ithaca; but as to Io the Ephesian, was at a loss what to say about him, and unable to give any account of Io's good or bad performances.

Io. I have nothing to oppose to what you say upon this point, Socrates: but of this I am conscious to myself, that upon Homer I dissent the best of all men, and do it with great ease. Nor is this my own opinion only; for all people agree, that my dissertations of this kind are excellent. But if the subject be any other of the poets, it is quite otherwise with me. Consider then what may be the meaning of this.

Soc. I do consider, Io; and proceed to show you how it appears to me. That you are able to discourse well concerning Homer is not owing to any art of which you are master; nor do you explain or illustrate him, as I said before, upon the principles or from the rules of art; but from a divine power, acting upon you, and impelling you: a power resembling that which acts in the stone, called by Euripides the magnet, but known commonly by the name of ⁴ the loadstone. For this stone does not only attract iron rings, but

² The Greek here is *κιθαρῳδία*: which word Eustathius, in his commentary on the Iliad, b. ii. v. 600. by a strange blunder, confounds with *κιθαρῳσις*, and makes them both to have the same meaning.—S.

³ These four persons severally excelled in the four arts just before mentioned, each of them in one, according to the order in which they are there ranked. For we learn from Plutarch *περὶ μουσικῆς*, and from Maximus Tyrius, Diff. xxiv. that Olympus's instrument was the *Αυλός*. How excellent a master he was of music we are told by Plato in his *Minos*, and by Aristotle in his *Politics*, b. viii. c. 5. who both agree, that the musical airs of his composing were most divine, and excited enthusiastic raptures in every audience. Thamyris is celebrated by Homer himself, who calls him *κιθαρῳστὸς*, Iliad. l. ii. v. 600. Agreeably to which we are informed by Pliny, that Thamyris was the first who played on the cithara, without accompanying it with his voice. Hist. Nat. l. vii. c. 56. The fame of Orpheus is well known: and among many passages in the writings of the ancients, to prove that he was *κιθαρῳδός*, or sung and played on his instrument together, this of Ovid is most express, "*Talia dicentem, nervosque ad verba moventem.*" *Metamorph.* l. x. v. 40—and this other in l. xi. v. 4. "*Orphea percussis fociantem carmina nervis.*" And as to Phemius, that he recited (or sung in recitativo) poems of the epic kind, touching his lyre at the same time, appears from Homer's *Odyssey*, b. i. v. 153, &c. and b. xvii. v. 262.—S.

⁴ The Greek word here is *Ἡρακλεία*, which Bembo translates *di Hercule*. But we are taught by Hesychius, that this name was given to the loadstone from the city Heraclea in Lydia, where probably they were found in greater number than elsewhere. Accordingly, the same stone was also called *λίθος Λυδῆος*, *the Lydian stone*. The same Hesychius, however, says, that Plato is mistaken

But impart to those rings the power of doing that very thing which itself does, enabling them to attract other rings of iron: So that sometimes may be seen a very long series of iron rings, depending, as in a chain, one from another. But from that stone, at the head of them, is derived the virtue which operates in them all. In the same manner, the Muse, inspiring, moves men herself through her divine impulse. From these men, thus inspired, others¹, catching the sacred power, form a chain of divine enthusiasts. For the best epic poets, and all such as excel in the composing any kind of verses to be recited, frame not those their admirable poems from the rules

in supposing the magnet to be the same with this stone, referring, undoubtedly, to the passage now before us. But it is Hesychius who is mistaken, not Plato. For that the *μαγνητις* of the ancients was the same with our magnet, appears from these words of Alexander Aphrodisiensis, an earlier writer than Hesychius, *μαγνητις ἔλκει μόνον τὸν σιδηρὸν*. Com. in Aristot. Problem. fol. 1. and from these of Cicero long before, *Magnetem lapidem—qui ferrum ad se allicit et attrahat*. Cic. de Divinat. lib. i. Yet Hesychius is so fond of his mistake, as to repeat it in three different places; admitting the *ἤρακλεια* to attract iron, but denying that quality to the *μαγνητις*. See Hesych. in vocibus, *ἤρακλεια*, *λίθος Λυδικός*, and *μαγνητις*. *Λίθος Λυδικός* indeed frequently among the ancients signified the touchstone: but so did sometimes *μαγνητις*. Witness the following passage of Euripides himself, *τὰς βροτῶν Γνώμας σκοπῶν*, [οὐδ'] *ὥστε μαγνητις λίθος*. See also Theophrastus *περὶ λίθων*. The truth seems to be, that the names of these two stones, the touchstone and the loadstone, were not well distinguished, but vulgarly confounded, in the days of Plato. This accounts for that uncertainty and doubtfulness with which Plato here mentions the name of this stone; which in any other light would appear unnecessary and insipid. This, perhaps, also was the reason why no particular name of that stone was mentioned by Aristotle, speaking of it in this passage, *εἰκοὲ δὲ καὶ Θάλης, εἰς ὧν ἀπομνημονεύουσι, κινήτικον τι τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπολαμβάνειν, εἴτερ τὸν λίθον ἢ τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχειν, ὅτι τὸν σιδηρὸν κινεῖ*. Aristot. de Animâ, lib. i. cap. 2.

¹ The contagion of this kind of enthusiasm is thus beautifully painted by a fine critic, who himself felt all the force of it: *Πολλοὶ γὰρ ἀλλοτρίῳ θεοφοροῦνται πνεύματι, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον, ὃν καὶ τὴν Ψυδίαν λόγος ἔχει, τρεῖσιν πλῆσιαζουσάν, εἶτα ἴηγμα ἐστὶ γῆς ἀναπνεῶν, ὡς φαίνῃ, αἶμον ἐνθεῶν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγκύματα τῆς δαιμονίου καθίσταται δυνάμει, παραυτικῶς χρησμοῦσιν κατ' ἐπιπνοίαν οὕτως ἀπο τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων μεγαλοφίας, εἰς τὰς τῶν ζήλοντων ἐκείνου ψυχὰς, ὡς ἀπο ἱερῶν στήμιων, ἀπορροιαὶ τινεὶ φερόνται, ὅφ' ὧν ἐπιπνυόμενοι καὶ οἱ μὴ λίαν Φοῖβεαστικοὶ τῶ ἔτερον συνέθευσιμαὶ μεγελεῖ.* “Many are possessed and actuated by a divine spirit, derived to them through others: in the same manner as it is reported of the Delphian priestesses, that when she approaches the sacred tripod, where a chasm in the earth, they say, respire some vapour, which fills her with enthusiasm, she is immediately by that more than human power made pregnant; and is there upon the spot delivered of oracles, such as the particular nature of the inspiration generates. So, from the great genius residing in the ancients, through them, as through some sacred opening, certain effluxes, issuing forth, pass into the souls of their admirers: by which many, who of themselves but little feel the force of Phœbus, swell with the expansive virtue of those great and exalted spirits.” Longin. de Sublim. § 11.—S.

of

of ¹ art; but possessed by the Muse, they write from divine inspiration. Nor is it otherwise with the best lyric poets, and all other fine writers of verses: to be sung. For as the priests of ² Cybele perform not their dances, while they have the free use of their intellect; so these melody poets pen those beautiful songs of theirs only when they are out of their sober minds. But as soon as they proceed to give voice and motion to those songs, adding to their words the harmony of music and the measure of dance, they are immediately transported; and, possessed by some divine power, are like the priestesses of ³ Bacchus, who, full of the god, no longer draw water, but honey

¹ In the Greek it is *οὐκ ἐκ τεχνῆς*. Bembo's translation of which, *non con arte*, excludes art from having any share in the best poetical compositions. But Plato's words admit of art, as an attendant upon the Muse; though they make not her art, but her inspiration, to be the mistress and leading cause of all which is excellent in poetry. Serranus happily paraphrases it, *non artis auspiciis*. The following passage in the Phædrus puts the meaning of Plato, with regard to this point, out of dispute. 'Ὅς δ' ἀν ἀνευ μανίας Μοῦσαν ἐπι ποιητικῆς θυρᾶς ἀφικηται, πειθεὶς ὡς ἀρα ἐκ τεχνῆς ἱκανῶς ποιητῆς ἐσομένος, ἀτελής αὐτῆς τε, καὶ ἡ ποιησις ὑπο τῆς τῶν μαινόμενων ἢ του σφραζονυτος ἠφρασηθη. "Whoever went, with a mind sober and uninspired, to the gates of the Muses; and made his application to them, in order to be taught their art; persuaded, that the learning that was alone sufficient to qualify him for writing poetry; never attained to any perfection as a poet; and his poetry, as being that of a man cool and sober, is now obliterated all, having been darkened by the splendour of that of the inspired."—S.

² The rites of Cybele and of Bacchus, beyond those of any other deities, were performed in a spirit of enthusiasm: which exerted itself in extraordinary agitations of body. Accordingly, these two religious rites are sung of together, as equally enthusiastical, by the chorus between the first and second acts in the Bacchæ of Euripides.—S.

³ The following account of enthusiasm, and the causes of divine mania, extracted from the third section of Jamblichus de Myst., as it admirably illustrates this part of the Io, will, I doubt not, be gratefully received by every Platonic reader:

Enthusiasm is falsely believed to be an agitation of the dianoëtic part in conjunction with demoniacal inspiration; for the inspiration is from the gods. But neither is it simply an ecstasy, but a reduction and restitution of the soul to a more excellent nature; since inordinate motion and ecstasy indicate a regression to that which is worse. Further still, the advocate for ecstasy adduces that which happens to those that energize enthusiastically, but does not teach us the leading cause, which is this, that the inspired are wholly possessed by a divine power; which possession is afterwards followed by ecstasy. No one, therefore, can justly apprehend, that enthusiasm depends on the soul, or any one of its powers, or on intellect, or energies, or corporeal infirmity, or that it cannot be produced without this. For the work of divine afflation is not human, nor does it derive all its authority from human parts and energies; but these have the relation of subjects, and divinity uses them as instruments. Hence he accomplishes the whole business of prophecy through

† honey and milk out of the springs and fountains; though unable to do any thing like it when they are sober. And in fact there passes in the souls of these poets that very thing which they pretend to do. For they assure us, that out of certain gardens and flowery vales belonging to the Muses, from fountains

through himself, unmingled with and liberated from other things, and neither the soul nor body moving, energizes by himself. Hence too, prophecies, when they are conducted in this manner, are unattended with falsehood. But when the soul has been previously disturbed, or is moved during the inspiration, or is confounded by the body, and disturbs the divine harmony, then the prophecies become confused and fallacious, and the enthusiasm is no longer true or genuine.

With respect to the causes of divine mania, they are as follow: Illuminations proceeding from the gods; spirits imparted by them; and an all-perfect dominion from them, which comprehends all that we possess, and entirely exterminates our proper obsequency and motion. It also produces words which are not understood by those that utter them, but are delivered, as it is said, with an insane mouth; the possessed being wholly subservient and obedient to the energy alone of the inspiring deity: such, in short, is enthusiasm, and from such like causes does it derive its perfection.

Again, with respect to its proper causes, it must not be said, that it arises from this, that nature leads every thing to its like: for the enthusiastic energy is not the work of nature. Nor is it produced because the temperature of the air, and of that which surrounds us, causes a difference of crasis in the body of the enthusiastic. For the works of the gods are not changed by corporeal powers or temperaments. Nor is it that the inspiration of the gods accords with passions and generated natures. For the gift to men of the proper energy of the gods is more excellent than all generation. But because the power of the Corybantes is of a guardian nature, and adapted to sacred mysteries, and because that of Sabazius pertains to the purification of souls, and a dissolution of antient anger, on this account the inspirations of these divinities are in every respect different.

In short, the spirits which from the divinities excite and agitate men with divine fury, expel all human and physical motion, nor are their operations to be compared with our accustomed energies; but it is requisite to refer them to the gods, as their primary causes.

Thus we see that Jamblichus very properly suspends enthusiasm and divination from the divinities, and ascribes all the varieties of these to the different characteristic properties of the gods, as to their proper source.—T.

† This place receives great light from the two following passages in Euripides:

Ὅσσαις δὲ λευκοῦ πωματος ποθεῖ παρῆν,
 Ἀκροῖσι δακτυλοῖσι διαμῶσαι χθονα,
 Γαλακτος εἰσμούς εἰχον' ἐκ δὲ κισσίνων
 Θουρών γλυκεῖαι μέλιτος ἐσταζόν ῥοαί. Bacch. v. 707.

Ῥεῖ δὲ γαλακτι πηδον,
 Ῥεῖ δ' οἶνω, Ῥεῖ δὲ μίλισσαν
 Νεκταρί. Bacch. v. 142.

fountains flowing there with honey, gathering the ¹ sweetness of their songs, they bring it to us, like the bees; and in the same manner withal, flying. Nor do they tell us any untruth. For a poet is a thing light and volatile, and ² sacred; nor is he able to write poetry, till the Muse entering into him, he is transported out of himself, and has no longer the command of his intellect. But so long as a man continues in the possession of intellect, he is

The first of these is in one of the dialogue scenes of the tragedy, and part of a narration; in English thus,

Some, longing for the milder milky draught,
Green herbs or bladed grass of the blest ground
Cropp'd with light finger; and to them, behold,
Out gush'd the milky liquid: trickling down
To others, from their ivy-twined wands
Dropp'd the sweet honey.—

The other is sung in chorus by the Bacchæ themselves; which we have therefore thus paraphrased,

Streams of milk along the plain
Gently flow in many a vein:
Flows sweet nectar, such as bee
Sips from flow'r and flow'ring tree:
Flow the richer purple rills;
Bacchus' self their current fills.

From hence are to be explained the fabulous relations in Anton. Liberal. Met. lib. x. and Ælian. V. H. lib. iii. c. 42. There is likewise a passage, cited by Arifides the orator, from Æschines, one of the disciples of Socrates, so much like this of Plato, that the reader may, perhaps, have pleasure in comparing them together. Αἱ Βακχῆαι, ἐπειδὴν εὐθεοὶ γίνονται, ὅθεν οἱ ἄλλοι ἐκ τῶν φρεάτων οὐδὲ ὕδωρ δύνανται ὑδρευεσθαι, ἐκίμαι μέλι καὶ γάλα ἀρύνονται. Arifid. Orat. vol. iii. p. 34. ed. Canter. “The priestesses of Bacchus, when they are become full of the god, extract honey and milk from those wells, out of which no common person is able so much as to draw water.”—S.

¹ The Greek is only τὰ μέλι, and is by the old translators rendered simply *carmina*, and *i versis*. We are in doubt whether the true reading is not τὸ μέλι: for the preceding word is *δρεπομενοι*, and the metaphor the same with this of Horace, *Ego apis matinx more modoque, Grata carpentis thyma*, &c. If this alteration be not admitted, an allusion, however, to the word μέλι is certainly meant, in the similarity of sound, which μέλι bears to it. And there is then a necessity, besides, for inserting the word μέλι immediately afterwards, as Ficinus does in his translation; which is making a still greater change in the text of the original.—S.

² Bees were by the antients held sacred, because fabled to have yielded their honey for a nourishment to the Cretan Jupiter in his infancy; (see Virgil's fourth Georgic, v. 150.) and poets, because supposed to be under the influence of the Muse.—S.

unable

unable to sing either odes or oracles; to write any kind of poetry, or utter any sort of prophecy. Hence it is, that the poets say indeed many fine things, whatever their subject be; just as you do concerning Homer: but each is alone able to accomplish this through a divine destiny, on that subject to which he is impelled by the Muse; this poet in ¹ dithyrambic; that in panegyric; one in chorus songs, another in epic verse, another in iambic. In the other kinds every one of them is mean, and makes no figure: and this, because they write not what is taught them by art, but what is suggested to them by some divine power, on whose influence they depend. For if it was their knowledge of the art which enabled them to write good poems upon one subject, they would be able to write poems equally good upon all other subjects. But for this reason it is, that the god, depriving them of the use of their intellect, employs them as his ministers, his ² oracle fingers, and divine ³ prophets; that when we hear them, we may know, ⁴ it is not these men who deliver things so excellent; these, to whom intellect ⁵ is not present; but the god himself speaking, and through these men publishing

¹ The usual accuracy of Plato appears strongly in this passage. For the five species of poetry, here enumerated, were the most of any full of enthusiasm, of the *vis poetica*, and the *os magna sonans*; and appear ranked in their proper degrees of excellence in those respects; beginning with that, which was deemed, and indeed by its effects proved, to be the most highly rapturous.—S.

² Near the seat of the oracle were certain poets employed, as the oracular response was delivered, to put it into metre. And because, in order to execute their office well, they ought to enter into the sense and spirit of those responses, they were piously presumed to be themselves inspired by the oracle.—S.

³ Plato in other places calleth the poets by this name; particularly in the second book of his Republic, where his words are, *οι θεων παιδες ποιηται, και προφηται των θεων γενομενοι*, poets, born the children of the gods, and made afterward their prophets. And in the Second Alcibiades he calls Homer, by way of eminence, *θεων προφητη*, the prophet of the gods.—S.

⁴ Thus Tully, who professedly imitated Plato; *Deus inclusus corpore humano jam, non Cassandra, loquitur*. Cic. de Divinat. lib. i.—S.

⁵ The soul, when resigning herself to the inspiring influence of divinity, in consequence of energizing divinely, is no longer governed by intellect; and it may therefore be said, that intellect is then no longer present to her nature. Mr. Sydenham, from not having penetrated the depths of antient theology, has unhappily given, by his translation, an air of ridicule to this passage; and I am sorry to add, that this is not the only instance in which he has done the same, both in this and other dialogues. The original is *οι νους μη παρεστιν*. The translation of Mr. Sydenham, *who are divested of common sense*.—T.

his

his mind to us. The greatest proof of that which I advance, is Tynnichus the Chalcidian; who never composed any other poem, worth the mention or remembrance, beside that ¹ Pæan, which every body sings, of almost all ² odes the most excellent, and as he himself tells us,

³ Wholly a present from the Muse's hands,
Some new invention of their own.

For in him does the god seem to give us a convincing evidence, so as to leave no room for doubt, that those beautiful poems are not human, nor the compositions of men; but divine, and the work of gods: and that poets are only interpreters of the ⁴ gods, inspired and possessed, each of them by that particular deity who corresponds to the peculiar nature of the poet. This, the better to demonstrate to us, did the god purposely choose out a poet of the meanest kind, through whom to sing a melody of the noblest. Do not you think, Io, that I say what is true?

IO. Indeed I do: for I ⁵ feel as it were in my very soul, Socrates, the truth of what you say. To me too such poets, as write finely, appear in their

¹ This was an ode or hymn in honour of Apollo, so called from one of the names or titles of that god: in the same manner, as the word *Dithyrambic* is derived from *Διθυραμβος*, one of the names of Bacchus.—S.

² *Μελων*. In *μελν* are included all poems, made to be sung; as *επη*, in the larger sense of that word, comprehends all those made for recital.—S.

³ The Greek is *ατεχνως εδρημα τι μουσαν*. This is a verse in the Alcmanian measure. Whence it appears, that this incomparable ode of Tynnichus, unhappily lost, was of the lyric kind, and in the measure used by Aleman, approaching the nearest of any to the heroic. It is evident, that Plato, in citing this verse, as applicable to his present purpose, alludes to the other sense of the word *ατεχνως*, in which it signifies *inartificially*, or *without art*. It was impossible to preserve this double meaning in our language, unless the word simply may be thought tolerably expressive of it. Cornarius renders it in Latin, *sine arte*: but the rest of the translators, as if it were a word of no force or even meaning at all, have entirely omitted it in their translations. It is probable, however, that they were misled by the false pointing in Aldus's edition, which refers the word *ατεχνως* to the preceding sentence.—S.

⁴ Hence probably was this title given to Orpheus, *sacer, interpretsque deorum*, by Horace, *Epist. ad Pison. v. 391*.—S.

⁵ The words in the original are very strong and significant, *απη της ψυχης*, *you touch my soul*. Whoever is well versed in Plato's way of writing, and is no stranger to the Socratic way of thinking, will easily imagine, that Plato intends here to hint to us, by what means poetry operates so strongly

their writings to be ¹ interpreters of the gods, in proportion to the kind and degree of those divine powers, allotted severally to each poet.

Soc. Now you rhapsodists interpret in like manner the writings of the poets. Do you not?

Io. So far you still say what is true.

Soc. Do you not then become the interpreters of interpreters?

Io. Very true.

Soc. Mind now, Io, and tell me this; and think not to conceal any part of the truth, in answering to what I am going to ask. At those times, when you perform your rehearsals in the best manner, and strike your audience with uncommon force and efficacy; when you sing, for instance, of Ulysses, hastening to the entrance of his house, appearing in his own proper person to the wooers of his queen, and pouring out his arrows close before him, ready for spreading round him instant death; or represent Achilles rushing upon Hector; or when you rehearse, in a different strain, any of the melancholy mournful circumstances attending Andromache, or Hecuba, or Priam; at such times whether have you the free use of your intellect? or are you not rather ² in a state of mental alienation? Does not your soul, in an ecstasy, imagine herself present to those very things and actions which you relate? as if you had been hurried away by some divine power to Ithaca, or Troy, or wherever else be laid the scene of action.

Io. How clear and convincing a proof, Socrates, of your argument is this which you have produced! For, without concealing any thing, I shall own the truth. When I am reciting any thing pitiable or mournful, my eyes

strongly upon the soul; that is, by touching some inward string the most ready to vibrate; awakening those sentiments, and stirring up those passions, to which the soul is most prompt: insinuating at the same time, that by means of the like aptitude and natural correspondence, truth touches the mind. Thus Io, in the present situation of his soul, reminded of his own past feelings, and made sensible to what cause they were owing, exemplifies and illustrates the truth of that doctrine just before laid down by Socrates.—S.

¹ In this sense it is, that the poets are a little before styled the ministers of the gods, as serving them in the conveying their mind and will to mortals. In the same sense the rhapsodists are called, in the second book of the Republic, *ποιητῶν ἰατροίται*, the ministers of the poets.—S.

² Agreeably to this, Cicero introduceth his brother Quintus, observing of him, and of Æsop the orator, *tantum ardorem vultuum atque motuum, ut eum vis quædam abstraxisset à sensu mentis videretur*. Cic. de Divinat. lib. i.—S.

are filled with tears ; when any thing dreadful or horrible is the subject, my hairs stand erect, and my heart beats quick, through terror and affright.

Soc. What shall we say then, Io? that a man has, at that time, the free use of his intellect, when, clad in a splendid garb, with a crown of gold upon his head, amidst a feast, or at a festival, he falls into tears, without having lost any part of his finery, or of the entertainment? or when he is affrighted and terrified, standing in the midst of twenty thousand men, all well-disposed and friendly to him, none offering to strip him of his ornaments, or do him the least injury?

Io. To confess the truth, Socrates, he is not, by Jupiter, entirely in the possession of intellect.

Soc. Do you know that you produce this very same effect upon many of your auditors?

Io. I am, indeed, fully sensible of it. For at every striking passage I look down from my ¹ pulpit round me, and see the people suitably affected by it: now weeping, then looking as if horror seized them; such emotion and such astonishment are spread through all. And it is my business to observe them with strict attention, that if I see I have set them a weeping, I may be ready to receive their money, and to laugh; but if I find them laughing, that I may prepare myself for a sorrowful exit, disappointed of my expected gain.

Soc. Know you not then, that this audience of yours is like the last of those rings, which one to another, as I said, impart their power, derived from that magnet at the top? The middle ring are ² you the rhapsodist,

¹ This was a place, raised on high above the area, like those two opposite gallery boxes in our magnificent theatre at Oxford; from whence orators, rhapsodists, and other declaimers, harangued the people.—S.

² Learned men are divided in their opinions concerning Io the rhapsodist, whether he is the same person or not with Io the Chian, a considerable poet, who flourished in the same age. see Jonsius de Scriptor. Hist. Philos. l. ii. c. 13. n. 4. and Bentleii Epist. ad Millium, p. 50, &c. In the great want of good reasoning on either side of the question, it may be worth observing, that in this passage, as also in page 32, Io is contradistinguished from the poets. A negative argument too may be of some weight, from the silence of Plato upon this point. Indeed it is strange, had Io been a poet, and had won the prize of tragedy, which was the case of Io the Chian, that Plato should have made him take none of those many opportunities to glory in it, which offered themselves in this conversation.—S.

and so too is the player: the first ring being the poet himself. By means of all these does the god draw, wherever it pleases him, the souls of men, suspended each on other through attractive virtue. In the same manner too, as from that magnet, is formed a chain of many rows, where ¹ chorus-singers and dancers, masters and ² under-masters, hang, like the collateral rings, attracted and held together side ways, all depending from the Muse. But upon one Muse one of the poets, upon a different Muse another is suspended; ³ possessed we call him, that is held fast; because he is fast held by the Muse. From these first rings, the ⁴ poets hang their followers and admirers; some from one, others from another; inspired by them, and fastened on them, by means of the enthusiastic spirit issuing from

¹ Or rather chorus-singers dancing; [*χορευται*:] for they were not different persons: the dance being nothing else than a measured motion, accompanied with certain gestures of body, adapted to the tune, (which they called the harmony,) as that was to the words of the chorus-song, sung by the same persons who performed the dance.—S.

² The hindmost rows of the chorus sang an under part, and had peculiar masters of their own to teach it them, who were therefore called under-masters. At the head of each row was placed the master of it, to give the musical key, and to lead the dance to his proper row. The principal teacher of the whole choir, who also headed the whole, was called *Χορευγος*. See Jul. Pollux, *Onomastic*. l. iv. c. 15.—S.

³ This passage in all the editions of Plato is read thus; *ονομαζομεν δε αυτο κατεχεται. το δε εστι παραπλησιον εχεται γαρ*. Which, being nonsense, is thus nonsensically rendered into Latin by Ficinus; “*Vocamus autem id nos occupari*, (altered by Grynæus into *mente capi*.) *quod quidem illi proximum est: tenetur enim*.” And by Cornarius thus; “*Hoc verò corripitur nominamus, quod consimile est: habet enim*.” In the steps of these translators Bembo thought it safest here to tread, as being wholly in the dark himself. For he thus translates it; *e cio chiamamo noi l'esser preso, il che è simile*: and then quite omits the *εχεται γαρ*. Serranus, divining, as it seems, the true sense of the passage, (for the words show it not,) avoids the sinking into nonsense; but hobbles along very lamely. The emendation of the pointing, with omission only of the word *γος*, would make the passage plain and clear, thus read, *ονομαζομεν δε αυτο κατεχεται, το δε εστι, παραπλησιον εχεται*. But there is another way of amending this passage, that is, by a repetition of the word *εχεται*: and this way we prefer, and follow in our translation, reading it thus; *ονομαζομεν δε αυτο κατεχεται το δε εστι, παραπλησιον εχεται εχεται γαρ*. The omission of a word, where the same word immediately follows, is a common fault in manuscripts.—S.

⁴ The wrong pointing of this passage in the Greek has occasioned Serranus to translate it, as if it described the poets depending, that is, receiving their inspiration, one from another. But though this fact be true, it is not the primary intention of Plato in this place to describe it. To prevent the same mistake in the readers of any future edition of the original, this sentence ought to be printed with a comma after the word *ποιηται*, as well as with one before it. Ficinus however and the rest translate it rightly.—S.

them;

them; some to Orpheus, others to Musæus; but the most numerous sort is of such, as are possessed by Homer, and held fast by him. Of this number, *Io*, are you, inspired as you are, and enthusiastically possessed by Homer. Hence it is, that when the verses of any other poet are sung or recited, you grow dull and fall asleep, for want of something to say: but that, as soon as you hear a strain of that poet poured forth, immediately you are roused, your soul recovers her sprightliness, and much to say presents itself to your mind: because, when you harangue upon Homer, you do it not from art or science, but from enthusiasm, of that particular kind which has possessed you by divine allotment. Just as those, who join in the rites of Cybele, have an acute perception of such music only as appertains to that deity by whom they are possessed; and are not wanting either in words or gestures, adapted to a melody of that kind; but have no regard to any other music, nor any feeling of its power. In the same manner you, *Io*, when any mention is made of Homer, feel a readiness and a facility of speaking; yet with regard to other poets find yourself wanting. That therefore which your question demands, whence you have within you such an ample fund of discourse, upon every thing relating to Homer; whilst it is quite otherwise with you, when the subject brought upon the carpet is any other of the poets: the cause is this, that not science, but enthusiasm, not art, but a divine destiny, has made you so mighty a panegyrist on Homer.

Io. You speak well, Socrates, I own. But I should wonder if, with all your fine talk, you could persuade me to think myself possessed, and insane, when I make my panegyrics on Homer. Nor would you, as I imagine, think so yourself, were you but to hear from me a dissertation upon that poet.

Soc. And willing am I indeed to hear you; but not till you have answered me this question in the first place, ¹ which of his subjects does
Homer

¹ The Greek of this passage in all the editions runs thus; ὃν Ὅμηρος λέγει, περί τίνος ἐν λέγει; Cornarius, in his *Eclogæ*, very dogmatically alters the last word of this question into λέγεις. Afterwards H. Stephens, into whose hands had fallen a copy of Plato with conjectural emendations in Ficinus's own hand-writing on the margin, tell us in his notes, that the same alteration was there proposed by Ficinus. This, if admitted, will give a different turn, not only to this question,

Homer handle best? for certainly you will not say, that he excels in all things.

Io. Be assured, Socrates, there is nothing in which he excels not.

Soc. You certainly do not mean to include those things of which Homer writes, and of which you are ignorant.

Io. And what things may those be which Homer writes of, and which I am ignorant of?

Soc. Does not Homer frequently, and copiously too, treat of the arts; for instance, the art of ¹ chariot-driving? If I can remember the verses, I will repeat them to you.

Io. I will recite them rather to you, for I well remember them.

Soc. Recite me then what Nestor says to his son Antilochus, where he gives him a caution about the turning, in that chariot-race celebrated in honour of Patroclus.

Io. His words are these:

There to the left inclining, easy turn
 The light-built chariot; mindful then to urge
 With pungent whip, and animating voice,
 The right-hand courser, and with hand remis
 The reins to yield him; hard upon the goal,
 Mean time, his partner bearing; till the wheel
 Skimming the stony lines of that old mark,
² Doubt if its nave with point projecting touch
 Th' extremeſt margin: bat of thoſe rough ſtones
 Th' encounter rude be careful to decline.

Soc.

but to Io's answer, and to the observation of Socrates thence arising: but the philosopher's drift, in asking the question, and the series of the argument, will be very little affected by it. For the business is to show, that neither poets write, nor rhapsodists interpret, when their subject happens to be some point belonging to any one of the arts, from their real skill in such art. The only difference is, that in the common reading, the poets are concerned immediately; and according to the proposed alteration, the question is pointed at the rhapsodists, and reaches the poets but in consequence. In either way, however, as the argument proceeds, the direct proof equally lies against the rhapsodists. Now in such a case as this, we believe it to be an established rule of sound criticism to forbear altering the text.—S.

¹ What this art was in ancient times, and in what high estimation it was held, such of our readers, as are not conversant in the writings of the antients, may find in the entertaining notes to Mr. Pope's Homer.—S.

² It is great pity, that Mr. Pope, in his elegant version of Homer, has dropt this strong poetical

Soc. Enough. Now in these verses, Io whether Homer gives a right account of what ought to be done upon the occasion or not, who must be the ablest judge, a physician, or a charioteer ?

Io. A charioteer, undoubtedly.

Soc. Whether is he thus able, from his having skill in his art, or by some other means ?

Io. From his skill in his art only, and no other way.

Soc. ¹ Has not thus every one of the arts an ability, given it by God himself, to judge of certain performances ? for the same things, in which we have good judgment from our skill in the art of piloting, by no means shall we be able to judge of well from any skill in the art of medicine.

Io. By no means, undoubtedly.

Soc. Nor the same things, in which our skill in the art of medicine has given us good judgment would the greatest skill in the art of building qualify us to judge of equally well.

Io. Certainly not.

Soc. ² Does it not then hold true alike in all the arts, that of whatever things we are good judges by means of our being possessed of one art, we can never judge well of those very things from our skill in any other art ? But before you answer to this question, answer me to this other : Do not you admit a diversity between the arts, and call this some one art, and that some other ?

Io. I admit such a diversity.

Soc. Do not you distinguish every art in the same way that I do, inferring

poetical stroke ; by which not only the wheel is animated, but the exquisite nicety of turning the goal, in keeping close to the edge of it, without touching, is described by one word in the finest manner possible. This mistake happened to him, from his misunderstanding the word *δοσοειται* to mean, doubling the goal ; in which sense this part of the description would be flat, lifeless, and prosaic, altogether unworthy Homer. Had Mr. Pope thought fit to consult Eustathius, he would have set him right. The verses here cited are in the 23d book of the Iliad ; where the word *αγρ*, in the fifth line, is evidently the right reading, instead of *μν*, which we meet with in the copies of Plato.—S.

¹ In the Greek, as it is printed, this is made an absolute assertion of Socrates, contrary to his usual manner of conversing, and to the genius of this Dialogue in particular, where Socrates is represented as proving the ignorance of Io out of his own mouth.—S.

² This sentence in the original is likewise printed as if it was spoken positively ; and is so translated by Bembo : whereas immediately afterwards Socrates himself calls it a question.—S.

a diversity

a diversity between them from the diversity of their subjects? When one art is attended with knowledge of one sort of things, another art by knowledge in things of a different nature, do you not from hence conclude, as I do, that this accordingly is one art, and that another?

Io. I do.

Soc. For if, in any two arts, there was the knowledge of the same things in both, why should we make a distinction, and call this some one art, and that some other different, when both of them were attended by skill in the same sort of things? as I know, for instance, these fingers of mine to be five in number; and you know it as well as I. Now were I to ask you, whether it was by the same art that we know this one and the same thing, by the art of arithmetic, you as well as I, or each of us by a several art; you would certainly answer, it was by the same art.

Io. Undoubtedly.

Soc. The question then, which I was about asking you before, answer me now; whether in all the arts, you think it alike necessary that the same things should be judged of by the same art; and that a different art must not pretend to judge of those very things; but that if in reality it be a different art, different things must of course fall under its cognizance?

Io. I do think so, Socrates.

Soc. No man therefore will be able to judge well of any thing said, or done, relating to any one of the arts in which he has no skill.

Io. You say right.

Soc. In those verses then, which you repeated, can you best tell whether Homer gives a right account of things or not; or is a charioteer the properest judge of this?

Io. A charioteer.

Soc. And that for this reason, because you are a rhapsodist and not a charioteer.

Io. True.

Soc. And because the art of a rhapsodist is different from that of a charioteer.

Io. Right.

Soc. If then it be a different art, it is attended by skill in a different sort of things.

Io. Very right.

Soc.

Soc. Well then; when Homer relates how Hecamede, a damsel of Nestor's, mingled a potion for machaon to drink, after he had been wounded, giving us this description of it;

Into rough Pramnian carefully she scrapes,
With brazen scraper, acrid-tasted cheefe,
Made of thin milk drawn from fallacious goat;
And sets beside the life-reviving bowl
¹ Strong stimulating onion.—

To form a true judgment in this case, whether Homer be in the right or not, does it belong to the art of medicine, or to that of rhapsody?

Io. To the art of medicine.

Soc. Well; and what, where Homer says thus;

Steep down to the low bottom of the main
Then plung'd the goddess; rushing, like the lead,
Pendant from horn of meadow-ranging bull,
Which falls impetuous, to devouring fish
² Bearing the deathful mischief.—

Whether shall we say it belongs to the art of fishing, or to that of rhapsody, to judge best whether this description be right or wrong?

Io. To the art of fishing, Socrates, without doubt.

¹ This latter circumstance is mentioned by Homer at some distance from the former, eight lines intervening. Plato brings them together, selecting them out from the other particulars of that description, as the two most singular and remarkable, the most blamed by the physicians, and ridiculed by the wits of those days. But in the 3d book of his Republic, he answers all their criticisms and cavils himself, in a just defence of the great poet, and of such a method of treating wounded persons, in the more simple, less luxuriant, and healthier ages. The verses of Homer, here cited, are to be found in the eleventh book of the Iliad.—S.

² Had we been to have translated this passage immediately from Homer, we should have made the last line thus: "Bearing their fates destructive"—the Greek word being *νερα* in the copies of Homer, instead of which we read *πυρ* in those of Plato. Upon this occasion, we beg leave, once for all, to advertise our readers, that in many passages of Homer, as cited by Plato, there are variations, and those sometimes material, from the received reading of the text of that poet; and that this was one of the reasons on which we grounded our undertaking to translate all those passages afresh; when Mr. Pope's version, so excellent upon the whole, might otherwise have well excused us from that trouble. The passage of Homer, now before us, occurs in the last book of the Iliad.—S.

Soc.

Soc. Consider now, suppose yourself had taken the part of questioner, and were to say to me thus ; Since then, Socrates, you have found what passages in Homer it belongs to ¹ each of those arts before mentioned, severally to discern and criticise with good judgment ; come, find me out, upon the subject of divination, what passages it is the business of a diviner critically to examine, and to tell us whether the poetical account be right or wrong : consider, how easily I should be able to give you a satisfactory and a proper answer. For Homer has many passages relating to this subject in his *Odyſſey*, particularly one, where Theoclymenus the diviner, ² one of the race of Melampus, addresses the wooers of Penelope in this manner ;

Mark'd out by Heav'n for great events ! What ill
Is this attends ye ! what sad omens point
Prefageful ! round ye some dark vapour spreads
His dusky wings ; head, face, and lower limbs
In shades involving : thick through burden'd air
Roll hollow sounds lamenting : dropping tears
Stain of each mourning statue the wet cheeks :
Crowded the porch, and crowded is the hall
With spectres ; down to Pluto's shadowy reign
Ghosts seem they gliding : the sun's cheery light
Is lost from heaven : a gloom foreboding falls,
O'erhanging all things, sadd'ning every heart.

On the same subject he writes in many places of his *Iliad* ; as, for instance, where he describes that fight, which happened under the Grecian fortifications. For he there gives us this relation of it ;

While eager they prepar'd to pass the moat,
And force th' intrenchments ; o'er them came a bird

¹ It is observable, that Plato here takes his four instances from four different sorts of arts ; the first from one of the arts military ; the second from one of the liberal arts ; the third from one of the mechanical kind ; and the fourth from one of those arts relating to religion. His ends in thus multiplying and varying his instances are these ; one is, to show the universality of Homer's genius ; and another is, to make it appear the more plainly, what a variety of arts the poet must have been master of, had he wrote, not from a divine genius, but from real skill humanly acquired. With the same view he instances again a little further in the arts imperatorial, liberal, servile, and mechanical.—S.

² See the *Odyſſey* of Homer, b. xv. v. 225, &c. But the fine descriptive speech following is taken out of the twentieth book of that poet.—S.

Tow'ring

Tow'ring, an eagle, from the ' left of heaven,
 Their enterprize forbidding: on he came,
 And in his talons bore a dragon, huge,
 Enormous, glist'ning horrid with red scales.
 Still liv'd the serpent; and though clofe with death
 He strove, and gasp'd, and panted; yet his rage
 And venom he forgot not; for half round
 Wreathing the pliant joints of his high crest,
 With backward stroke he pierc'd his griping foe:
 His breast he pierc'd, where clofe beneath the neck
 Soft to the stroke it yielded. Stung with smart,
 Loosen'd his gripe the foe, and to the ground
 Down dropp'd him. Mid the martial throng the beast
 Fell: while the bleeding bird with clangor shrill
 Strain'd onward his weak flight, where bore the winds.

These passages, and others of the same kind, shall I say, it belongs to the diviner to consider, and to criticise?

Io. So will you say what is true, Socrates.

Soc. You speak truth yourself, Io, in this. Come on then, and tell me, as I have selected out for you certain passages from the *Odyssey*, and from the *Iliad*, appertaining some of them to the diviner, some to the physician, and others to the fisherman; in return, do you pick out for me (since you are better versed in Homer than I am) such passages, Io, as appertain to the rhapsodist, and relate to the rhapsodical art: such as it becomes the rhapsodist to examine and to criticise, with a judgment and skill superior to that of other men.

Io. The whole of Homer I affirm it to be, Socrates.

¹ This circumstance is very important. For upon the principles of augury, one kind of divination, had the flight of the eagle over their heads been, on the contrary, from the right side of the heavens, that is, from the east, making toward the left, or west, it had been a presage of good success. Yet is this circumstance carelessly omitted by Mr. Pope. Now the passage being cited by Plato, expressly, as an instance to show that Homer treats of the art of divination, we could not, without an absurdity, pass over that part of it, which is the most material with regard to the scope of our author in this place. And as this often is the case, that where Plato cites Homer for some particular purpose, Mr. Pope's version happens there to be defective, we found ourselves obliged, for this further reason, to attempt setting those passages in their proper light by a new translation. This is cited from the *τετραμυχία*, or twelfth book of the *Iliad*.—S.

Soc. You denied it, Io, but just now, to be the whole of Homer. ¹ What, are you so forgetful? It ill becomes, however, a man, who is a rhapsodist, to be forgetful.

Io. But what is it now that I have forgot?

Soc. Do you not remember, that you affirmed the art of rhapsody to be an art different from that of chariot-driving?

Io. I do remember it.

Soc. Did not you allow too, that being a different art, it was accompanied by skill and judgment in a different sort of things?

Io. I did allow it.

Soc. The art of rhapsody therefore, according to your own account, is not accompanied by skill and judgment in things of every sort: nor will the rhapsodist know all things.

Io. With an exception, perhaps, Socrates, of such sort of things.

Soc. By such sort of things, which you are pleased to except, you mean such things as belong to nearly all the other arts. But, since the rhapsodist knows not all things, pray what are those things which he does know?

Io. He knows, I presume, what is proper for a man to speak, and what for a woman; what for a slave, and what for a freeman; what for those who are under government or command, and what for the governor and the commander.

Soc. For the commander, do you mean who has the command of a ship at sea, amidst a tempest, what is proper for him to speak, that the rhapsodist will know better than the master of a ship?

Io. Not so; for this indeed the master of a ship will know best.

Soc. For the governor then, who has the government of the sick, what is proper for such a one to speak, will the rhapsodist know better than the physician?

Io. Not this neither.

Soc. But that which is proper for a slave, you say.

Io. I do.

¹ The Greek here is erroneously printed in all the editions, thus ἢ (instead of ἢ) οὕτως ἐπισημαίνωμι; accordingly, Cornarius translates it, "Aut ita obliuiofus es?" This error of the press, we hope, will be corrected in the next edition of Plato.—S.

Soc.

Soc. For instance now, a slave, whose office it is to keep the cattle, what is proper for him to speak, when the herd grows wild and madding, in order to pacify and tame them; do you say the rhapsodist will know this better than the cow-keeper?

Io. No, to be sure.

Soc. That, however, which is proper for a woman to speak; for a woman-weaver now, suppose, relating to the fabric of cloth.

Io. No, no.

Soc. But he will know what is proper for a man to speak, who has the command of an army, in order to animate his men.

Io. You have it; such sort of things the rhapsodist will know.

Soc. What is the art of rhapsody then the art of commanding armies?

Io. Truly I¹ should know what speech is proper for the commander of an army.

Soc. Because you have, perhaps, the art of generalship, Io. For suppose you were skilled in the arts of horsemanship and of music, both of them, you would be a good judge of what horses were well-managed, and would be able to distinguish them from such as were managed ill. Now, in that case, were I to ask you this question, by which of your arts, Io, do you know the well-managed horses? do you know them through your skill in horsemanship, or through your skill in music? what answer would you make me?

Io. Through my skill in horsemanship, I should answer.

Soc. Again; when you distinguished rightly the good performers in music, would not you own, that you distinguished them by your being skilled in music; and not say it was owing to your skill in horsemanship?

Io. Certainly.

Soc. But now that you understand what belongs to the² command of

¹ In the printed editions of the Greek we here read γινῆν γου ἄρ' ἐγω, whereas certainly we ought to read γ:σινυ γου αν (or else ἄρ') ἐγω.—S.

² This refers to an assertion of Io's a little before. It seems necessary, therefore, in this place to read στρα νη:α, (as the sense also requires), and not στρατιωτικα, *military affairs*, as it is printed, and accordingly translated by Cornarius and Serranus. Ficinus, however, Grynæus, and Bembo, agree with us.—S.

armies, whether do you understand this by means of your skill in the art of generalship, or as you are an excellent rhapsodist?

Io. There appears to me no difference.

Soc. What mean you by no difference? Do you mean, that the art of rhapsody and the art of generalship are one and the same art? or do you admit them to be two different arts?

Io. I think they are one art only.

Soc. Whoever then happens to be a good rhapsodist, the same man must also be a good general.

Io. By all means, Socrates.

Soc. ¹ And whoever happens to be a good general, must he be a good rhapsodist too?

Io. This, I think, does not hold true.

Soc. ² But that other consequence, you think, will hold true, that whoever is a good rhapsodist is also a good general.

Io. Beyond all doubt.

Soc. Now are not you the most excellent of all the Grecian rhapsodists?

Io. Certainly so, Socrates.

Soc. Do you also then, Io, excel the rest of the Grecians in knowing how to command armies?

Io. ³ Be assured, Socrates, that I do; for I have acquired that knowledge from the works of Homer.

Soc. In the name of the gods then, Io, what can be the meaning that, excellent as you are above the rest of the Grecians, both as a general and as a rhapsodist, you choose to make your appearance only in this latter character; and travel about all over Greece, reciting and expounding, but take not the command of the Grecian armies? Is it because you think the Grecians

¹ We choose, here, to tread in the steps of Ficinus, deviating from the printed original, where the sentence is not interrogative, but affirmative.—S.

² By a strange perverseness in the editors or printers of the Greek text, this sentence is changed into a question; by which means the humorous turn of it is half lost.—S.

³ The words of Plato are *eu ischi*. This was an arrogant expression, frequent in the mouths of the sophists. See Plato's Symposium. In the same spirit he here very properly attributes it to Io. Yet Bembo renders it thus in Italian, *Tu il fai bene*; following the sense, or rather nonsense, given it by Cornarius and Serranus.—S.

are in great need of a rhapsodist, or of a man to repeat verses to them with a golden crown upon his head, but have no occasion at all for a general?

Io. The city, which I belong to, Socrates, is under the government of yours, and her forces are commanded by the Athenians: therefore she is in no want of a general. And as to your city, or that of the Lacedæmonians, neither of you would appoint me her general, because you have, both of you, a high opinion of your own sufficiency.

Soc. What, my friend Io, do you not know Apollodorus of Cyzicum?

Io. Which Apollodorus?

Soc. Him, whom the Athenians have often appointed to the command of their armies, though a foreigner. Then there is, besides, Phanosthenes the Andrian, and ¹ Heraclides of Clazomenæ; upon whom the city, notwithstanding that they are foreigners, yet because they have ² approved themselves considerable and worthy men, confers the chief command of her army, with other posts of power and government. And will not the city then bestow her honours on Io the Ephesian, and appoint him her general, should he

¹ This general is mentioned by Ælian in his *Various Histories*, b. xiv. c. 5. together with Apollodorus of Cyzicum, and both of them with high commendations; but in such a manner, it must be owned, as to induce a suspicion, that he had all his knowledge of them from this passage of the *Io*—S.

² Plato seems to take this opportunity of expressing the esteem he had for these three commanders; under whom, it is probable, that Socrates had served his country in some of those campaigns which he had made with so much glory. See *Plato's Banquet*. This whole passage, however, is understood in a very different sense by Athenæus, b. xi. p. 5:6 who takes this praise to be ironical: in consequence of which mistake he bestows ill language on Plato, for having here, as he pretends, vilified these commanders, and thrown a reflection upon the city for promoting them. According to the supposition, therefore, of Athenæus, they are introduced here, on purpose to depreciate them, and put them on a level with an ignorant rhapsodist. A strange interpretation! by which is weakened, if not entirely destroyed, as well the force of the argument here used by Socrates, as of that ridicule, with which he all along treats Io. For by setting him in comparison with commanders of real merit only, could Socrates, consistently with his own reasoning, invalidate the account given by Io, why he was not promoted, in that he was a foreigner. Since the argument would be very inconclusive, if this were supposed the meaning: "You see how the city chooses to prefer a pack of fellows, who have no merit, and are foreigners as well as yourself; if you then are truly an expert and able general, though a foreigner, you may reasonably expect a share in so injudicious a promotion." And as to the irony, Socrates is thus

he appear a man valuable, and worthy that regard? What, are not ¹ you Ephesians originally of Athens? and then, besides, does Ephesus yield the preference to any city in point of greatness? But the question is about your own character, Io; What shall we think of you? For if you speak truth, when you say that you are able to display the excellencies of Homer through your skill in any art or science, you are a man who does not act fairly. For after you had professed to know many fine things, from which you could illustrate the works of Homer, and had undertaken to give me a specimen of that knowledge of yours, you deceive and disappoint me: whilst you are so far from doing as you promised, and giving me such a specimen, that you will not so much as inform me what those things are in which you have so profound a skill; and this, notwithstanding I have long pressed you to tell me: but absolutely become, like Proteus, all various and multiform, changing backwards and forwards, till at last you escape me, by starting up a general; for fear, I suppose, you should be driven to discover how deep your wisdom is in the works of Homer. If then you really are an artist, and when you had promised to give me a specimen of your art and knowledge in Homer, wilfully disappoint me; you act, as I just now said, unfairly. If indeed you

made to go out of his way, and take off the ridicule from Io, whilst he turns it upon others. But the reasoning is just, and the ridicule on Io continued strong, upon the contrary supposition, expressed in other words thus: "Your being a foreigner can be no bar to your pre-ferment; let not that deter you from so laudable an ambition: you see what regard the city pays to men of great abilities, though born in other countries. Let the success, therefore, of Apollodorus and the rest encourage you to offer yourself a candidate: for you on other accounts have still fairer pretensions." Were the point, now in debate, a matter to be decided by authority, to that of Athenæus we might oppose that of Ælian, who commends the compliment, made by Plato in this passage, not only to the three foreign generals, but to the city of Athens at the same time, for giving her first honours to superior virtue, wherever found, without regard to birth-place or to popular favour. See Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. xiv. c. 5.—S.

¹ Socrates, having now sufficiently derided the personal arrogance and ignorance of Io, before he quits him, bestows an ironical sarcasm or two upon the general vanity of Io's countrymen; who, while they were sunk in Asiatic luxury and effeminacy, valued themselves highly, in the first place, upon their descent from the Athenians, so illustrious for wisdom and valour, and next on account of their opulence and magnificence; circumstances, in truth, redounding only to their shame; yet the usual topics of boast, these two, high descent and outward greatness, whether in nations or private persons, degenerated from their ancestors, and void of those virtues which raised them to that greatness.—S.

are not an artist, but an enthusiast, one of those who from divine allotment are inspired by Homer ; and thus, without any real knowledge, are able to utter abundance of fine words about the writings of that poet, agreeably to the opinion which I had of you before ; in this case you are not guilty of any unfair dealing. Choose then, whether of these two opinions you would have me entertain of you ; whether this, that you are a man, who acts unfairly ; or this other, that you are a man under the influence of some divinity.

Io. Great is the difference, O Socrates : it is certainly much the better thing to be deemed under divine influence.

Soc. This better thing then, Io, is with you, to be deemed by us, in your encomiums upon Homer, an enthusiast, and not an artist.

THE END OF THE IO.

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