

take you and me as advisers about the education of their children, but, as I said at first, they should ask Socrates and not let him off; if my own sons were old enough, I should do the same.

NICIAS: To that I quite agree, if Socrates is willing to take them under his charge. I should not wish for anyone else to be the tutor of
d Niceratus. But I observe that whenever I mention the matter to him he recommends to me some other tutor and refuses himself. Perhaps he may be more ready to listen to you, Lysimachus.

LYSIMACHUS: He ought, Nicias, for certainly I would do things for him which I would not do for many others. What do you say, Socrates—will you comply? And are you ready to give assistance in the improvement of the youths?

e SOCRATES: Indeed, Lysimachus, I should be very wrong in refusing to aid in the improvement of anybody. And if I had shown in this conversation that I had a knowledge which Nicias and Laches have not, then I admit that you would be right in inviting me to perform this duty, but as we are all in the same perplexity, why should one of us be preferred to another? I certainly think that no one should,
201 and under these circumstances, let me offer you a piece of advice—and this need not go farther than ourselves. I maintain, my friends, that every one of us should seek out the best teacher whom he can find, first for ourselves who are greatly in need of one, and then for the youths, regardless of expense or anything. But I cannot advise that we remain as we are. And if anyone laughs at us for going to school at
b our age, I would quote to them the authority of Homer, who says, 'Modesty is not good for a needy man.'⁴ Let us then, regardless of what may be said of us, concern ourselves both with our own education and that of the youths, together.

LYSIMACHUS: I like your proposal, Socrates, and as I am the oldest, I am also the most eager to go to school with the boys. Let me
c beg a favor of you. Come to my house tomorrow at dawn, and we will advise about these matters. For the present, let us make an end of the conversation.

SOCRATES: I will come to you tomorrow, Lysimachus, as you propose, God willing.

⁴ *Odyssey* 17.347.

LYSIS

The interest of the Lysis does not lie in the matter of the discussion but in the manner. Socrates questions two boys, close friends, on what friendship is. They are sure that they know, but the more they try to explain the less they feel that they really know. They come to see under Socrates' guiding hand that every statement they make is unsatisfactory. But his object is by no means to resolve their difficulties for them. He declares that he knows as little as they do. How ridiculous it is, he tells them at the end, that he and they who are friends should not know what friendship is.

This method of teaching is Socrates' own among the great teachers of mankind. All of the others would have been concerned to give Lysis and his friend a higher ideal of friendship, to point them on to a loftier idea, to form in their young minds a mold of nobility which might persist. That Socrates would have been pleased to do all this is a matter of course; the reason he made no attempt is that he did not believe it could be done. It was his conviction that truth cannot be taught, it must be sought. His only desire in talking to the boys was to make them use their minds. To him the best that could be done for them was to arouse them to think. In that way they might finally turn the process to their own inner world and examine themselves—"The unexamined life is not worth living"—and learn to know themselves. So and only so could they discover the spark of good within, which they alone could kindle into a flame. Among the dialogues the Lysis has no superior as an illustration of Socrates' method.

203 I was walking straight from the Academy to the Lyceum, by the road which skirts the outside of the walls, and had reached the little gate where is the source of the Panops, when I fell in with Hippothales, the son of Hieronymus, Ctesippus the Paeonian, and some more young men, standing together in a group.

Hippothales, seeing me approach, called out, Ha, Socrates, whither b and whence?

From the Academy, I replied, and I am going straight to the Lyceum.

Straight to us, I hope, cried he. Won't you turn in? It will be worth your while.

Turn in where? said I. And whom do you mean by us?

There, he replied, pointing out to me an enclosure facing the wall, with a door open. There we are passing our time, he added, we whom you see, and a great many other fine fellows too.

And what's all this, pray? And how are you passing your time?

204 This is a palaestra that has been lately erected, and we are passing our time principally in conversations, of which we should be very glad to give you a share.

You are very kind, I answered. And who is your teacher there?

A friend and admirer of yours, Miccus.

And no ordinary man either, I rejoined, a most competent Sophist.

Won't you come with us, then, he said, to see both him and all our party there too?

b Here, where I am, was my reply, I should like first to be informed, what I am to enter for, and who is your prime beauty?

Some think one, and some another, Socrates.

But whom do you think, Hippothales? Tell me this.

He answered only with a blush. So I added, Hippothales, son of Hieronymus, there is no longer any need for you to tell me whether you are in love or not, since I am sure you are not only in love, but pretty far gone in it too by this time. For though in most matters I am a poor useless creature, yet by some means or other I have received c from heaven the gift of being able to detect at a glance both a lover and a beloved.

On hearing this, he blushed still more deeply than before. Whereupon Ctesippus broke in, It is very fine of you, Hippothales, turning red in this way, and making such a fuss about telling Socrates the name, when he is quite sure, if he stays ever so short a time in your company, to be bored to death by hearing it always repeated. At any rate, Socrates, he has deafened *our* ears for us, and filled them d full of Lysis. Nay, if he be but a little tipsy when he talks of him,

From *Socratic Discourses by Plato and Xenophon*, translated by J. Wright (Everyman's Library, London and New York, first pub. 1910).

we can easily fancy, on waking the next morning, that we are still hearing the name of Lysis. But his constant talk about him, bad as it is, is not the worst—nothing like so bad as when he begins to deluge us with his poems and speeches, and, worse and worse, to sing a song on his darling in a portentous voice, which we are compelled to listen to with patience.

Your Lysis must be quite a juvenile, I rejoined. I conjecture this e from my not knowing the name when you mentioned it.

Why, they don't often call him by his own name, Socrates; he still goes by his father's, the latter being so well known. Still, I am sure, you cannot be a stranger to the boy's appearance; that's quite enough to know him by.

Say, then, whose son he is.

Democrates' of Aexone, his eldest.

Well done, Hippothales, said I. A noble, and in every way a brilliant choice is this which you have made. But come now, go on 205 about him with me, just as you do with your friends here, that I may know what language a lover ought to hold with regard to his favorite, either to his face or before others.

And do you really, Socrates, set any value on what this fellow says?

Do you mean, I asked, absolutely to deny being in love with the person he mentions?

No, not that, he answered, but I do the making verses or speeches on him.

He is out of his senses, doting, mad, cried Ctesippus.

But, I replied, I don't want to hear any of your verses, Hippothales, nor any song either that you may have composed upon your b darling, but I should like to have an idea of their sense, that I may know how you behave toward your favorite.

Ctesippus will tell you all about it, Socrates, I don't doubt. He must remember it well enough, if it be true, as he says, that I dined it into his ears till he was deaf.

Oh, I know it, cried Ctesippus, right thoroughly too. It is such a joke, Socrates. The idea of a lover devoting himself exclusively to the object of his love, and yet having nothing of a personal interest to say to him that any child might not say—isn't it absurd? But stories c that all the city rings with, about Democrates, and Lysis, the boy's grandfather, and all his ancestors—their wealth, their breeds of horses, their victories at the Pythian, Isthmian, Nemean with four steeds and single—all these he works into poem and speech, aye, and stories too, still further out-of-date than these. For in a sort of poem the other day, he gave us the whole account of Heracles' entertainment, telling us how their ancestor received that hero into his house d on the strength of his relationship, being himself son of Zeus, by the daughter of the founder of Aexone. Yes, Socrates, such, among others,

old wives' tales that our lover here is ever singing and reciting, condemning us moreover to listen to.

On hearing this, I said to the lover, You ridiculous Hippothales, before you have gained the victory, you compose and sing a hymn of praise on yourself.

It isn't on myself, Socrates, that I either make or sing it.

You fancy not, said I.

How is it so? said he.

In every way, I replied, these songs have reference to you. If you succeed in winning such a youth as you describe, all that you have said and sung will redound to your honor, and be in fact your hymn of triumph, as if you had gained a victory in obtaining such a favorite. But if he escape your grasp, then the higher the eulogium you have passed on him, the greater will be the blessings which you will seem to have missed, and the greater consequently the ridicule you will incur. All connoisseurs, therefore, in matters of love, are careful of praising their favorites before they have won them, from their doubts as to the result of the affair. Moreover, your beauties, when lauded and made much of, become gorged with pride and arrogance. Don't you think so?

I do, he replied.

And the more arrogant they are, the harder they become to be caught?

It is to be expected, at any rate.

Well, what should you say to a huntsman that frightened the prey he was in chase of, and rendered it harder to be caught?

That he was a very sorry one, certainly.

And if by speech and song he renders it wild instead of luring it, he can be no favorite of the Muses, can he?

I think not.

Have a care then, Hippothales, that you do not lay yourself open with your poetry to all these reproaches. And yet I am sure, that to a man who injured himself by his poetry, you would not be willing to accord the title of a good poet, so long as he did himself harm.

No, indeed, that would be too unreasonable, he replied. But it is on this very account, Socrates, that I put myself in your hands, and beg you to give me any advice you may have to bestow, as to the course of conduct or conversation that a lover ought to adopt in order to render himself agreeable to the object of his affection.

That were no such easy matter, I replied. But if you would bring me to speak with Lysis, perhaps I could give you a specimen of what you ought to say to him, in place of the speeches and songs which you are in the habit of treating him with, according to your friends here.

Well, there is no difficulty in that, he rejoined. If you will only go into the palaestra with Ctesippus, and sit down and begin to talk, I

have little doubt that he will come to you of his own accord, for he is singularly fond of listening. And, moreover, as they are keeping the Hermaea, boys and men are all mixed up together today. So he is pretty certain to join you. But if he does not, Ctesippus knows him, through his cousin Menexenus, who is Lysis' particular friend. You can get Ctesippus, therefore, to summon him, in case he does not come of himself.

This be our plan, I cried. And taking Ctesippus with me, I walked toward the palaestra, the rest following.

On entering we found that the boys had finished their sacrifices, and, the ceremony being now pretty well over, were playing together at knucklebones, all in their holiday dress. The greater part were carrying on their game in the court outside, but some of them were in a corner of the dressing room, playing at odd and even with a number of bones which they drew out of small baskets. Round these were stationed others looking on, among whom was Lysis, and he stood in the midst of boys and youths with a chaplet on his head, unmatched in face or form. You would say he was not beautiful merely, but even of a noble mien. For ourselves, we withdrew to the opposite part of the room, and sitting down, as nothing was going on there, began to talk. While thus engaged, Lysis kept turning round and eyeing us, evidently wishing to join us. For some time though he remained in doubt, not liking to walk up alone. But when Menexenus looked in from his game in the court and on seeing Ctesippus and me came to sit down with us, Lysis also followed at sight of his friend, and took a seat by his side.

There came up, moreover, the rest of our party, among them Hippothales, who, seeing them form into a good-sized group, screened himself behind them in a position where he did not think he could be seen by Lysis—so fearful was he of giving him offense. And thus placed near him, he listened to our conversation.

I began it by turning my eyes on Menexenus, and saying, Son of Demophon, which of you two is the elder?

It is a disputed point, he replied.

And do you dispute, too, which is the better fellow?

Right heartily, was his answer.

And so too, I suppose, which is the more beautiful?

At this they both laughed.

I will not ask you, I added, which is the wealthier, for you are friends, are you not?

Oh dear, yes! they both cried.

And friends, they tell us, share and share alike; so in this respect, at any rate, there will be no difference between you, if only you give me a true account of your friendship.

To this they both assented.

I was then proceeding to inquire which of the two excelled in

justice, and which in wisdom, when someone came up and carried off Menexenus, telling him that the master of the palaestra wanted him—I presume, on business connected with the sacrifice. Accordingly he left us, and I went on questioning Lysis.

Lysis, said I, I suppose your father and mother love you very dearly?

Very dearly, he answered.

They would wish you then to be as happy as possible.

Of course.

e Do you think a man happy if he is a slave, and may not do anything he wants?

No, that indeed I don't.

Well, if your father and mother love you, and wish you to become happy, it is clear that they try in every way to make you happy.

To be sure they do.

They allow you then, I suppose, to do what you wish, and never scold you, or hinder you from doing what you want to do?

Yes, but they do though, Socrates, and pretty frequently too.

208 How? said I. They wish you to be happy, and yet hinder you from doing what you want. But tell me this. If you wanted to ride on one of your father's chariots, and take the reins during a race, would they not allow you?

No, most assuredly they would not.

Whom would they then? I asked.

There is a charioteer paid by my father.

Paid! cried I. Do they allow a paid servant in preference to you to do what he pleases with the horses, and, what is more, give him money for so doing?

b Not a doubt about it, Socrates, he replied.

Well, but your pair of mules I am sure they let you drive, and even if you wished to take the whip and whip them, they would allow you.

Allow me, would they? said he.

Would they not? said I. Is there no one allowed to whip them?

Of course there is—the mule driver.

Is he a slave or free?

A slave, he answered.

c A slave then, it appears, they think of more account than you, their son; they entrust their property to him rather than to you, and they allow him to do what he pleases, while you they hinder. But answer me further. Do they let you rule yourself, or not even allow you this?

Rule myself! I should think not, said he.

You have someone to rule you, then?

Yes, my governor here.

Not a slave?

Yes, but he is, though, ours.

Shocking! I exclaimed. A free man to be ruled by a slave. But how, pray, does this governor exercise his authority?

He takes me to school, of course.

And do you mean to say that they rule you there, too—the schoolmasters?

Most certainly they do.

Very many then, it appears, are the masters and rulers whom your father sets over you on purpose. But come now, when you go home to your mother, she, I am sure, lets you do what you please—that you may be as happy as she can make you—either with her wool or her loom, when she is spinning. It cannot possibly be that she hinders you from touching her comb or her shuttle, or any other of her spinning implements.

He burst out laughing. I can assure you, Socrates, he said, she not only hinders me, but would get me a good beating if I did touch e them.

Beating! cried I. You haven't done your father or mother any wrong, have you?

Not I, he answered.

Whatever is the reason, then, that they hinder you, in this shocking manner, from being happy, and acting as you please, and keep you, all the day long, in a state of bondage to someone or other—and, in a word, of doing hardly anything at all you want to do? So that it seems you get no good whatever from your fortune, large as it is, but all have control over it, rather than you, nor, again, from that beautiful person of yours, for it, too, is under the care and charge of other people, while you, poor Lysis, have control over nothing at all, nor do a single thing you wish. 209

Because I'm not old enough yet, Socrates.

That should be no hindrance, son of Democrates, since there are things, I fancy, which both your father and mother allow you to do, without waiting for you to be old enough. When they wish, for example, to have anything written or read, it is you, I conceive, whom they appoint to the office, before anyone else in the house. Isn't it? b

Beyond a question, he replied.

In these matters, then, you are allowed to do as you please; you may write whichever letter you like first, and whichever you like second. And in reading you enjoy the same liberty. And when you take up your lyre, neither father nor mother, I imagine, hinders you from tightening or loosening such strings as you choose, or from playing with your fingers or stick, as you may think proper. Or do they hinder you in such matters?

Oh dear, no! he exclaimed.

What in the world, then, can be the reason, Lysis, that in these matters they don't hinder you, while in the former they do? c

I suppose it is, Socrates, because I understand the one, and don't understand the other.

Oh! That's it, is it, my fine fellow? It is not, then, for you to be old enough that your father is waiting in all cases, but on the very day that he thinks you are wiser than he is, he will hand over to you himself and his property.

I shouldn't wonder, said he.

Nor I, said I. But again. Does your neighbor follow the same rule that your father does with regard to you? Do you expect he will hand over to you his house to manage, as soon as he thinks you have a better idea of the management of a house than he has himself, or will he keep it in his own hands?

Hand it over to me, I should think.

And the Athenians? Will they, do you imagine, hand over to you their matters directly they perceive that you are wise enough to manage them?

Yes, I expect so.

But come now, I asked, what will the Great King do? When his meat is cooking, will he allow his eldest son, heir to the throne of Asia, to throw into the gravy whatever he chooses, or us, rather, if we come before him, and prove that we have a better idea than his son has of dressing a dish?

Us, to be sure, said he.

And the prince he won't allow to put in the least morsel even, while with us he would make no difficulty, though we wished to throw in salt by handfuls?

Exactly.

Once more. If his son had something the matter with his eyes, would he allow him to touch them himself, if he thought him ignorant of the healing art, or rather hinder him?

Hinder him.

But against us, on the other hand, if he conceived us to be skilled in the art, he would, I imagine, make no objection, even though we wished to force open the eyes, and sprinkle in ashes, as he would suppose us to be rightly advised.

True, he would not.

And so, with everything else whatsoever, he would entrust it to us rather than to himself or his son, if he believed that we knew more about it than either of them did.

Necessarily he would, Socrates.

You see then, said I, how the case stands, dear Lysis. All matters of which we have a good idea will be put into our hands by all people, whether Greeks or barbarians, men or women. We shall act, with regard to them, exactly as we please; no one will intentionally stand in our way. And not only shall we be free ourselves in these matters, but we shall be lords over others, and they will be in fact our

property, as we shall have the enjoyment of them. With regard to matters, on the other hand, into which we have acquired no insight, no one will ever allow us to act as we think proper, but all persons, to the best of their power, will hinder us from meddling with them—not only strangers, but even our own father and mother, and if we possess any nearer relation. And we ourselves, in these matters, shall be subject to others, and they will be, in fact, the property of others, as we shall derive no advantage from them. Do you allow this to be the case?

I do.

Will anyone, then, count us his friends, will anyone love us in those matters in which we are of no use?

Indeed no.

According to this, then, not even you are loved by your own father, nor is anyone else by anyone else in the world, in so far as you or he is useless?

So it would appear, he said.

If, therefore, you acquire knowledge, my son, all men will be friendly to you, all men will be attached to you, for you will be useful and good. If not, you will have no friend in anyone, not even in your father or mother, or any of your own family. Now is it possible, Lysis, for a man to have a great idea of himself in those matters of which he has yet no idea?

How can he possibly? he replied.

And if you still require, as you do, an instructor, you are still without ideas.

True, he answered.

It cannot be, then, that you have a great idea of yourself, if as yet you have no idea.

No, really, Socrates, I don't see how I can.

On receiving this reply from Lysis, I turned my eyes on Hippothales, and was on the point of making a great blunder. For it came into my head to say, This is the way, Hippothales, that you should talk to your favorite, humbling and checking, instead of puffing him up and pampering him, as you now do. However, on seeing him writhing with agitation at the turn the conversation was taking, I recollected that though standing so near, he didn't wish to be seen by Lysis. So I recovered myself in time, and forbore to address him.

At this moment, too, Menexenus returned and took the seat by Lysis, from which he had previously arisen.

Whereupon Lysis, in a boyish fondling way, said to me in a low voice, so that Menexenus couldn't hear, I say, Socrates, say over again to Menexenus what you have been saying to me.

No, Lysis, I replied, *you* must tell him that; you were certainly attending.

I should think I was too, he rejoined.

Try to remember it then, as well as you can, that you may give
b him a clear account of the whole, and if there's anything you forget,
ask me about it some other day—the first time you meet me.

Well, I'll do as you tell me, Socrates, with all my heart; you may
rely upon that. But say something else to him now, will you, that I,
too, may hear it, till it's time for me to go home.

Well, I must do so, I replied, since it's you who bid me. But
mind you come to my aid, if Menexenus tries to baffle me. You know,
don't you, that he's fond of a dispute?

Oh yes, desperately, I know. And that's the very reason I want
c you to talk with him.

That I may make myself ridiculous, eh?

Oh dear, no, Socrates, but that you may put him down.

Put him down, indeed, cried I. That's no such easy matter. He's
a redoubtable man, this, a scholar of Ctesippus'. And here's his master
too, himself, to help him—don't you see?—Ctesippus.

Trouble yourself about no one, Socrates, he said, but begin, at-
tack him.

As you will, said I.

At this point of our byplay Ctesippus cried out, What's that you
d two there are feasting on by yourselves, without giving us a share?

Never fear, said I, you shall have a share. There's something I've
said that Lysis here doesn't understand. He says, though, he thinks
Menexenus knows, and bids me ask him.

Why don't you ask him then? he rejoined.

Just what I mean to do, I replied. Answer, Menexenus, the ques-
e tions I ask. From my earliest childhood I have had a particular
fancy; everyone has. One longs for horses, another for dogs, a third
for money, a fourth for office. For my part, I look on these matters
with equanimity, but on the acquisition of friends, with all a lover's
passion, and I would choose to obtain a good friend rather than the
best quail or cock in the world; I should prefer one to both horse and
dog—nay, I fully believe, that I would far sooner acquire a friend
and companion, than all the gold of Darius, aye, or than Darius him-
212 self. So fond am I of friendship. On seeing, therefore, you and Lysis, I
am lost in wonder, while I count you most happy, at your being able,
at your years, to acquire this treasure with such readiness and ease—
in that you, Menexenus, have gained so early and true a friend in
Lysis, and he the same in you—while I, on the contrary, am so far
from making the acquisition, that I do not even know how one man
becomes the friend of another, but wish on this very point to appeal
to you as a connoisseur. Answer me this. As soon as one man loves
another, which of the two becomes the friend—the lover of the loved,
b or the loved of the lover? Or does it make no difference?

None in the world, that I can see, he replied.

How? said I. Are both friends, if only one loves?

I think so, he answered.

Indeed! Is it not possible for one who loves, not to be loved in
return by the object of his love?

It is.

Nay, is it not possible for him even to be hated—treatment, if I
mistake not, which lovers frequently fancy they receive at the hands of
their favorites? Though they love their darlings as dearly as possible,
they often imagine that they are not loved in return, often that they c
are even hated. Don't you believe this to be true?

Quite true, he replied.

Well, in such a case as this, the one loves, the other is loved.

Just so.

Which of the two, then, is the friend of the other—the lover of
the loved, whether or no he be loved in return, and even if he be
hated, or the loved of the lover? Or is neither the friend of the
other, unless both love each other?

The latter certainly seems to be the case, Socrates.

If so, I continued, we think differently now from what we did be- d
fore. Then it appeared that if one loved, both were friends, but now,
that unless both love, neither are friends.

Yes, I'm afraid we have contradicted ourselves.

This being the case then, the lover is not a friend to anything that
does not love him in return.

Apparently not.

People, then, are not friends to horses, unless their horses love
them in return, nor friends to quails or to dogs, nor again, to wine or
to gymnastics, unless their love be returned—nor friends to wisdom,
unless wisdom loves them in return. But in each of these cases, the
individual loves the object, but is not a friend to it, and the poet is
wrong who says, e

Happy the man who, to whom he's a friend, has children, and horses
Mettleless, dogs of the chase, guest in a faraway land.¹

I don't think he is wrong, Socrates.

But do you think he's right?

Yes, I do.

The lover then, it appears, Menexenus, is a friend to the object
of his love, whether the object love, or even hate him. Just as to quite
young children, who are either not yet old enough to love, or who are 213
old enough to feel hatred when punished by father or mother, their
parents, all the time even that they are being hated, are friends in the
very highest degree.

Yes, such appears to be the case.

¹ Solon 21.2.

By this reasoning, then, it is not the object of love that is the friend, but the lover.

Apparently.

And so, not the object of hatred that is the enemy, but the hater. Clearly.

It frequently happens, then, that people are enemies to those who love them, and friends to those who hate them—that is, are enemies to their friends, and friends to their enemies—if it be true that the lover is the friend, but not the loved. But surely, my dear friend, it were grossly unreasonable, nay, rather, I think altogether impossible, for a man to be a friend to his enemy, and an enemy to his friend.

Yes, Socrates, it does seem impossible.

Well, then, if this be impossible, it must be the object of the love that is the friend to the lover.

Clearly.

And so again, the object of the hatred that is the enemy to the hater.

Necessarily.

But if this be true, we cannot help arriving at the same conclusion as we did in the former case—namely, that it often happens that a man is not a friend, but even an enemy to a friend, as often, that is, as he is not loved, but even hated by the man whom he loves—and often again, that he is not an enemy, but even a friend to an enemy, as often, in fact, as he is not hated, but even loved by the man whom he hates.

No, I'm afraid we can't.

What are we to do then, said I, if neither those who love are to be friends, nor those who are loved, nor, again, those who both love and are loved? Are there any other people besides these that we can say become friends to each other?

To tell you the truth, Socrates, said he, I don't see my way at all.

Is it possible, Menexenus, said I, that from first to last we have been conducting our search improperly?

I am sure I think it is, Socrates, cried Lysis. And he blushed as he said so. For the words seemed to burst from him against his will in the intensity of the interest he was paying to the conversation—an interest which his countenance had evinced all the time we were talking.

I then, wishing to relieve Menexenus, and charmed with the other's intelligence, turned to Lysis, and directing my discourse to him, observed, Yes, Lysis, you are quite right, I think, in saying that if we had conducted our search properly, we should never have lost ourselves in this manner. Let us proceed, however, on this line of inquiry no longer—for I look upon it as a very difficult sort of road—but let us go back again to that point at which we turned aside, and follow in the steps of the poets. For poets, I conceive, are as good as fa-

thers and guides to us in matters of wisdom. Well, the poets, if I mistake not, put forward no slight claims for those who happen to be friends, but tell us that it is God himself who makes them friends, by leading them one to another. They express, if I remember right, their opinion thus: 'Like men, I trow, to like, God ever leads,'² and makes them known. You have met with the verse, have you not?

Oh, yes.

And also with the writings of those learned sages which tell the same story—namely, that like must of necessity be ever friendly with like. And these are they, if I mistake not, who talk and write on nature and the universe.

True, they are.

Well, do you think they are right in what they say? I asked.

Perhaps, said he.

Perhaps, I answered, in half—perhaps, too, even in all—only we don't understand. For, as it appears to us, the nearer wicked men come to each other, and the more they see of each other, the greater enemies they become. For they injure each other. And it is impossible, I take it, for men to be friends, if they injure and are injured in turn.

So it is, he replied.

By this, then, it would appear, that half of their assertion cannot be true, if we suppose them to mean that wicked men are like one another.

So it would.

But they mean to say, I imagine, that the good are like and friendly with the good, but that the bad, as is remarked of them in another place, are not ever even like themselves, but are variable and not to be reckoned upon. And if a thing be unlike and at variance with itself, it will be long, I take it, before it becomes like to or friendly with anything else. Don't you think so too?

I do, he answered.

When, therefore, my friend, our authors assert that like is friendly with like, they mean, I imagine, to intimate, though obscurely enough, that the good man is a friend to the good man only, but that the bad man never engages in a true friendship either with a good or a bad man. Do you agree?

He nodded assent.

We know then now, I continued, who it is that are friends, for our argument shows us that it must be those who are good.

Quite clearly too, I think, said he.

And so do I, I rejoined. Still there is a something in the way that troubles me; so let us, with the help of heaven, see what it is that I suspect. Like men are friendly with like men, in so far as they are like, and such a man is useful to such a man. Or rather, let us put it in

² *Odyssey* 17.218.

215 this way. Is there any good or harm that a like thing can do to a like thing, which it cannot also do to itself? Is there any that can be done to it, which cannot also be done to it by itself? And if not, how can such things be held in regard by each other, when they have no means of assisting one another? Can this possibly be?

No, not possibly.

And if a thing be not held in regard, can it be a friend?

Certainly not.

But, you will say, the like man is not a friend to the like man, but the good will be a friend to the good, in so far as he is good, not in so far as he is like.

Perhaps I may.

And I should rejoin, Will not the good man, in so far as he is good, be found to be sufficient for himself?

Yes.

b And if sufficient, he will want nothing so far as his sufficiency goes.

Of course not.

And if he does not want anything he won't feel regard for anything either.

To be sure not.

And what he does not feel regard for, he cannot love.

Not he.

And if he does not love, he won't be a friend.

Clearly not.

How then, I wonder, will the good be ever friends at all with the good, when neither in absence do they feel regret for each other, being sufficient for themselves apart, nor when present together have they any need of one another? Is there any possible way by which such people can be brought to care for each other?

None whatever.

c And if they do not care for each other, they cannot possibly be friends.

True, they cannot.

Look and see then, Lysis, how we have been led into error. If I mistake not, we are deceived in the whole, and not only in the half.

How so? he asked.

Once upon a time, I replied, I heard a statement made which has just this moment flashed across my mind. It was that nothing is so hostile to like as like, none so hostile to the good as the good. And among other arguments, my informant adduced the authority of d Hesiod, telling me that, according to him, 'Potter ever jars with potter, bard with bard, and poor with poor.'³ And so, he added, by a universal and infallible law the nearer any two things resemble one

³ *Works and Days* 25.

another, the fuller do they become of envy, strife, and hatred—and the greater the dissimilarity, the greater the friendship. For the poor are obliged to make themselves friends of the rich, and the weak of the strong, for the sake of their assistance; the sick man also must be friendly with the physician, and, in short, everyone who is without knowledge must feel regard and affection for those who possess it. Nay, he proceeded with increased magnificence of position to assert e that the like was so far from being friendly with the like, that the exact opposite was the case; the more any two things were contrary, the more were they friendly to each other. For everything, he says, craves for its contrary, and not for its like—the dry craves for moisture, the cold for heat, the bitter for sweetness, the sharp for bluntness, the empty to be filled, the full to be emptied. And everything else follows the same rule. For the contrary, he added, is food to the contrary; the like can derive no advantage from the like. And I can assure you I thought him extremely clever as he said all this. He stated 21 his case so well. But you, my friends, what do you think of it?

Oh, it seems very fair at first hearing, said Menexenus.

Shall we admit then that nothing is so friendly to a thing as its contrary?

By all means.

But if we do, Menexenus, will there not spring upon us suddenly and uncouthly and exultingly those universal-knowledge men, the masters of dispute, and ask us, whether there is anything in the world so contrary to enmity as friendship? And if they do, what must be our answer? Can we possibly help admitting that they are right? b

No, we cannot.

Well then, they will say, is friendship a friend to enmity, or enmity to friendship?

Neither one nor the other, he replied.

But justice, I suppose, is a friend to injustice, temperance to intemperance, good to evil.

No, I don't think this can be the case.

Well but, I rejoined, if one thing is friend to another thing in virtue of being its contrary, these things must of necessity be friendly.

So they must, he allowed.

It follows then, I think, that neither like is friendly with like, nor contrary with contrary.

Apparently it does.

Well, then, said I, let us look again, and see whether we be not c still as far as ever from finding friendship, since it is clearly none of these things I have mentioned, but whether that which is neither good nor evil may not possibly turn out, however late, to be friendly with the good.

How do you mean? he asked.

Why, to tell you the truth, said I, I don't know myself, being quite

dizzied by the entanglement of the subject. I am inclined though to think that, in the words of the old proverb, the beautiful is friendly. Certainly the friendly has the appearance of being something soft and smooth and slippery, and probably it is from being of this character that it slides and slips through our fingers so easily. Now I am of this opinion, because the good, I assert, is beautiful. Don't you think so?

I do, said he.

I further assert, with a diviner's foresight, that to the beautiful and good that which is neither good nor evil is friendly. And my reasons for divining this I will tell you. I conceive I recognize three distinct classes, good, evil, and, thirdly, that which is neither good nor evil. Do you allow this distinction?

I do.

Now that good is friendly with good, or evil with evil, or good with evil, we are hindered by our previous arguments from believing. It remains then that, if there be anything friendly with anything, that which is neither good nor evil must be friendly either with the good or with that which resembles itself. For nothing, I am sure, can be friendly with evil.

True.

But neither can like be friendly with like; this we also said, did we not?

We did.

That then which is neither good nor evil will not be friendly with that which resembles itself.

Clearly not.

217 It follows then, I conceive, that friendship can only exist between good and that which is neither evil nor good.

Necessarily, as it appears.

What think you then, my children? I proceeded to say. Is our present position guiding us in a right direction? If we look attentively, we perceive that a body which is in health has no need whatever of the medical art or of any assistance, for it is sufficient in itself. And therefore no one in health is friendly with a physician on account of his health.

Just so, he replied.

But the sick man *is*, I imagine, on account of his sickness.

Undoubtedly.

b Sickens, you will allow, is an evil, the art of medicine, both useful and good.

Yes.

But a body, if I mistake not, in so far as it is a body, is neither good nor evil.

Exactly.

A body though is compelled, on account of sickness, to embrace and love the medical art.

I think so.

That, then, which is neither evil nor good becomes friendly with good, on account of the presence of evil.

Apparently.

But evidently it becomes so before it is itself made evil by the evil which it contains. For, once become evil, it can no longer, you will allow, be desirous of or friendly with good, for evil, we said, cannot possibly be friendly with good.

No, it cannot possibly.

Now mark what I say. I say that some things are themselves such as that which is present with them, some things are not such. For example, if you dye a substance with any color, the color which is dyed in is present, I imagine, with the substance which is dyed.

To be sure it is.

After the process then, is the dyed substance such, in point of color, as that which is applied?

I don't understand, he said.

But you will thus, said I. If anyone were to dye your locks of a gold with white lead, would they, after the dyeing, be, or appear, white?

Appear.

And yet whiteness would, at any rate, be present with them.

True.

But still they would not, as yet, be at all the more white on that account, but though whiteness is present with them, they are neither white nor black.

Precisely.

But when, my dear Lysis, old age has brought upon them this same color, then they become really such as that which is present with them, white by the presence of white.

Yes, indeed they do.

This, then, is the question I want to ask. If a thing be present in a substance, will the substance be such as that which is present with it, or will it be such, if the thing is present under certain conditions, under certain conditions not?

The latter rather, said he.

That then which is neither evil nor good is, in some cases, when evil is present with it, not evil as yet; in other cases it has already become such.

Exactly.

Well then, said I, when it is not evil as yet, though evil be present with it, this very presence of evil makes it desirous of good, but the presence which makes it evil deprives it, at the same time, of its desire and friendship for good. For it is no longer a thing neither evil nor good, but already evil, and evil, we said, cannot be friendly with good. 218

True it cannot be.

On the same ground then we may further assert that those who are already wise are no longer friends to wisdom, be they gods, or be they men, nor, again, are those friends to wisdom who are so possessed of foolishness as to be evil, for no evil and ignorant man is a friend to wisdom. There remain then those who possess indeed this evil, the evil of foolishness, but who are not, as yet, in consequence of it, foolish or ignorant, but still understand that they do not know the things they do not know. And thus, you see, it is those who are neither good nor evil, as yet, that are friends to wisdom [philosophers], but those who are evil are not friends, nor again are the good. For that contrary is not friendly with contrary, nor like with like, was made apparent in the former part of our discourse. Do you remember?

Oh perfectly, they both cried.

Now then, Lysis and Menexenus, I continued, we have, as it appears, discovered, beyond a dispute, what it is that is friendly, and not friendly. Whether in respect of the soul, or of the body, or of anything else whatsoever, that, we pronounce, which is neither evil nor good is friendly with good on account of the presence of evil.

To this conclusion they both yielded a hearty and entire assent.

For myself, I was rejoicing, with all a hunter's delight, at just grasping the prey I had been so long in chase of, when presently there came into my mind, from what quarter I cannot tell, the strangest sort of suspicion. It was that the conclusions to which we had arrived were not true, and, sorely discomfited, I cried, Alackaday, Lysis, alack, Menexenus, we have, I fear me, but dreamed our treasure.

Why so? said Menexenus.

I am afraid, I answered, that, just as if with lying men, we have fallen in with some such false reasonings in our search after friendship.

How do you mean? he asked.

Look here, said I. If a man be a friend, is he a friend to someone, or not?

To someone, of course.

For the sake of nothing, and on account of nothing, or for the sake and on account of something?

For the sake of and on account of something.

Is he a friend to that thing, for the sake of which he is a friend to his friend, or is he to it neither friend nor foe?

I don't quite follow, he said.

No wonder, said I, but perhaps you will if we take this course, and I too, I think, shall better understand what I am saying. The sick man, as we just now said, is a friend to the physician. Is he not?

He is.

On account of sickness, for the sake of health?

Yes.

Sickness is an evil?

Beyond a doubt.

But what is health? I asked. A good, an evil, or neither one nor the other?

A good, he replied.

We further stated, I think, that the body, a thing neither good nor evil, is, on account of sickness—that is to say, on account of an evil—a friend to the medical art. And the medical art is a good, and it is for the sake of health that the medical art has received the friendship, and health is a good, is it not?

It is.

Is the body a friend, or not a friend, to health?

A friend.

And a foe to sickness?

Most decidedly.

That, then, it appears, which is neither good nor evil is a friend to good on account of an evil to which it is a foe, for the sake of a good to which it is a friend?

So it seems.

The friendly, then, is a friend for the sake of that to which it is a friend, on account of that to which it is a foe?

Apparently.

Very well, said I. But arrived as we are, I added, at this point, let us pay all heed, my children, that we be not misled. That friend is become friend to friend—that is to say, that like is become friend to like, which we declared to be impossible—is a matter I will allow to pass, but there is another point which we must attentively consider, in order that we may not be deceived by our present position. A man is a friend, we said, to the medical art for the sake of health.

We did.

Is he a friend to health too?

To be sure he is.

For the sake of something?

Yes.

For the sake of something, then, to which he is friendly, if this, too, is to follow our previous admission?

Certainly.

But is he not again a friend to that thing for the sake of some other thing to which he is a friend?

Yes.

Can we possibly help, then, being weary of going on in this manner, and is it not necessary that we advance at once to a beginning, which will not again refer us to friend upon friend, but arrive at that to which we are in the first instance friends, and for the sake of which we say we are friends to all the rest?

It is necessary, he answered.

This, then, is what I say we must consider, in order that all those other things, to which we said we were friendly, for the sake of that one thing, may not, like so many shadows of it, lead us into error, but that we may establish that thing as the first, to which we are really and truly friends. For let us view the matter thus. If a man sets a high value upon a thing—for instance, if, as is frequently the case, a father prizes a son above everything else he has in the world—may such a father be led by the extreme regard he has for his son to set a high value upon other things also? Suppose, for example, he were to hear of his having drunk some hemlock; would he set a high value on wine, if he believed that wine would cure his son?

Of course he would.

And on the vessel also which contained the wine?

Certainly.

Do you mean to say, then, that he sets an equal value on both, on a cup of earthenware and his own son, on his own son and a quart of wine? Or is the truth rather thus? All such value as this is set not on those things which are procured for the sake of another thing, but on that for the sake of which all such things are procured. We often talk, I do not deny, about setting a high value on gold and silver, but is the truth on this account at all the more so? No, what we value supremely is that, whatever it may be found to be, for the sake of which gold, and all other subsidiaries, are procured. Shall we not say so?

Unquestionably.

And does not the same reasoning hold with regard to friendship? When we say we are friendly to things for the sake of a thing to which we are friendly, do we not clearly use a term with regard to them which belongs to another? And do we not appear to be in reality friendly only with that in which all these so-called friendships terminate?

Yes, he said, this would appear to be the truth.

With that, then, to which we are truly friendly, we are not friendly for the sake of any other thing to which we are friendly.

True, we are not.

This point, then, we dismiss, as sufficiently proved. But, to proceed, are we friends to good?

I imagine so.

And good is loved on account of evil, and the case stands thus. If, of the three classes that we just now distinguished, good, evil, and that which is neither evil nor good, two only were to be left to us, but evil were to be removed out of our path, and were never again to come in contact either with body or soul, or any other of these things, which in themselves we say are neither good nor evil, would it not come to pass that good would no longer be useful to us, but have become useless? For if there were nothing any more to hurt us, we

should have no need whatever of any assistance. And thus you see it would then be made apparent that it was only on account of evil that we felt regard and affection for good, as we considered good to be a medicine for evil, and evil to be a disease. But where there is no disease, there is, we are aware, no need of medicine. This, then, it appears, is the nature of good. It is loved on account of evil by us who are intermediate between evil and good, but in itself, and for itself, it is of no use.

Yes, he said, such would seem to be the case.

It follows, then, I think, that the original thing to which we are friendly, that wherein all those other things terminate to which we said we were friendly for the sake of another thing, bears to these things no resemblance at all. For to these things we called ourselves friendly for the sake of another thing to which we were friendly, but that to which we are really friendly appears to be of a nature exactly the reverse of this, since we found that we were friendly to it for the sake of a thing to which we were unfriendly, and, if this latter be removed, we are, it seems, friendly to it no longer.

Apparently not, said he, according at least to our present position.

But tell me this, said I. If evil be extinguished, will it no longer be possible to feel hunger or thirst, or any similar desire? Or will hunger exist, as long as man and the whole animal creation exist, but exist without being hurtful? And will thirst, too, and all other desires exist, but not be evil, inasmuch as evil is extinct? It is ridiculous though, to ask what will exist or not exist, in such a case, for who can know? But this, at any rate, we do know, that even at present it is possible for a man to be injured by the sensation of hunger, and possible for him also to be profited. Is it not?

Certainly it is.

And so, too, a man who feels thirst, or any similar desire, may feel it in some cases with profit to himself, in other cases with hurt, and in other cases again, with neither one nor the other.

Assuredly he may.

Well, if evil is being extinguished, is there any reason in the world for things that are not evil to be extinguished with it?

None whatever.

There will exist, then, those desires which are neither evil nor good, even if evil be extinct.

Clearly.

Is it possible for a man who is desirous and enamored not to love that of which he is desirous and enamored?

I think not.

There will exist then, it appears, even if evil be extinct, certain things to which we are friendly.

Yes, there will.

But if evil were the cause of our being friendly to anything, it would not be possible, when evil was extinct, for any man to be friendly to anything. For if a cause be extinct, surely it is no longer possible for that to exist of which it was the cause.

True, it is not.

But earlier we agreed that the friendly loved something, and on account of something, and at the same time we were of opinion that it was on account of evil that that which is neither good nor evil loved the good.

So we were.

d But now, it appears, we have discovered some other cause of loving and being loved.

So it does.

Is it true, then, as we were just now saying, that desire is the cause of friendship, and that whatever desires is friendly to that which it desires, and friendly at the time of its feeling the desire? And was all that, which we previously said about being friendly, mere idle talk, put together after the fashion of a lengthy poem?

I am afraid it was, he replied.

But that, I continued, which feels desire, feels desire for that of which it is in want. Does it not?

Yes.

e And that which is in want is friendly with that of which it is in want.

I imagine so.

And becomes in want of that which is taken from it?

Of course.

That then which belongs to a man, is found, it seems, Lysis and Menexenus, to be the object of his love, and friendship, and desire.

They both assented.

If, then, you two are friendly to each other, by some tie of nature you belong to each other?

To be sure we do, they cried together.

222 And so, in general, said I, if one man, my children, is desirous and enamored of another, he can never have conceived his desire, or love, or friendship, without in some way belonging to the object of his love, either in his soul, or in some quality of his soul, or in disposition, or in form.

I quite believe you, cried Menexenus—but Lysis said not a word.

Well, then, I continued, that which by nature belongs to us, it has been found necessary for us to love.

So it appears, said Menexenus.

It cannot possibly be then, but that a true and genuine lover is loved in return by the object of his love.

b To this conclusion Lysis and Menexenus nodded a sort of re-

luctant assent, while Hippothales in his rapture kept changing from color to color.

I, however, with a view of reconsidering the subject, proceeded to say, Well, if there is a difference between that which belongs to us and that which is like, we are now, I conceive, in a condition to say what is meant by a friend. But if they happen to be the same, it's no such easy matter to get rid of our former assertion, that like was useless to like, in so far as it was like, for to admit ourselves friendly with that which is useless were outrageous. What say you then, said I, since we are, as it were, intoxicated by our talk, to our allowing that there is a difference between that which belongs and that which is like?

Let us do so by all means, he replied.

Shall we further say that good belongs to everyone and that to everyone evil is a stranger, or rather, that good belongs to good, evil to evil, and that which is neither evil nor good, to that which is of the same nature?

They both agreed that the latter was their opinion in each particular.

It appears then, said I, that we have fallen again into positions, with regard to friendship, which we previously rejected. For, according to our present admission, the unjust will be no less friendly to the unjust, and the evil no less friendly to the evil, than the good to the good.

So it would appear, said he.

And again, said I, if we assert that what is good and what belongs to us are one and the same, will it not result that none are friendly with the good but the good? And this, too, I think, is a position in which we imagined that we proved ourselves wrong. Don't you remember?

Oh, yes, they both cried.

What other way then is left us of treating the subject? Clearly e none. I therefore, like our clever pleaders at the bar, request you to reckon up all that I have said. If neither those who love or are loved, neither the like nor the unlike, nor the good, nor those who belong to us, nor any other of all the suppositions which we passed in review—they are so numerous that I can remember no more—if, I say, not one of them is the object of friendship, I no longer know what I am to say.

223 With this confession, I was just on the point of rousing to my aid one of the elders of our party, when all of a sudden, like beings of another world, there came down upon us the attendants of Menexenus and Lysis, holding their brothers by the hand, and calling out to the young gentlemen to come home, as it was already late. At first, both we and the bystanders were for driving them off, but finding that they

did not mind us at all, but grumbled at us in sad Greek, and persisted in calling the boys—fancying, moreover, that from having tumbled at the feast, they would prove awkward people to deal with—we owned ourselves vanquished, and broke up the party.

However, just as they were leaving, I managed to call out, Well, Lysis and Menexenus, we have made ourselves rather ridiculous to-day, I, an old man, and you children. For our hearers here will carry away the report that though we conceive ourselves to be friends with each other—you see I class myself with you—we have not as yet been able to discover what we mean by a friend.

EUTHYPHRO

Socrates and Euthyphro meet at the entrance to the law courts, and to Euthyphro's surprised question—"What has taken you from your haunts in the Lyceum?"—Socrates answers that a charge has been brought against him which is rather a grand one, that of corrupting the youth of Athens, and that the prosecutor knows just how it is done and how Socrates is doing it. But why, he asks in turn, is Euthyphro here? The reason, the latter answers, is that he is prosecuting his own father on a charge of murder. Socrates' astonishment at this does not disturb him. He is by profession an interpreter of religion, a theologian, and he tells Socrates that with his special insight into what is right and wrong he knows that he is acting in the spirit of true piety. When Socrates asks what then is piety, he gives the answer characteristic of the orthodox everywhere—in effect, "Piety is thinking as I do." His sincerity is as patent as his conceit. He really believes that he ought to prosecute his father who though certainly not a murderer is not free from blame.

The conversation that follows is chiefly an attempt to define piety, and comes to nothing, but in the course of it Socrates makes a distinction fundamental in reasoning and often disregarded, that the good is not good because the gods approve it, but the gods approve it because it is good.

The real interest of the dialogue, however, is the picture of Socrates just before his trial. There is no question that he realized the danger he was in, but Plato, who knew him best of all, shows him engaging humorously and ironically and keenly in a discussion completely removed from his own situation. Just at the end he says that if only Euthyphro will instruct him in what true piety is he will tell his accuser that he has become the pupil of a great theologian and is going to lead a better life. But Euthyphro, by this time in no mood to define anything, gives up. "Another time, then, Socrates," he says and hurries away.