

Letters

Philostratus

A



Letter 1 — To a Boy

THE roses, borne on their leaves as on wings, have made haste to come to you. Receive them kindly, either as mementos of Adonis or as tinct of Aphroditê or as eyes of the earth. Yes, a wreath of wild olive becomes an athlete, a tiara worn upright the Great King, and a helmet crest a soldier; but roses become a beautiful boy, both because of affinity of fragrance and because of their distinctive hue. You will not wear the roses; they will wear you.

Letter 2 — To a Woman

I have sent you a garland of roses, not to honour you (though I would fain do that as well), but to do a favour to the roses themselves, so that they may not wither.

Letter 3 — To a Boy

The Lacedaemonians used to attire themselves in crimson-coloured corselets, either to shock their enemies by the fearsome hue, or, by having the colour the same as that of blood, to prevent their noticing blood stains; and you handsome boys must equip yourselves with naught but roses — this the panoply that you accept from your lovers. Now a larkspur suits a boy who has a light complexion, a narcissus a boy who is dark; but a rose suits all, inasmuch as it has long since existed both as a boy and as a flower, as a drug and as a perfume. 'Twas roses that won the heart of Anchises, 'twas they that stripped Ares of his armour, they that prompted Adonis to come, they are spring's tresses, they earth's lightning flashes, they the torches of love.

Letter 4 — To a Boy

You blame me because I did not send you roses.

But it was neither because I was indifferent that I did not, nor because I was incapable of love; no, what I had in mind was that, since you are red-haired and are garlanded with roses of your own, you have no need of flowers from others. Homer set no garland on the head of his red-haired Meleager, since this would have been fire on fire and a twin torch to that fatal torch; nor on the head of his Achilles or of his Menelaus or of any other of his longhaired

heroes. This flower is dreadfully grudging of its prime and it is doomed to early death and quick to fade, and very sad, according to the story, was the cause to which it owed its origin, as Aphroditê was going by, the rose thorn pricked her — as Cyprians and Phoenicians tell the tale. Let not our garland be of blood. Let us shun a flower that spares not even Aphroditê!

Letter 5 — To a Boy

From what land are you? Tell me, boy, since you are so impervious to love From Sparta, you will say? Then did you not see Hyacinthus, or crown yourself with the lifeblood from his wound? Or from Thessaly? Then did not the great Achilles either, the man of Phthia, teach you a lesson? Or from Athens? Then did you not pass the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton? Or from Ionia? Yet what more voluptuous than that land, the realm of the Branchuses and the Claruses, the darlings of Apollo? Or from Crete, where Eros is most great, Eros who roams its hundred cities? A Scythian you seem to me to be, and a barbarian — from that dread altar and from those inhospitable rites. So then it is within your power to observe your ancestral custom; and if you are unwilling to spare my life, here's the sword I am not asking for mercy — have no fear of that! Even for a wound I yearn.

Letter 6 — To a Woman

If you are playing the part of virtue, why for me only? If you are granting favours, why not to me also?

Letter 7 — To a Boy

Because I am poor I seem to you of less worth: and yet even Eros himself is naked, and so are the Graces and the Stars And in paintings I see even the great Heracles clad in a wild beast's pelt and sleeping, for the most part, on the ground ; and Apollo with just a breechclout on, throwing the discus, or shooting the bow or running; whereas the kings of the Persians live delicately and sit on lofty thrones, using majesty as a screen to guard their store of gold — and so it was that they fared ill, conquered by the impecunious Greeks. Socrates was a beggar, but the rich Alcibiades crept under his coarse cloak. For poverty is not a reproach, nor does the individual's fortune excuse his fault in

our relations with one another. Look at the theatre the audience is made up of poor people. Look at the courts of law it is the indigent who sit there. Look at the battlefields: the men with the costly armour of gold desert the ranks, whereas we win prizes for valour. And in this very matter of our relations with you handsome boys, consider how great the difference is. The rich man deals haughtily with the boy who has accepted him — feeling that the boy is bought and paid for; the poor man is grateful, feeling that the boy is taking pity on him. The former gives himself airs because of his quarry; the poor man holds his tongue. Then again the nabob ascribes his success to the influence of his personal power, whereas the poor man ascribes his to the kind-heartedness of the boy who made the gift. The rich man sends as his messenger a toady or a parasite or a cook or his table-servants, the poor man sends himself, so as not to fail of deference in this point either, by not doing it himself. The rich man is, by his present, promptly exposed, for the affair is detected because so many people are privy to it, so that neither the neighbours nor those wayfarers who pass by fail to learn what has happened, the boy who has a poor man for a lover is unobserved, for the man's solicitation has nothing showy about it, and, since the man tries to avoid having outsiders reveal the facts and having a crop of rivals spring up from the number of those who have more power than he has (as could very easily happen), he does not avow his good fortune but conceals it. What need of many words? The rich man calls you his beloved, I call you my master. He calls you his servant; I call you my god. He calls you a part of his property; I call you my all, hence if he falls in love again with someone else, he will behave the same to him, whereas the poor man falls in love but once. Who can remain by your side when you are ailing? Who can stay awake with you? Who can go out to camp with you? Who can put himself in front of you when an arrow is sped? Who can fall in death for you? In all these ways I'm rich.

Letter 8 — To a Boy

If I, a foreigner, love you, do not wonder; eyes may not be convicted of being foreign, for beauty, just like fire, kindles them, and it is inevitable that beauty should blaze and that eyes should immediately burn; and neither in the case of eyes nor in the case of ears need any distinction be drawn between native and foreign — no, both to foreigners and to citizens they are the soul's messengers.

Surely Branchus did not flee from Apollo as from a foreigner, nor Hyllas from Heracles, nor Atymnius from Rhadamanthus, nor Patroclus from Achilles, nor Chrysippus from Laius. Then too Polycrates the Samian loved Smerdies, and Agesilaus loved the Persian boy — I do not know the boy's name. Foreign too are the showers to the land, and the rivers to the sea; foreign is Asclepius to the Athenians and Zeus to us and the Nile to the Egyptians and the sun to all. Foreign too is the soul to the body and the nightingale to the spring and the swallow to the house and Ganymede to the heavens and the kingfisher to the cliff and the elephant to the Romans and the phoenix bird to the Indians; this last-named stranger is tardy too, and then the stork — they that are first to see it actually worship it. Foreign too are the letters of the alphabet, for they came from Phoenicia, and the woven fabrics of the Chinese and the divine science of the magi; of all these we avail ourselves more gladly than of our native goods, for the former, being imported, are accounted rare, whereas the latter, being already ours, are accounted cheap. Better too is the foreign love, inasmuch as, being unknown, he is not suspected, and, being less noticed, he is less likely to be detected. If you want someone who will remain faithful, inscribe my name upon the roll and be my Zeus Phiatrius and my Apollo Patrous, and let my tribe be the tribe of Eros.

Letter 9. — To a Boy

What possessed the roses? Before they came to you they were beautiful and were truly roses — for I should not have sent them to you to begin with if they had not had some quality that made them worth having — but when they arrived they straightway withered and expired. The cause is not altogether clear to me, for they would not tell me anything. But it is easy to guess that they could not bear to be surpassed in renown nor could they endure the rivalry with you, no, as soon as they touched a more fragrant skin they perished. So too a lamp fades away when overcome by a stronger flame, and stars are dimmed when they cannot face the sun.

Letter 10 — To a Boy

Nests are hosts to birds, rocks to fish, eyes to handsome boys; birds and fish migrate, moving from one place to another and shifting their abodes, for they

wander as the seasons lead them; but when beauty has once made its way into eyes it never departs again from the lodging it there finds. Even so have I become your host and carry you everywhere in the snare of my eyes: if I go forth a wayfarer as it were, you appear to me in the guise of a shepherd, of one who sits and by his beauty charms the very rocks; and if I go to the sea, out from the sea you rise, as Aphroditê rose from the depths; and if to a meadow, above the very flowers you stand out — yet no such thing as you are grows there, for verily, though the flowers are in other ways fair and lovely, yet they last but a single day. Yes truly, if I come near a river, the river, I know not how, vanishes suddenly from my sight, and in its place, methinks, I see you flowing fair and great and greater far than is the sea. If I look up into heaven, I think that the sun has fallen and is making his way afoot somewhere below, and that in his place my heart's desire shines. And if night comes, I see but two stars, Hesperus and you.

Letter 11 — To a Boy

How many times, do you think, have I unclosed my eyes to release you, even as hunters open their nets to give their quarry a chance to escape? And you sit fast, like those vexatious squatters who, when once they have seized on other people's land, will not hear of moving off again. Lo, once more, as so often in the past, I raise my eyelids; now at long last, I pray you, fly away, and raise the siege, and become a guest of other eyes. You are not listening, not you. You are pressing ever further on, into my very soul. And what is this new fiery heat? In my perilous plight I cry for water, but no one assuages the heat, for the means of quenching this flame is very hard to find, whether one bring water from a spring or from a stream; yes, for love's fire sets even the water ablaze.

Letter 12 — To a Woman

From what vantage point did you seize upon my soul? Is it not plain that it was from the eyes, by which alone beauty finds entrance? For even as tyrants seize on citadels, kings on strongholds, and gods on high places, so too love seizes on the citadel of the eyes. This he fortifies, not with palisaded rampart nor with wall of brick but with eyelids alone, and then quietly and step by step he invades the soul — swiftly, since he is winged, unhampered, since he is

naked, invincible, since he is an archer. The eyes, as soon as they become aware of beauty, take fire therefrom in earnest; a god, I think, has willed for them one and the same path of delight at seeing and of occasion for pain. Why, I beg of you, O base torches of love and all too curious witnesses of corporeal charm, were you the first to signal the image of beauty to us, and the first to teach our soul to remember impressions from without, and the first to force it to abandon the sun and extol an alien flame? Well then, pass your nights without sleep and consume yourselves with fire and with flame, unable to find relief from what you freely chose. Ye gods, how fortunate are they who have been blind from birth! Love has no path by which to march on them.

Letter 13 — To a Boy

The handsome boy, if he is wild and cruel, is a fire, but if he is tame and kind, a shining beacon. Therefore do not consume me with flame, but let me live; and keep the altar of Compassion in your soul, gaining a firm friend at the price of a short-lived favour; and take time by the forelock — time which alone makes an end of handsome boys even as the populace makes an end of princes. For I fear — yes, I will speak out my thoughts — lest, while you linger and hesitate, your beard may make its advent and may obscure the loveliness of your face, even as the concourse of clouds is wont to hide the sun! Why do I fear what one may see already? The down is creeping on, and your cheeks are becoming fluffy, and over all your face the hair begins to grow. Ah me! In hesitating we have waxed old — you because you would not divine my love sooner, I because I shrank from asking. So before your springtime quite departs and winter comes upon you, grant springtime's gifts in the name of Love, I pray, and of this beard by which I must swear to-morrow.

Letter 14 — To a Boy

My greetings, even though you do not wish them; my greetings, even though you do not write, for others fair, for me contemptuous! So, after all, you are not made of flesh and of whatever else is mingled with flesh, but of steel and stone and Styx. I pray that I may soon behold you getting a beard and sitting as a suppliant at others' doors. Yea, Eros and Nemesis are swift gods and fickle turning.

Letter 15 — To a Boy

Why, my boy, do you point to your beard? You are not at the end of your beauty but at its very beginning; for, though the prime of youth, with all its flightiness and inconstancy, has passed, and, like a burst of flame, is being quenched, yet that which is firm and stable abides. Time does not disparage those who are truly beautiful, nay, it points them out and, far from envying, bears witness to them. The boy with the new down on his chin the poet Homer too calls loveliest, and the poet knows how to see beauty and how to describe it in his verse; he would never express this judgement if he had not himself first touched and kissed the beard of a boy he loved. Yes, before the hair grew on your cheeks they differed not at all from those of a woman, since they were soft and translucent; but now that you are showing your first down, you are more manly than you were and more nearly perfect. What! Did you want to be no different from a eunuch even? Their chins are barren and hard and are like stone. These unfortunates, at all events, are more ashamed of this sort of cutting than of the other, since they think that the other is hidden whereas this is a perfectly obvious disfigurement of their appearance.

Letter 16 — To a Boy

Not even Menander's Polemon polled a handsome boy, but in the case of a captive maiden whom he loved he was so bold as to poll her in a fit of anger, and even in her case he couldn't endure having done it — at least he threw himself to the ground and wept and repented the slaughter of her locks; so then even the play spared a lad, but I don't know what has struck you that you have made war on yourself — you slaughterer of your own head. What need was there to put knives to your locks? What need of deliberate and extensive mayhem? What a harvest you mowed down! Hadn't you learnt a lesson even from the poets, who represented their Euphorbuses and Menelaïses and all the army of the Achaeans too as long-haired? And if they think of any river as beautiful, he too has long hair, yes, as gold and silver are votive offerings, so too are locks of hair. Plumed are the barbarians with gear and weapons, the Greeks with helmets, the eyes with lids, the ships with sails, the earth with mountains, the mountains with glens, the sea with isles, the bulls with horns, the rivers with vales, the cities with walls. More formidable too is the lion

whose coat is shaggy, and the stallion who is now conscious of his mane, and more pugnacious is the cock whose crest is raised. Wise men too honour among the stars the comets, and among priests those who let their hair grow long, and among gods one for this and one for that, Poseidon as dark-haired, Apollo as of locks unshorn, Pan as shaggy, Isis as of locks free-flowing, Dionysus as crowned with ivy set amid his locks; and as for Aphroditê, not even in mourning did she cut off her hair. Nay, more! I have heard a wise man call the Sun's beams his locks, and Zeus more august than the other gods because he shakes his locks and if he nods he does not break his word; and Hermes too is plumed on his temples, and on his ankles, A city too is not shorn except when it is captured, and a woman does not shed the beauty of her head except when she sorrows, and there is no famine except when the earth is not decked with foliage. But over a fallen tree there is lamentation, and a poet with notes sublime intones a long dirge over it; whereas you have cut off all this foliage and do not weep. Come now! Let me speak the funeral oration over your locks: O Beauty's Citadel, Love's Grove, Head's Crown of Stars!

Letter 17 — To a Boy

Both beauty and the rose have their spring; and he who enjoys not what is to his hand is foolish; for he delays among delights that do not brook delay, and in the face of fleeting joys he loiters. Time indeed is grudging and effaces the bloom on the flower and carries away the heyday of beauty. Do not delay at all, O rose with voice of man, but, while you may and while you live, share with me what you have.

Letter 18 — To a Barefoot Boy

Your condition is rather delicate, and it's because, I am sure, your sandal pinches; new leather, you know, is quite likely to cut into flesh that is tender. That is why Asclepius readily heals wounds received in war and hunting and all such accidents, but neglects these others because of the voluntariness of the action — as due to indiscretion rather than to a god's capricious malevolence. Why then don't you walk barefoot? What grudge have you against the earth? Slippers and sandals and top-boots and shoes are for the wearing of invalids or the aged Philoctetes, at any rate, is pictured in such protective garb — because

he was lame and ill. But the philosopher from Sinopê and the Theban Crates and Ajax and Achilles are pictured as wearing no shoes, and Jason as wearing but one. For the story goes that, when Jason was crossing the Anaurus River, one boot was caught by the mud and held fast under the stream, and so he had one bare foot — not that he deliberately chose to have, but that chance taught him what was best, and he went his way the victim of a salutary robbery. Let nothing come between the earth and your bare foot. Fear not, the dust will welcome your tread as it would welcome grass, and we shall all kiss your footprints. O perfect lines of feet most dearly loved! O flowers, new and strange! O plants sprung from earth! O kiss left lying on the ground!

Letter 19 — To a Boy who is a Prostitute

You offer yourself for sale; yes, mercenary soldiers do the like. You belong to anyone who pays your price; yes, so do pilots. We drink of you as of the streams; we feel of you as of the roses. Your lovers like you because you too stand naked and offer yourself for examination — something that is a peculiar right of beauty alone — beauty fortunate in its freedom of action. Pray, do not be ashamed of your complaisance, but be proud of your readiness; for water too is public property, and fire belongs to no individual, and the stars belong to all, and the sun is a common god. Your house is a citadel of beauty, those who enter are priests, those who are garlanded are sacred envoys, their silver is tribute money. Rule graciously over your subjects, and receive what they offer, and, furthermore, accept their adoration.

Letter 20 — To a Woman

For Zeus also, when he lay asleep on Mount Ida, the earth bore flowers — clover and larkspur and crocus, but no roses were there, whether because roses were the property of Aphrodite alone (from whom it would have been necessary for Hera to borrow them, as she had borrowed the cestus) or because Zeus could not have fallen asleep if these too had been there (and they wanted Zeus to sleep). But when roses exhale their fragrance, both men and gods must of necessity, I suppose, keep awake and enjoy doing so. For their sweetness has a wondrous power to dispel all repose. Well, let such matters be left to Homer and to the licence of the poets. But it was unmannerly of you to sleep alone

among roses and to exercise self-control in a company far from controlling itself. Yes, one of your lovers should have been with you, or I or Zeus, unless perchance, my fair one, you had already formed the notion that, having put your garland to your breast, you were in the embraces of a new kind of adulterer.

Letter 21 — To a Woman

You have red hair and you ask for roses But surely your nature and theirs is the same. Why then do you grasp at a flower that soon dies? And why do you crown your head with fire? I suspect indeed that the Colchian woman's wreath, which she sent to Glaucê, was made of poisoned roses, and that is why Glaucê was scorched up when she took it. If roses are charming, let them not surpass fair women; if they are fragrant, let them not compete in fragrance; if they are short-lived, let them not for that reason cause alarm. I for my part think that the petals of roses that have fallen to pieces resemble dying men and nothing else, certainly most of the people who are very fond of roses are more distressed when the roses fall to pieces than rejoiced while the petals are still firmly planted in their calyxes, since the fear that threatens outweighs the present pleasure which they cause Your head is a large meadow bearing flowers, which in summer depart not and which in midwinter are plainly to be seen, nor, if men pluck them, do they fall to pieces. If you would only permit me to cut but a single lock! Were I to come away with fragrance such as that, surely you'll be making me a gift of roses that cannot wither.

Letter 22 — To a Woman

The woman who beautifies herself seeks to supply what is lacking; she fears the detection of her deficiency. The woman whose beauty is natural needs nothing adventitious, for she is self-sufficient to the point of utter perfection. Eyes underlined with kohl, false hair, painted cheeks, tinted lips, all the enhancements known to the beautifier's art, and all the deceptive bloom achieved by rouge have been invented for the correction of defects, the unadorned is the truly beautiful. And so, if you have perfect trust and confidence in yourself, for that reason I love you all the more; your want of concern I take to indicate your confidence in your good looks. For you do not

plaster your face with colour, nor is your place among the women of the make-up brigade, but among those who are genuinely beautiful, as were the women of olden time, who were courted by shower of gold, by bull and water and birds and serpents. But rouge and wax and Tarentine wrap and serpentine bracelets and golden anklets are sorceries of Thaïs and Aristagora and Lais.

Letter 23 — To a Woman

So then, if you ask for money, I am poor, but if you ask for friendship and good character, I am rich. It is not so calamitous to me that I possess no money as it is shameful to you that you charge money for your love; a courtesan's business, of course, is to admit men who carry pikes and swords, since such spend money readily, but a free woman will bear in mind the claim of the ideal and reward the good man with her favour. Command me as you please, and I obey; order me to go to sea, and I embark, order me to suffer stripes, I endure, to cast away my life, I do not hesitate; to run through fire, I do not refuse. What rich man does as much?

Letter 24 — To a Boy

Agamemnon, when he held his anger in check, was handsome and resembled not one god but many,

In eyes and head like Zeus the thunder-hurler, In waist like Ares, and in breast Poseidon.

But when, in the sweet indulgence of his wrath, he behaved unseemly, and raged wildly against his comrades, he was regarded as a stag and a dog, and there was nothing of the eyes of Zeus about him. A boar indeed rages in anger, and so do dogs and serpents and wolves and all the other irrational beasts; but a beautiful human being is painful to see when he merely neglects to laugh, to say nothing of actually becoming gloomier than his usual self. And it is not becoming to the sun, either, to shield his face with a cloud. What means this dejection of yours, what this night, this sullen gloom? Smile, compose yourself, restore to us the daylight of your eyes.

Letter 25 — To a Woman

Yesterday I found you in a rage and I thought that I was looking at another woman. The cause, of this was the transport of passion which completely destroyed the charm of your countenance. Put on another mien at once. No more of your savage glances. Not even the moon seems to us to be still shining when it is obscured by clouds; nor Aphroditê to be beautiful when she is angry or in tears; nor Hera to be ox-eyed when she indulges in wrath against Zeus, nor the sea to be bright when it is stirred up. Athena even tossed her flute away because it deformed her features. And moreover we now call the Furies the Eumenides, implying that they renounce their gloomy nature. And we delight in rose-brambles because, sprung as they are from a savage shrub that can hurt and prick, they nevertheless burst forth in roses. In the case of a woman calmness of countenance is the bright flower of her charm. Be not harsh or terrifying; do not filch away your own beauty nor despoil yourself of the roses that bloom in the eyes of you fair ladies. And if you don't believe what I say, take your mirror and see how your countenance has changed. Good for you for heeding the warning! Surely you despised' yourself, or feared yourself, or failed to recognize yourself, or had a change of heart.

Letter 26 — To a Woman

You bid me not to look, and I bid you not to let yourself be seen. Who is the lawgiver who orders this, and who that? If neither act is prohibited, don't deprive yourself of approval for exhibition nor me of the licence to enjoy. A fountain does not say, "Don't drink"; nor does fruit say, "Don't take", nor a meadow, "Don't come near." Do you too, woman, observe nature's laws and quench the thirst of a wayfarer, whom your star has parched.

Letter 27 — To a Boy

How contentious and quarrelsome is your beauty! Neglected, it but blooms the more, like plants that rely on nature and have no need of the husbandmen's careful tendance. You do not mount a horse; you do not attend a wrestling-school; you do not expose yourself to the sun — for on handsome boys tan is a flowering of their beauty; but you go about scrubby and fighting against yourself. You have deceived yourself, for you are handsome even though you will not have it so, and you attract everybody's attention by your

undue carelessness — like clusters of grapes, and apples, and all the other things in which beauty is innate. For self-adornment is a courtesan's trick, and beauty achieved by paint deserves intense disgust — it suggests knavery; pure and honest and guileless beauty is a trait peculiar to those on whom the very essence of beauty has been bestowed. Thus Apollo loved shepherds, and Aphrodite cowherds, and Rhea rustic lads, and Demeter men who were unacquainted with cities, for in every sphere the natural gift is more genuine than that contrived by art. No man ever heard of stars adorning themselves, or lions, or birds; and the man who decks out horses with gold or ivory or ribands is guilty, though he knows it not, of an indignity against the creature's haughty pride and of handing over to art the business of supplying nature's deficiencies.

Letter 28 — To a Woman

A pretty woman should make up her list of lovers on the basis of character not of birth and family, the fact is that a foreigner can prove to be a good sort of person, and a fellow-citizen a scoundrel — in proportion to his inclination to be conceited. The native indeed is in no way different from rocks or anything else that is permanent, things whose stability is an inevitable characteristic; but the foreigner is like those swiftest gods Helios and the winds and stars and Eros, gods thanks to whom I too have been made wingèd and have come hither, drawn by a compelling force. Pray do not spurn my petition. Hippodameia certainly did not scorn Pelops, although he was a foreigner and outlander; nor did Helen scorn the stranger who came because of her, nor Phyllis the man who arrived from across the sea; nor Andromeda the man who flew down to aid her. Doubtless these ladies knew that from their fellow-citizens they win a single city, whereas from foreigners they win many. Come now, if you approve!

Let us settle the matter by a bargain let us both stay here, or let us go off there together. You don't agree to this; well then, let me tell you that, though a stranger does not endure transformation into a fish, yet he does take pleasure in shifting position on land, and the land is a unit. What in fact are the different countries but paltry areas marked out by narrow-minded legislators who circumscribe their own possessions by frontier lines with entrance gates, to the end that we may hesitate to go beyond the bounds which love of country marks on maps and that the area of our goodwill may be thus

restricted? And yet truly I too am love's host and you are beauty's, for we did not journey to them but they came to us, and we have been glad to see them, as sailors are glad to see the stars. Now if the fact that I am foreign-born does not stand between me and love, pray do not let it hinder you from hearkening to lovers' words. You would have been ready enough to take as bridegroom an exile, even as Adrastus took Polyneices and Tydeus, whom he made his sons-in-law with an eye to acquiring the kingdom. Does anyone shut the door even against a stranger whose desire is, not to kindle a fire, but to put the fire out? Do not behave like a Spartan, fair lady, nor imitate Lycurgus; love knows no such thing as expulsion of strangers.

Letter 29 — To a Woman

Your eyes I love, my own I hate, for, whereas in yours I recognize a great intelligence, in mine I recognize a wondrous meddlesomeness. They are shameless, yes, they are unable to hide anything of what they have once seen. So they cease not to say to my heart, "Did you not see the woman with the lovely hair, the woman with the comely countenance? Come, stand up and speak; yes, write and weep and beg." And my heart ever so readily yields — yields because it cannot disobey its greedy satellites; for even against its will they drag it forth and compel it to share to the full the opinions to which they have already given their own assent. Doubtless, before Love alighted on earth, the heart knew the sun's beauty and no other, and this beauty was its spectacle and marvel; but after tasting human beauty it fell away from that zealous worship, and was reduced to bitter servitude, whose tasks are waiting outside doors, and sleeping on the ground, and defiance of heat and cold, and the fight, "your life or mine," against one's rival. For all these sufferings you are the cure, if you will but accept, in return for a momentary service, works that cannot die, and, in return for a brief physical satisfaction, a remembrance that never grow old, for what you will give is something that every woman has and can give easily, and what you will gain in return is great beyond the power of my words to tell: affection, remembrance, and night — these three, from which a mother and a father too are made.

Letter 30 — To a Married Woman

The act is one and the same whether it is done with the husband or with a paramour. But that which involves more danger is more attractive, for the prerogative that is openly acknowledged lacks the charm of forbidden pleasure, and stolen fruit is always sweeter. So Poseidon assumed the form of a purple billow, and Zeus the form of a golden shower and a bull and a serpent, and other disguises as well — whence Dionysus and Apollo and Heracles, the gods sprung from adultery; and Homer says that even Hera was glad to see Zeus at the time when he consorted with her secretly; for he had transformed the husband's prerogative into the adulterer's theft.

Letter 31 — To a Woman

The paramour who has his way pays for it in extreme danger, and if he is thwarted he pays in suffering if he is successful he has the law to fear, and if he is disappointed he buys his disappointment at the price of love. Yet it is better to get what one wants and be afraid than to be spurned and grieve.

Letter 32 — To the Same

Your eyes are more translucent than drinking cups, so that even your soul can be seen through them; and the blush of your cheeks is lovelier than the colour of wine itself; and this linen dress of yours reflects the brilliance of your cheeks; and your lips are tinged with the blood of roses, and you seem to me to give men drink from your eyes as if your eyes were fountains, and therefore to be one of the Nymphs. How many men hastening on their way do you bring to a halt? How many men speeding by do you detain? How many do you call to yourself when you raise your voice? I first and foremost, when I see you, feel thirst, and against my will stand still, and hold the cup back; and I do not bring it to my lips, but I know that I am drinking of you.

Letter 33 — To the Same

Cups are made of glass, but your hands turn them to silver and to gold — so that they too get their liquid glances from your eyes. But their limpidity is soulless and unmoved, like that of standing waters, whereas the cups set in your face appear to give delight not merely by their general liquid loveliness, but also by their showing that they know what kisses are. So set the cups down

and leave them alone, especially for fear of their fragility; and drink to me only with your eyes; 'twas such a draft that Zeus too drank — and took to himself a lovely boy to bear his cup. And, if it please you, do not squander the wine, but pour in water only, and, bringing it to your lips, fill the cup with kisses and so pass it to the thirsty. Surely nobody is so ignorant of love as to yearn for the gift of Dionysus any longer after the vines of Aphroditê.

Letter 34 — To a Woman

I know not what part of you to praise the most. Your head? But oh your eyes! Your eyes? But oh your cheeks! Your cheeks? But your lips entice me and with a wondrous passion they consume me — closed indeed for modesty's sake, yet open to exhale sweet breath. If you go further and take your clothes off, I suppose that there is a radiance within as of lightning — O Pheidias and Lysippus and Polycleitus, how much too soon you ceased to be! Surely you would not have made any other statue in preference to hers — Exceeding lovely is your hand, lovely the breadth of your bosom, lovely the symmetry of your belly. As to what remains, I know not in what terms to describe it. Even were Priam's son the judge, your beauty still contests the prize. Ah! What is to become of me? Shall I praise this? No, surely that is better Shall I adjudge the prize to that? No, for assuredly this lures me back again. Let me touch it, and I will give my decision.

Letter 35 — To a Woman

Danae would accept gold, Leda birds, Europa the pick of a herd, Antiopê the creatures of the hills, Amymonê the creatures of the sea; but the poets made stones out of the gifts, perverting the truth by the charm of their fabrications. Do you too, I beg, receive gifts, discarding the affectation of lofty sentiments and dismissing the pretence of chastity, that I too may be a Zeus and a Poseidon, giving what you desire and receiving what I desire.

Letter 36 — To a Woman

Do not ever wear shoes, or conceal your ankles with false and deceptive skins, whose beauty, which consists in their dye, is illusory For if you wear white, you obscure the whiteness of your feet (since like in the midst of like does not

show); and if you wear the colour of larkspur, you offend the eye by the darkness of the shade, and if crimson, you cause flight, as if blood were flowing somewhere in the shoe I wish that all the rest of you were visible; and you would actually be far more beautiful, exposing your whole body to the spectators' eager pursuit. Well, be a bit economical of other features, if you will, and do not begrudge them protection or such coverings as are indispensable, but leave your feet at least bare like your neck, your cheeks, your locks, like your nose and eyes. To be sure, wherever nature has erred, the damage requires clever treatment, in order that art may conceal the defect; but where beauty suffices for its own display, remedial measures are superfluous. Be self-reliant and trust to your feet! These even fire will spare, these even the sea, and if you wish to cross a river, the river will stay its course, and if you wish to scale crags, you will seem to yourself to be treading on meadows. Thus Thetis was called "silver-footed" by the poet who had exact knowledge of all of beauty's highest forms; thus Aphrodite too, as she rises from the sea, is depicted by the painters, thus too the daughters of Leucippus. Keep your feet in readiness for those who fain would kiss them; and wear no bonds, even of gold. I hate fetters whose costliness is punitive. For what difference does it make whether one is bound with gold or bound with iron? Unless it be that the former is actually more honourable because it torments with an aspect of merriment. Do not torture your feet, fair lady; and do not hide them, since there is nothing about them that deserves to be hidden; but walk softly and leave a print of your own foot behind you, as one who is destined to include even earth in her beauty.

Letter 37 — To the Same

Momus said that he found no other fault in Aphroditê (for what pray could he have censured?), but at one thing only he said he was irritated — her shoe squeaked and was too loquacious and its noise gave offence. But if she had walked without her shoes, as she was when she rose from the sea, that rascal would never have had any occasion for his jeers or for his satire; and I am inclined to think that the only reason why she failed to keep her adultery hidden was that Hephaestus, thanks to her tell-tale sandal, learned all her secrets. This is what the story tells us; but you no doubt plan better than Aphroditê, using your feet as they were intended to be used and avoiding the

charges of Momus. O feet unfettered! O unhampered beauty! Thrice happy me and blessed, if on me ye tread!

Letter 38 — To a Woman who is a Whore

That which seems to others infamous and deserving of reproach — the fact that you are shameless and bold and complaisant — is what I love about you most. Take the case of animals: the horses we admire are those that are conscious of their own powers; and the lions we admire are those that show spirit; and the cocks we admire are those that do not let their heads droop. So then, in your case also, you are doing nothing strange if, since you are a woman who surpasses many in beauty, you have a haughty glance and an imposing gait; surely there is a citadel of loveliness surpassing far the citadels of kings — at least we love you and fear them. You receive wages; so too Danaë received gold. And you accept garlands the virgin Artemis did the same. And you give yourself to tillers of the soil: but Helen actually gave herself to shepherds. And you grant your favours to lyre-players; why hesitate — just look at Apollo? Do not hold yourself back from flute-players either, for theirs is the art of the Muses. And do not scorn slaves, but let them think that, thanks to you, they are freemen. And do not feel shame, my fair one, of Aphrodite's rites with those who live by the hunt and by the chase; nor with sailors: 'tis true that they go off quickly, but Jason, the first to dare the sea, was not without honour; nor yet of those who serve in arms for pay: strip these vainglorious fellows bare. For you must never so much as gainsay the poor to them the gods give ear Esteem the aged man because of his dignity; instruct the young man, regarding him as a tiro, hold back the stranger, if he is hastening on his way. That is what Timagora did, and Laïs, and Aristagora, and Menander's Glycerium, and in their footsteps you also are treading. You place your charms at men's disposal with full knowledge, and you possess a skill that is nicely adjusted to produce its effect. For fire is not so hot as is your panting, nor flute so sweet to hear as are your words.

Letter 39 — To a Woman

Won't you suffer an exile even to write? Then don't allow lovers to breathe either, or to weep, or to do anything else that is natural. Do not drive me from

your door, as fate has driven me from my country, or reproach me with a fortuitous event distinguished only as dependent on the irrationality of superior force. Aristеides too was an exile, but he returned to his native city; and Xenophon, but not justly so, Themistocles too was an exile, but he was held in honour even among non-Greeks; and Alcibiades, but he built a fortress by the side of Athens itself, and Demosthenes, but malice was the cause. The sea too is exiled from the land when, under the sun's compulsion, it sweeps upon its way, and the sun, when night overtakes; the autumn also is exiled when winter comes, and winter retires in the face of spring's pursuit; and, in a word, the coming of new seasons is the exile of the earlier. Furthermore the Athenians welcomed Demeter when she was in exile, and Dionysus when he was shifting his abode, and the sons of Heracles when they were wandering about; it was at that time that the Athenians also set up the altar of Compassion, as a thirteenth god, to whom they poured libations, not of wine and milk, but of tears and of respect for suppliants. Do you also erect this altar, and show pity on a man who is in distress, so that I may not be twice exiled, both deprived of my country and foiled of my love for you; for, if you take pity, I am forthwith restored.

Letter 40 — To Berenice

The vermilion that gives a fiery red to the lips and taints the cheeks interferes with kissing, and furthermore it makes people think that the face is old — with that old age which pales the lips to an ashen hue and wrinkles and withers the cheeks. So stop laying on the paint and don't try to add anything to your natural beauty, lest I attain you of old age because you taint your face.

Letter 41 — To Athenodorus

It is the eyes that counsel love; but you have seized upon a rumour and, though you dwell in Corinth, are in love with a boy in Ionia; and this seems magic to those who know not yet that the mind has eyes.

Letter 42 — To Epictetus

If you take pleasure in unintelligent clapping, then you must regard the storks — when they clap their mandibles at us as we pass upon our way — as a more

reasonable people than the Athenians, since the storks do not even ask any return for their clapping.

Letter 43 — To Aristobulus

To be in love and to resist love shows more self-control than not to fall in love at all. To illustrate: in wars also the heroes are not the men who have not been wounded but the men who conquer in spite of their wounds.

Letter 44 — To Athenais

To gratify one who loves not is the philosophy of Lysias; to gratify one who loves, the philosophy of Plato; yours is to gratify both him who loves and him who loves not. This lacks the approval of any sage, but had, I think, the approval of Lais.

Letter 45 — To Diodorus

Erythiae cultivates seedless pomegranates, which provide an agreeable drink, like the liquor from good, juicy grapes. I have picked ten of these and am sending them to you, use them as wine when you are eating, and as food when you are drinking.

Letter 46 — To a Boy

You have done well to use the roses for a bed also; for pleasure in gifts received is a clear indication of regard for the sender. So through their agency I also touched you, for roses are amorous and artful and know how to make use of beauty. But I fear that they may actually have been restless and oppressed you in your sleep, even as the gold oppressed Danae. If you wish to do a favour for a lover, send back what is left of them, since they now breathe a fragrance, not of roses only, but also of you.

Letter 47 — To a Woman

If you were a Spartan, you lovely creature, I should have mentioned Helen and the ship; if you were a Corinthian, I should have mentioned the revels of Lais;

if you were a Boeotian, the nuptials of Alcmenê. If you are from Elis, haven't you heard of Pelops' chariot race? Haven't you been struck with envy of the woman who went from the spectacle straight to her wedding? Haven't you been struck with admiration for Alpheus? Haven't you drunk of the bridegroom? Tyro swam on the river Enipeus and consorted with him as he swept fiercely to the sea, for she was goodly and was worthy of mighty lovers. Nor do I think that you are from Thespieae either, for, if you were, you would certainly have offered sacrifices to Eros; nor from Attica, for in that case you never would have failed to know the night festivals and the holidays and Menander's plays. But even if you are a barbarian and one of the maidens from the Thermodon, still 'tis rumoured that even these allow young men's embraces and have children born from secret amours. You are not a Thracian or a Sidoman, are you? Yet surely they too felt the touch of love; and one allowed the embrace of Ninus, and the other the embrace of Boeotus. I think I've found out who you are — unless I'm a bad and incompetent physiognomist. Danaus was your father, and there's the hand and there the murderous will. Yet even of those husband slaying maidens one spared her youthful lover. I do not beseech you; I do not shed tears; bring the play to its conclusion, so that you may touch me, even though it be with a sword.

Letter 48 — To a Certain Companion

You are so spiteful that you have no pity for anybody except yourself, and I am so unfortunate that I will not accept pity from anybody except you; and I am very happy in my misery — I don't want my rebuffs to end, for I don't want your evil reputation for bad character to end. In my case it's a matter of gratifying one desire: in your case it's a matter of the general discredit accruing from the charges of all the world.

Letter 49 — To Nestor

I am sending you spring figs, you may wonder at their coming already or at their coming still.

Letter 50 — To a Woman

What is this new form of the right of seizure? What this despotism? With your eyes you draw me and hale me off against my will, even as Charybdis used to suck down those who sailed the sea. There are love rocks, it seems, and eye whirlwinds; and when a man is once caught in them he sinks. This is a power that not even Charybdis possessed. Her shipwrecks were at regular intervals, and if one waited a bit he could find a tree in the flood of waters and so save himself; but whoso is once swallowed up in this sea never again comes forth.

Letter 51 — To Cleonide

Sappho loves the rose and always crowns it with a word of praise, likening lovely maidens to it; and she likens it also to the arms of the Graces when she bares their arms to the elbow. Now the rose, though it is the most beautiful of flowers, has but a short period of youthful perfection, for with it, as with the others, blossom time is limited to spring. But your loveliness is in flower always; like a true spring, the autumn of your beauty continues to smile in your eyes and in your cheeks.

Letter 52 — To Nicetes

It is not loving but loving not that is a disease. For if “loving” () is derived from “seeing” (), those that love not are blind.

Letter 53 — To a Certain Woman

It is better to remove the cloud from your brows, so that there may be nothing despondent about the spring-time of your loveliness, for of the seasons themselves the pleasanter are the relaxed and smiling; and beauty reflects pleasure, as from a mirror, from the serenity of the countenance. If you dim my vision of this, you will seem “the peerless star of the firmament, robbed of light in day-time.” Since these are Pindar’s words, I take it that the following also is in Pindar’s style. The beam of light that leaps from you “engenders sight in me.”

Letter 54 — To a Woman

Though you shun me, yet do at least accept the roses in my place. And I pray you not only to garland yourself with them but also to sleep on them. For indeed they are both beautiful to behold, possessing splendour as of fire, and delicate to touch and softer than any bed, surpassing the Babylonian scarlet and the Tyrian purple; for, although these are magnificent, yet they have no beautiful fragrance. I have told the roses to kiss your throat and to cling to your breasts and to play the part of a man, if you will permit; and I know that they will obey. O happy roses! What a woman you are going to embrace!

Pray beseech her in my behalf and serve as my ambassadors and prevail upon her; and if she will not listen, consume her.

Letter 55 — To a Woman

Truly roses are Love's flowers, for they are young like him, and lithe like Love himself, and both have golden locks, and they resemble one another in their other traits as well: roses have thorns for shafts, red blushes for torches, and they have petals for feathers, and neither Love nor yet roses know length of time, for this god is hostile both to beauty's autumn and to roses lingering stay. I saw at Rome the flower-bearers running and by their speed indicating how precarious is beauty's prime, for their running signifies that that prime should be enjoyed. If you hesitate, it is gone. A woman too withers with the roses, if she loiters. Do not delay, my fair one; let us join in sport We will crown ourselves with roses; let us speed upon our way together.

Letter 56 — To a Boy

I closed my eyes against you. How against you? I will explain: like men besieged, who close their gates. And you have slipped past the guard and are inside. Tell me who brought you in — unless it be that the eyes are a sort of erotic force which has descended upon the soul; and that formerly the soul pondered only such subjects as it wished, and it was engrossed in the most sublime speculations, and its desire was to behold the broad expanses of heaven and to pry into the genuine existence there and to inquire what were the revolutions of the universe and what was the Necessity that drove all this, and it seemed to be a most agreeable inquiry — to follow the course of the sun, to share the moon's danger when it waned and its joy when it waxed, to

wander in company with the rest of the troop of stars, and not to leave untrodden or unviewed any of the mysteries above the earth; whereas ever since it began to consort with human love and was caught by the eyes of beauty it has ceased to trouble itself about all these other things and has studied just this one thing, and all that it has taken to itself from the outward form it stores within and treasures in its memory, and whatsoever gains entrance is a light by day, and by night becomes a dream.

Letter 57 — To a Boy

You are persuaded, I fancy, but you hesitate for fear the deed might bring disgrace. Are you, then, shirking an act that makes a friend? Was it not because of this that the poems of Homer were filled with beautiful lads when he brought Nireus and Achilles to Troy? Was it not because of this that all Harmodiuses and Aristogeitons were friends even to the point of death by the sword? And was it not because of this that Apollo fell into subjection to Admetus and to Branchus? And did not Zeus carry off Ganymede, in whom he delights even more than in his nectar? For you handsome lads, and you alone, inhabit even heaven as your city. Do not begrudge yourself a lover who cannot indeed give you immortality, but can give you his own life. If you do not believe me, I am ready to die, if that is your command, at this very moment If I plait the noose, you inhuman boy, will you not take it from me?

Letter 58 — To a Boy

I commend you for cheating time and shaving your cheeks That smooth skin which left you by nature's law is now restored by art; and recovery of what is lost is most agreeable. So, if you take my advice, you will let your hair grow long on your head and will take care of your locks in such a way that some come down over your cheeks a little (and anyone can readily remove this hair from your cheeks at will) and some rest on your shoulders, even as Homer says that the Euboeans wear their hair long behind — for a good head of hair is far lovelier than the tree of Athena, since in fact this acropolis also must not be seen bare or unadorned — but let your cheeks be bare and let nothing bedim their brightness, neither cloud nor mist. As eyes that are shut are not a pleasant sight, so is it with a handsome fellow's cheeks if they are hairy. So then, with

drugs or with keen razors or with finger tips or with detergents and herbs or by any other means whatsoever, make your beauty longer-lasting. If you do this, you will be imitating the always youthful gods.

Letter 59 — To a Woman

Yesterday I closed my eyes just long enough to get a wink of quiet sleep, yet the time seemed too long to me. Of course I scolded my eyes for their insensibility to love. “How could you forget her? How could you desert your post as guard? Where is she and what has happened to her? Tell me that, at least. Believing that I heard the answer, I went to a place where I thought I should see you, and I actually hunted for you just as if you had been carried off. What then am I going to do if you go out into the country, as you did last year, and abandon your haunts in the city for many days? It seems to me inevitably that I am definitely a lost soul if I have nothing pleasant either to hear or to see; I really believe that, when you leave, not only the people of the city will follow you but also the city gods themselves, drawn by the sight of you. For what could they do here, all by themselves? But even if they remain where they are, I at any rate shall not stay behind, being “Love’s trailer.” If I must actually dig ditches, I’ll put my hands to the mattock, if I must prune, I’ll tend the vines; if I must water a vegetable garden, I’ll run the irrigation trench. What stream could be so blind as not to fertilize land that belonged to you? Only one of the regular country chores I swear I will not do — I will not do milking. Your breasts alone I touch with pleasure.

Letter 60 — To the Hostess of an Inn

Everything about you captivates me: your linen tunic, like the tunic of Isis; and your inn, like a temple of Aphroditê, and your wine-cups, like Hera’s eyes; and your wine, like a flower; and that tripod of your three fingers on which the wine-cup rides, as on rose-sepals. And I am afraid that the cup will fall, but it rests firmly, as if supported by its own resolve, and has grown to be a part of the fingers. And if ever you sip from the cup, all that is left becomes warmer with your breath and sweeter than nectar. At all events it slips by a clear passage down to the throat, as if it were mingled not with wine but with kisses.

Letter 61 — To a Woman

Who polled you, my pretty one? How senseless and barbarous the person who spared not the gifts of Aphroditè! For not even the earth with its foliage is so delightful a sight as a woman with long hair. Ah, what a shameless hand! In very truth you have suffered all that people suffer from their foes in war. I for my part would not have polled even a captive — out of reverence for her beauty as something that one could not enjoy mistreating. But since the dreadful deed is done, tell at least where your locks are laid, where they were cut off, how I may recover them under truce, how kiss them as they lie upon the ground. O wings of Love! O first offering of the head! O relics of beauty!

Letter 62 — To the Same

But when Alexander was sitting in judgement on the goddesses, the woman from Lacedaemon was not yet present, if she had been, he would have given the award for beauty to her, and to her alone, whom he himself desired. So, then, the defect in his judgement shall now be set right by me. Do not strive, ye goddesses, nor vie with one another; for lo! I hold the apple. Do you take it, my fair one, and be the vanquisher of the goddesses, and read the inscription. I have used the apple as a letter too. That former apple was an apple of Discord (Eris), this is an apple of Love (Eros). The former was silent; this one speaks. Don't throw it away, don't eat it: not even in war is an ambassador ill-used. What, then, is my message? The apple itself will tell you: "Evippê, I love you." Read it and write underneath, "And I, you." There is room on the apple for these letters also.

Letter 63 — To a Woman

I have learned that the roses, when they reached you, received all the welcome due; for I had given them instructions, and when they had, as it were, quaffed the pure dew of your skin, they arrested the flight of their expiring and sorely labouring life. You did well, my roses, to revive. And I beg you, stay until I come, for I have determined to find out whether you and she have acquired anything from each other, she in sweet fragrance and you in length of life.

Letter 64 — To a Boy

The virtue of which you are so proud I know not what to call, whether savage opposition to the dictates of nature or philosophy fortified by boorishness or stubborn timidity towards pleasures or disdainful contempt of life's delights. But whatever it is and whatever the professors may think it, yet, while in repute it is noble, in practice it is rather inhuman. Pray, what greatness is there in being, before you depart from life, a chaste corpse? Garland yourself with flowers before you wither quite away; anoint yourself with sweet oil before corruption has set in, and make friends before you find yourself solitary. 'Tis well to anticipate at night that other night; to drink before thirsting; to eat before hungering. What day think you is yours? Yesterday. 'Tis dead. To-day? It is not yours. Tomorrow? I know not whether you will live to see it. Both you and your days are playthings of fate.

Letter 65 — To Epictetus

Fear a people with whom you have much power.

Letter 66 — To Chariton

You think that the Greeks will remember your words when you are dead; but those who are nobodies while they exist, what will they be when they exist not?

Letter 67 — To Philemon

Diocles, the tragic actor, you doubtless approve of, if you already know him; if you do not know him, write his name in the list of men deservedly approved, and behave towards him as behooves a person who is convinced or a person who does not disbelieve.

Letter 68 — To Ctesidemus

The erotic poets are pleasant hearing even for men beyond the age of gallantry; for they lead them on to thoughts of love and, as it were, make them renew their youth. So do not think yourself too old to hear them, communion with such poets will either keep you from forgetting sexual pleasures or recall them to you.

Letter 69 — To Epictetus

Those who are initiated in the rites of Rhea are driven mad, deafened by the din of instruments. That uproar, indeed, is the product of cymbals and flutes, whereas in your case the Athenians by their applause drive you so frantic that you forget who you are and of whom born.

Letter 70 — To Cleophon and Gaius

The business you wrote about has already been attended to in part, and the remainder shall be attended to presently; for I, Lemnian that I am, count Imbros also as my fatherland, and with good will I am binding the islands to one another and myself to both.

Letter 71 — To Pleistaeretianus

The poet-folk are numerous, even more numerous than the swarms of bees; but whereas the bees find their food in meadows, the poets find theirs in houses and cities; and in requiting hospitality some poets serve honey and some serve magnificent and costly viands. Then too there are some poets who serve sweetmeats; let us consider that the poets of erotic verse are such. Among their number is Celsus, the bearer of this note, who has devoted his life to song, as the good cicadas do. I am sure you will see to it that he is fed, not on dew, but on substantial food.

Letter 72 — To Antoninus

Storks do not fly into cities that have been sacked, for they flee from the echo of past ills. But you dwell in a house that you yourself sacked; and you sacrifice to the gods that inhabit it as if they were non-existent, or as if they existed but had forgotten that you had seized even their property.

Letter 73 — To Julia Augusta

No, the divine Plato had no envy of the sophists, though some people believe firmly that he had; but he was emulous of them, since they travelled around, charming cities small and large after the manner of Orpheus and Thamyras;

no, he was as far removed from envy as emulation is from jealousy. For jealousy nourishes mean natures, but emulation arouses brilliant ones; and a man is envious of what he himself is unable to attain, but he is emulous of such actions as he is going to be able to perform as well or better. Now Plato eagerly adopts the literary forms of the sophists, he does not let himself be beaten by Gorgias at Gorgias' own tricks, and he words many a phrase in the sonorous manner of Hippias and Protagoras. Some writers have emulated one sophist, others another. For example, the son of Gryllus is emulous of the Heracles of Prodicus, in the passage where Prodicus introduces Vice and Virtue to Heracles and they summon him to a choice of life. The admirers of Gorgias were excellent men and very numerous; in the first place there were the Greeks of Thessaly, among whom the practice of oratory got the name "Gorgrizing"; in the next place his admirers embraced the entire Greek people, among whom, at Olympia, from the threshold of the temple, he delivered an oration against the barbarians. Aspasia the Milesian too is said to have whetted the tongue of Pericles to imitate Gorgias, and it is a well-known fact that Critias and Thucydides acquired their grandeur and sternness of style from him, remodelling the style according to their own genius, the one through fluency, the other through power. And Aeschines too, the Socratic, whom you recently discussed as writing his dialogues in a notably severe style, did not hesitate to write like Gorgias in his discourse about Thargelia. For in one passage he says, "Thargelia of Miletus came to Thessaly and was associated with Antiochus the Thessalian, king of all the Thessalians." And Gorgias' figures of "emphatic break" and "sudden transition" had wide currency, especially in the corpus of the epic poets. Then do you too, O Queen, please urge Plutarch, boldest of the Greeks, not to take offence at the sophists and not to fall foul of Gorgias. If you do not succeed in persuading him, at least you know, such is your wisdom and cleverness, what name to apply to a man of that sort; I could tell you, but I can't.