

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING SOCRATES'S DAEMON.

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

1. I HEARD lately, Caphisias, a neat saying of a painter, comprised in a similitude upon those that came to view his pictures. For he said, the ignorant and unskilful were like those that saluted a whole company together, but the curious and knowing like those that complimented each single person ; for the former take no exact, but only one general view of the performance ; but those that with judgment examine part by part take notice of every stroke that is either well or ill done in the whole picture. The duller and lazy sort are abundantly satisfied with a short account and upshot of any business. But he that is of a generous and noble temper, that is fitted to be a spectator of virtue, as of a curious piece of art, is more delighted with the particulars. For, upon a general view, much of fortune is discovered ; but when the particulars are examined, then appear the art and contrivance, the boldness in conquering intervening accidents, and the reason that was mixed with and tempered the heat and fury of the undertakers. Suppose us to be of this sort, and give us an account of the whole design, how from the very beginning it was carried on, what company you kept, and what particular discourse you had that day ; — a thing so much desired, that I protest I would willingly go to Thebes to be

informed, did not the Athenians already suspect me to lean too much to the Boeotian interest.

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

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

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

ARCH. We know, Caphisias, how matters stood at Thebes before the exiles returned, — how Archias, Leontidas, and their associates, having persuaded Phoebidas the Spartan in the time of peace to surprise that castle, banished some of the citizens, awed others, took the power into their own hands, and tyrannized against all equity and law. We understood Melon's and Pelopidas's designs, having (as you know) entertained them, and having conversed with them ever since they were banished. We knew likewise that the Spartans fined Phoebidas for taking

the Cadmea, and in their expedition to Olynthus cashiered him ; but sent a stronger garrison, under Lysinoridas and two more, to command the castle ; and further, that Ismenias presently after his trial was basely murdered. For Gorgidas wrote constantly to the exiles, and sent them all the news ; so that you have nothing to do but only to inform us in the particulars of your friends' return and the seizing of the tyrants.

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

3. But Theocritus the soothsayer, grasping me by the hand, and looking on Charon that went just before us, said :

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

4. Anaxidorus, overhearing this discourse of mine to

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

interceding with Leontidas for Amphitheus, and begs that instead of dying, according to the sentence, he may be banished.

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

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

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

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