

Characters

Theophrastus



Proem

Often before now have I applied my thoughts to the puzzling question — one, probably, which will puzzle me for ever — why it is that, while all Greece lies under the same sky and all the Greeks are educated alike, it has befallen us to have characters so variously constituted. For a long time, Polycles, I have been a student of human nature; I have lived ninety years and nine; I have associated, too, with many and diverse natures; and, having observed side by side, with great closeness, both the good and the worthless among men, I conceived that I ought to write a book about the practices in life of either sort. I will describe to you, class by class, the several kinds of conduct which characterise them and the mode in which they administer their affairs; for I conceive, Polycles, that our sons will be the better if such memorials are bequeathed to them, using which as examples they shall choose to live and consort with men of the fairest lives, in order that they may not fall short of them. And now I will turn to my narrative; be it your part to come along with it and to see if I speak rightly. In the first place, then, I will commence my account with those who have studied Irony, dispensing with preface or many words about the matter. I will begin with Irony and define it; next I will set forth, in like manner, the nature of the Ironical man, and of the character into which he has drifted; and then I will try, as I proposed, to make the other affections of the mind plain, each after its kind.

I. The Ironical Man

Irony, roughly defined, would seem to be an affectation of the worse in word or deed. The Ironical Man is one who goes up to his enemies, and volunteers to chat with them, instead of showing hatred. He will praise to their faces those whom he attacked behind their backs, and will sympathise with them in their defeats. He will show forgiveness to his revilers, and excuse things said against him; and he will talk blandly to persons who are smarting under a wrong. When people wish to seem him in a hurry, he will desire them to call again. He will never confess to anything that he is doing, but will always just say that he is thinking about it. He will pretend that he has ‘just arrived,’ or that he ‘was too late,’ or that he ‘was unwell.’ To applicants for a loan or a subscription he will say that he has no money; when he has anything for sale,

he will deny that he means to sell; or, when he does not mean to sell, he will pretend that he does. Hearing, he will affect not to have heard, seeing, not to have seen; if he has made an admission, he will say that he does not remember it. Sometimes he has 'been considering the question'; sometimes he does 'not know'; sometimes he is 'surprised'; sometimes it is 'the very conclusion' at which he 'once arrived' himself. And, in general, he is very apt to use this kind of phrase: 'I do not believe it'; 'I do not understand it'; 'I am astonished.' Or he will say that he has heard it from some one else: 'This, however, was not the story that he told me.' 'The thing surprises me'; 'Don't tell me'; 'I do not know how I am to disbelieve you, or to condemn him'; 'Take care that you are not too credulous.' [Such the speeches, such the doublings and retractions to which the Ironical man will resort. Disingenuous and designing characters are in truth to be shunned more carefully than vipers.]

II. The Flatterer

Flattery may be considered as a mode of companionship degrading but profitable to him who flatters. The Flatterer is a person who will say as he walks with another, 'Do you observe how people are looking at you? This happens to no man in Athens but you. A compliment was paid to you yesterday at the Stoa. More than thirty persons were sitting there; the question was started, Who is our foremost man? Everyone mentioned you first, and ended by coming back to your name.' With these and the like words, he will remove a morsel of wool from his patron's coat; or, if a speck of chaff has been laid on the other's hair by the wind, he will pick it off; adding with a laugh, 'Do you see? Because I have not met you for two days, you have had your beard full of white hairs; although no one has darker hair for his years than you.' Then he will request the company to be silent while the great man is speaking, and will praise him, too, in his hearing, and mark his approbation at a pause with 'True'; or he will laugh at a frigid joke, and stuff his cloak into his mouth as if he could not repress his amusement. He will request those whom he meets to stand still until 'his Honour' has passed. He will buy apples and pears, and bring them in and give them to the children in the father's presence; adding, with kisses, 'Chicks of a good father.' Also, when he assists at the purchase of slippers, he will declare that the foot is more shapely than the shoe. If his patron is approaching a friend, he will run forward and say, 'He is

coming to you'; and then, turning back, 'I have announced you.' He is just the person, too, who can run errands to the women's market without drawing breath. He is the first of the guests to praise the wine; and to say, as he reclines next the host, 'How delicate is your fare!' and (taking up something from the table) 'Now this — how excellent it is!' He will ask his friend if he is cold, and if he would like something more; and, before the words are spoken, will wrap him up. Moreover he will lean towards his ear and whisper with him; or will glance at him as he talks to the rest of the company. He will take the cushions from the slave in the theatre, and spread them on the seat with his own hands. He will say that his patron's house is well built, that his land is well planted, and that his portrait is like. [In short the Flatterer may be observed saying and doing all things by which he conceives that he will gain favour.]

III. The Garrulous Man

Garrulity is the discoursing of much and ill-considered talk. The Garrulous Man is one who will sit down beside a person whom he does not know, and first pronounce a panegyric on his own wife; then relate his dream of last night; then go through in detail what he has had for dinner. Then, warming to the work, he will remark that the men of the present day are greatly inferior to the ancients; and how cheap wheat has become in the market; and what a number of foreigners are in town; and that the sea is navigable after the Dionysia; and that, if Zeus would send more rain, the crops would be better; and that he will work his land next year; and how hard it is to live; and that Damippus set up a very large torch at the Mysteries; and 'How many columns has the Odeum?' and that yesterday he was unwell; and 'What is the day of the month?'; and that the Mysteries are in Boëdromion, the Apaturia in Pyanepsion, the rural Dionysia in Poseideon. Nor, if he is tolerated, will he ever desist. [He who would not have a fever must shake off such persons, and thrust them aside, and make his escape. It is hard to bear with those who cannot discern between the time to trifle and the time to work.]

IV. The Boor

Boorishness would seem to be ignorance offending against propriety. The Boor is one who, having drunk a posset, will go into the Ecclesia. He vows that

thyme smells sweeter than any perfume; he wears his shoes too large for his feet; he talks in a loud voice. He distrusts his friends and relatives, but talks confidentially to his own servants on the most important matters; and recounts all the news from the Ecclesia to the hired labourers working on his land. Wearing a cloak which does not reach the knee, he will sit down. He shows surprise and wonder at nothing else, but will stand still and gaze when he sees an ox or an ass or a goat in the streets. He is apt also to take things out of the store-room and eat them; and to drink his wine rather strong. He will help the bakery-maid to grind the corn for the use of the household and for his own; he will eat his breakfast while he shakes down hay for his beasts of burden; he will answer a knock at the door himself, and call the dog to him, and take hold of his nose, saying 'This fellow looks after the place and the house.' When he is given a piece of money, he will reject it, saying that it is too smooth, and thereupon will take another instead; and, if he has lent his plough, or a basket or sickle or bag, and remembers it as he lies awake, he will ask it back in the middle of the night. On his way down to Athens he will ask the first man that he meets how hides and salt-fish were selling, and whether the archon celebrates the New Moon to-day; adding immediately that he means to have his hair cut when he gets to town, and at the same visit to bring some salt-fish from Archias as he goes by. He will also sing at the bath; and will drive nails into his shoes.

V. The Complaisant Man

Complaisance may be defined as a mode of address calculated to give pleasure, but not with the best tendency. The Complaisant man is very much the kind of person who will hail one afar off with 'my dear fellow'; and, after a large display of respect, seize and hold one by both hands. He will attend you a little way, and ask when he is to see you, and will take his leave with a compliment upon his lips. Also, when he is called in to an arbitration, he will seek to please, not only his principal, but the adversary as well, in order that he may be deemed impartial. He will say, too, that foreigners peak more justly than his fellow-citizens. Then, when he is asked to dinner, he will request the host to send for the children; and will say of them, when they come in, that they are as like their father as figs; and will draw them towards him, and kiss them, and establish them at his side, — playing with some of them, and

himself saying 'Wineskin,' and 'Hatchet,' and permitting others to go to sleep upon him, to his anguish.

VI. The Reckless Man

Recklessness is tolerance of shame in word and deed. The Reckless man is one who will lightly take an oath, being proof against abuse, and capable of giving it; in character a coarse fellow, defiant of decency, ready to do anything; just the person to dance the cordax, sober and without a mask, in a comic chorus. At a conjuror's performance, too, he will collect the copper coins, going along from man to man, and wrangling with those who have the free-pass, and claim to see the show for nothing. He is apt, also, to become an inn-keeper or a tax-farmer; he will decline no sort of disreputable trade, a crier's, a cook's; he will gamble, and neglect to maintain his mother; he will be arrested for theft, and spend more time in prison than in his own house. And he would seem, too, to be one of these persons who collect and call crowds about them, ranting in a loud cracked voice and haranguing them; meanwhile some will approach, and others go away without hearing him out; but to some he gives the first chapter of his story, to others and epitome, to others a fragment; and the time which he chooses for parading his recklessness is always when there is some public gathering. Great is he, too, in lawsuits, now as defendant, now as prosecutor; sometimes excusing himself on oath, sometimes attending the court with a box of papers in the breast of his cloak and satchels of note-books in his hands. He will not disdain either to be a captain of market-place hucksters, but will readily lend them money, exacting, as interest upon a drachma, three obols a day; and will make the round of the cook-shops, the fishmongers, the fish-picklers, thrusting into his cheek the interest which he levies on their gains. [These are troublesome persons, for their tongues are easily set wagging abusively; and they talk in so loud a voice that the market-place and the workshops resound with them.]

VII. The Chatty Man

Chattiness, if one should wish to define it, would seem to be an incontinence of talk. The Chatty Man is one who will say to those whom he meets, if they speak a word to him, that they are quite wrong, and that he

knows all about it, and that, if they listen to him, they will learn; then, while one is answering him, he will put in, 'Do you tell me so? — don't forget what you are going to say'; or 'Thanks for reminding me'; or 'How much one gets from a little talk, to be sure!' or 'By-the-bye' — ; or 'Yes! you have seen it in a moment'; or 'I have been watching you all along to see if you would come to the same conclusion as I did'; and other such cues will he make for himself, so that his victim has not even breathing-time. Aye, and when he has prostrated a few lonely stragglers, he is apt to march next upon large, compact bodies, and to rout them in the midst of their occupations. Indeed, he will go into the schools and the palaestras, and hinder the boys from getting on with their lessons, by chattering at this rate to their trainers and masters. When people say that they are going, he loves to escort them, and to seem them safe into their houses. On learning the news from the Ecclesia, he hastens to report it; and to relate, in addition, the old story of the battle in Aristophon [the orator]'s year, and of the Lacedaemonian victory in Lysander's time; also of the speech for which he himself once got glory in the Assembly; and he will throw in some abuse of 'the masses,' too, in the course of his narrative; so that the hearers will either forget what it was about, or fall into a doze, or desert him in the middle and make their escape. Then, on a jury, he will hinder his fellows from coming to a verdict, at a theatre from seeing the play, at a dinner-party, from eating; saying that 'it is hard for a chatterer to be silent,' and that his tongue will run, and that he could not hold it, though he should be thought a greater chatterer than a swallow. Nay, he will endure to be the butt of his own children, when, drowsy at last, they make their request to him in these terms— 'Papa, chatter to us, that we may fall asleep!'

VIII. The Gossip

Gossip is the framing of fictitious saying and doings at the pleasure of him who gossips. The Gossip is a person who, when he meets his friend, will assume a demure air, and ask with a smile— 'Where are you from, and what are your tidings? What news have you to give me about this affair?' And then he will reiterate the question— 'Is anything fresh rumoured? Well certainly these are glorious tidings!' Then, without allowing the other to answer, he will go on— 'What say you? You have heard nothing? I flatter myself that I can treat you to some news'; and he has a soldier, or a slave of Asteius the

fluteplayer, or Lycon the contractor, just arrived from the field of battle, from whom he says that he has heard of it. In fact the authorities for his statements are always such that no one can possibly lay hold upon them. Quoting these, he relates how Polyperchon and the king have won the battle, and Cassander has been taken alive; and, if anyone says to him, 'But do you believe this?'— 'Why,' he will answer, 'the town rings with it! The report grows firmer and firmer — everyone is agreed — they all give the same account of the battle'; adding that the hash has been dreadful; and that he can tell it, too, from the faces of Government — he observes that they have all changed countenance. He speaks also of having heard privately that the authorities have a man hid in a house who came just five days ago from Macedonia, and who knows it all. And in narrating all this — only think! — he will be plausibly pathetic, saying 'Unlucky Cassander! Poor fellow! Do you see what fortune is? Well, well, he was a strong man once...': adding 'No one but you must know this' — when he has run up to everybody in town with the news. [It is a standing puzzle to me what object these men can have in their inventions; for, besides telling falsehoods, they incur positive loss. Often have cloaks been lost by those of them who draw groups round them at the baths; often has judgment gone by default against those who were winning battles or seafights in the Stoa; and some there are who, while mounting the imaginary breach, have missed their dinner. Their manner of life is indeed most miserable. What porch is there, what workshop, what part of the market-place which they do not haunt all day long, exhausting the patience of their hearers in this way, and wearying them to death with their fictions?]

IX. The Shameless Man

Shamelessness may be defined as neglect of reputation for the sake of base gain. The Shameless man is one who, in the first place, will and borrow from the creditor whose money he is withholding. Then, when he has been sacrificing to the gods, he will put away the salted remains, and will himself dine out; and, calling up his attendant, will give him bread and meat taken from the table, saying in the hearing of all, 'Feast, most worshipful.' In marketing, again, he will remind the butcher of any service which he may have rendered him; and, standing near the scales, will throw in some meat, if he can, or else a bone for his soup; if he gets it, it is well; if not, he will snatch up a

piece of tripe from the counter, and go off laughing. Again, when he has taken places at the theatre for his foreign visitors, he will see the performance without paying his own share; and will bring his sons, too, and their attendants the next day. When anyone secures a good bargain, he will ask to be given part in it. He will go to another man's house and borrow barley, or sometimes bran; and moreover will insist upon the lenders delivering it at his door. He is apt, also, to go up to the coppers in the baths, — to plunge the ladle in, amid the cries of the bath-man, — and to souse himself; saying that he has had his bath, and then, as he departs,— ‘No thanks to you!’

X. The Penurious Man

Penuriousness is too strict attention to profit and loss. The Penurious man is one who, while the month is current, will come to one's house and ask for a half-obol. When he is at table with others, he will count how many cups each of them has drunk; and will pour a smaller libation to Artemis than any of the company. Whenever a person has made a good bargain for him and charges him with it, he will say that it is too dear. When a servant has broken a jug or a plate, he will take the value out of his rations; or, if his wife has dropped a triple-copper coin, he is capable of moving the furniture and the sofas and the wardrobes, and of rummaging in the curtains. If he has anything to sell, he will dispose of it at such a price that the buyer shall have no profit. He is not likely to let one eat a fig from his garden, or walk through his land, or pick up one of the olives or dates that lie on the ground; and he will inspect his boundaries day by day to see if they remain the same. He is apt, also, to enforce the right of distraining, and to exact compound interest. When he feasts the men of his deme, the cutlets set before them will be small; when he markets, he will come in having bought nothing. And he will forbid his wife to lend salt, or a lamp-wick, or cumin, or verjuice, or meal for sacrifice, or garlands, or cakes; saying that these trifles come to much in the year. Then, in general, it may be noticed that the money-boxes of the penurious are mouldy, and the keys rusty; that they themselves wear their cloaks scarcely reaching to the thigh; that they anoint themselves with very small oil-flasks; that they have their hair cut close; that they take off their shoes in the middle of the day; and that they are urgent with the fuller to let their cloak have plenty of earth, in order that it may not soon be soiled.

XI. The Gross Man

Grossness is not difficult to define; it is obtrusive and objectionable pleasantry. The Gross man is one who will insult freeborn women; who, in a theatre, will applaud when others cease, and hiss the actors who please the rest of the spectators. When the market-place is full, he will go up to the place where nuts or myrtleberries or fruits are sold, and stand munching while he chatters to the seller. Then he will call by name to a passer-by with whom he is not familiar; or, if he chance to see persons in a hurry, he will cry 'stop' or he will go up to a man who has lost a great lawsuit and is leaving the court, and will congratulate him. He will do his own marketing, and hire flute-players; moreover, he will show to everyone who meets him the provisions that he has bought, with an invitation to come and eat them; and will explain, as he stands at the door of a barber's or perfumer's shop, that he means to get drunk. His mother having gone out to the soothsayer's, he will use words of evil omen; or, when people are praying and pouring libations, he will drop his cup, and laugh as if he had done something clever. Also, when the flute is being played to him, he alone of all the company will beat time with his hands, and trill an accompaniment; and will reprove the player, asking why she did not stop sooner. And, when he desires to spit, he will spit across the table at the cup-bearer.

XII. The Unseasonable Man

Unseasonableness consists in a chance meeting disagreeable to those who meet. The Unseasonable man is one who will go up to a busy person, and open his heart to him. He will serenade his mistress when she has a fever. He will address himself to a man who has been cast in a surety-suit, and request him to become his security. He will come to give evidence when the trial is over. When he is asked to a wedding, he will inveigh against womankind. He will propose a walk to those who have just come off a long journey. He has a knack, also, of bringing a higher bidder to him who has already found his market. He loves to rise and go through a long story to those who have heard it and know it by heart; he is zealous, too, in charging himself with offices which one would rather not have done, but is ashamed to decline. When people are sacrificing and incurring expense, he will come to demand his interest. If he is

present at the flogging of a slave, he will relate how a slave of his own was once beaten in the same way — and hanged himself; or, assisting at an arbitration, he will persist in embroiling the parties when they both wish to be reconciled. And, when he is minded to dance, he will seize upon another person who is not yet drunk.

XIII. The Officious Man

Officiousness would seem to be, in fact, a well-meaning presumption in word or deed. The Officious man is one who will rise and promise things beyond his power; and who, when an arrangement is admitted to be just, will oppose it, and be refuted. He will insist, too, on the slave mixing more wine than the company can finish; he will separate combatants, even those whom he does not know; he will undertake to show the path, and after all be unable to find his way. Also he will go up to his commanding officer, and ask when he means to give battle, and what is to be his order for the day after tomorrow. When the doctor forbids him to give wine to an invalid, he will say that he wishes to try an experiment, and will drench the sick man. Also he will inscribe upon a deceased woman's tombstone the name of her husband, of her father, and of her mother, as well as her own, with the place of her birth; recording further that 'All these were Estimable Persons.' And when he is about to take an oath he will say to the bystanders, 'This is by no means the first that I have undertaken.'

XIV. The Stupid Man

Stupidity may be defined as mental slowness in speech and action. The Stupid man is one who, after doing a sum and setting down the total, will ask the person sitting next to him 'What does it come to?' When he is defendant in an action, and it is about to come on, he will forget it and go into the country; when he is a spectator in the theatre, he will be left behind slumbering in solitude. If he has been given anything, and has put it away himself, he will look for it and be unable to find it. When the death of a friend is announced to him, in order that he may come to the house, his face will grow dark — tears will come into his eyes — and he will say 'Heaven be praised!' He is apt, too, when he receives payment for a debt, to call witnesses; and in winter-time to

quarrel with his slave for not having bought cucumbers; and to make his children wrestle and run races until he has exhausted them. If he is cooking a leek himself in the country, he will put salt into the pot twice, and make it uneatable. When it is raining, he will observe 'Well, the smell from the sky is delicious' (when others of course say 'from the earth'); or, if he is asked 'How many corpses do you suppose have been carried out at the Sacred Gate?' he will reply, 'I only wish that you or I had as many.'

XV. The Surly Man

Surliness is discourtesy in words. The Surly man is one who, when asked where so-and-so is, will say, 'Don't bother me'; or, when spoken to, will not reply. If he has anything for sale, instead of informing the buyers at what price he is prepared to sell it, he will ask them what he is to get for it. Those who send him presents with their compliments at feast-tide are told that he 'will not touch' their offerings. He cannot forgive a person who has besmirched him by accident, or pushed him, or trodden upon his foot. Then, if a friend asks him for a subscription, he will say that he cannot give one; but will come with it by and by, and remark that he is losing this money also. When he stumbles in the street he is apt to swear at the stone. He will not endure to wait long for anyone; nor will he consent to sing, or to recite, or to dance. He is apt also not to pray to the gods.

XVI. The Superstitious Man

Superstition would seem to be simply cowardice in regard to the supernatural. The Superstitious man is one who will wash his hands at a fountain, sprinkle himself from a temple-font, put a bit of laurel-leaf into his mouth, and so go about the day. If a weasel run across his path, he will not pursue his walk until someone else has traversed the road, or until he has thrown three stones across it. When he sees a serpent in his house, if it be the red snake, he will invoke Sabazius, — if the sacred snake, he will straightway place a shrine on the spot. He will pour oil from his flask on the smooth stones at the cross-roads, as he goes by, and will fall on his knees and worship them before he departs. If a mouse gnaws through a meal-bag, he will go to the expounder of sacred law and ask what is to be done; and, if the answer is, 'give

it to a cobbler to stitch up,' he will disregard the counsel, and go his way, and expiate the omen by sacrifice. He is apt, also, to purify his house frequently, alleging that Hecate has been brought into it by spells; and, if an owl is startled by him in his walk, he will exclaim 'Glory be to Athene!' before he proceeds. He will not tread upon a tombstone, or come near a dead body or a woman defiled by childbirth, saying that it is expedient for him not to be polluted. Also on the fourth and seventh days of each month he will order his servants to mull wine, and go out and buy myrtle-wreaths, frankincense, and smilax; and, on coming in, will spend the day in crowning the Hermaphrodites. When he has seen a vision, he will go to the interpreters of dreams, the seers, the augurs, to ask them to what god or goddess he ought to pray. Every month he will repair to the priests of the Orphic Mysteries, to partake in their rites, accompanied by his wife, or (if she is too busy) by his children and their nurse. He would seem, too, to be of those who are scrupulous in sprinkling themselves with sea-water; and, if ever he observes anyone feasting on the garlic at the cross-roads, he will go away, pour water over his head, and, summoning the priestesses, bid them carry a squill or a puppy around him for purification. And, if he sees a maniac or an epileptic man, he will shudder and spit into his bosom.

XVII. The Grumbler

Grumbling is undue censure of one's portion. The Grumbler is one who, when his friend has sent him a present from his table, will say to the bearer, 'You grudged me my soup and my poor wine, or you would have asked me to dinner.' He will annoy with Zeus, not for not raining, but for raining too late; and, if he finds a purse on the road, 'Ah,' he will say, 'but I have never found a treasure!' When he has bought a slave cheap after much coaxing of the seller, 'It is strange,' he will remark, 'if I have got a sound lot such a bargain.' To one who brings him good news, 'A son is born to you,' he will reply, 'If you add that I have lost half my property, you will speak the truth.' When he has won a lawsuit by a unanimous verdict, he will find fault with the composer of his speech for having left out several points in his case. If a subscription has been raised for him by his friends, and someone says to him 'Cheer up!'— 'Cheer up?' he will answer; 'when I have to refund his money to every man, and to be grateful besides, as if I had been done a service!'

XVIII. The Distrustful Man

Distrustfulness is a presumption that all men are unjust. The Distrustful man is one who, having sent his slave to market, will send another to ascertain what price he gave. He will carry his money himself, and sit down every two-hundred yards to count it. He will ask his wife in bed if she has locked the wardrobe, and if the cupboard has been sealed, and the bolt put upon the hall-door; and, if the reply is 'Yes,' not the less will he forsake the blankets, and light the lamp and run about shirtless and shoeless to inspect all these matters, and barely thus find sleep. He will demand his interest from his creditors in the presence of witnesses, to prevent the possibility of their repudiating the debt. He is apt also to send his cloak to be cleaned, not to the best workman, but wherever he finds sterling security for the fuller. When anyone comes to ask the loan of cups, he will, if possible, refuse; but, if perchance it is an intimate friend or relation, he will almost assay the cups in the fire, and weigh them, and do everything but take security, before he lends them. Also he will order his slave, when he attends him, to walk in front and not behind, as a precaution against his running away in the street. To persons who have bought something of him and say, 'How much is it? Enter it in your books, for I am too busy to send the money yet,' — he will reply: 'Do not trouble yourself; if you are not at leisure, I will accompany you.'

XIX. The Offensive Man

Offensiveness is distressing neglect of person. The Offensive man is one who will go about with a scrofulous or leprous affection, or with his nails overgrown, and say that these are hereditary complaints with him; his father had them, and his grandfather, and it is not easy to be smuggled into his family ... He will use rancid oil to anoint himself at the bath; and will go forth into the market-place wearing a thick tunic, and a very light cloak, covered with stains.

XX. The Unpleasant Man

Unpleasantness may be defined as a mode of address which gives harmless annoyance. The Unpleasant man is one who will come in an awake person who has just gone to sleep, in order to chat with him. He will detain people

who are on the very point of sailing; indeed he will go up to them and request them to wait until he has taken a stroll. He will take his child from the nurse, and feed it from his own mouth, and chirp endearments to it, calling it 'papa's little rascal.' He is apt, also, to ask before his relations, 'Tell me, Mommy, — when you were bringing me into the world, how went the time?' He will say that he has cool cistern-water at his house, and a garden with many fine vegetables, and a cook who understands dressed dishes. His house, he will say, is a perfect inn — always crammed; and his friends are like the pierced cask — he can never fill them with his benefits. Also, when he entertains, he will show off the qualities of his parasite to his guest; and will say, too, in an encouraging tone over the wine, that the amusement of the company has been provided for.

XXI. The Man of Petty Ambition

Petty Ambition would seem to be a mean craving for distinction. The man of Petty Ambition is one who, when asked to dinner, will be anxious to be placed next to the host at table. He will take his son away to Delphi to have his hair cut. He will be careful, too, that his attendant shall be an Aethiopian: and, when he pays a mina, he will case the slave to pay the sum in new coin. Also he will have his hair cut very frequently, and will keep his teeth white; he will change his clothes, too, while still good; and will anoint himself with unguent. In the marketplace he will frequent the bankers' tables; in the gymnasium he will haunt those places where the young men take exercise; in the theatre, when there is a representation, he will sit near the Generals. For himself he will buy nothing, but will make purchases on commission for foreign friends — pickled olives to go to Byzantium, Laconian hounds for Cyzicus, Hymettian honey for Rhodes; and will talk thereof to people at Athens. Also he is very much the person to keep a monkey; to get a satyr ape, Sicilian doves, deerhorn dice, Thurian vases of the approved rotundity, walking-sticks with the true Laconian curve, and a curtain with Persians embroidered upon it. He will have a little court provided with an arena for wrestling and a ball-alley, and will go about lending it to philosophers, sophists, drill-sergeants, musicians, for their displays; at which he himself will appear upon the scene rather late, in order that the spectators might say one to another, 'This is the owner of the palaestra.' When he has sacrificed an ox, he will nail up the skin of the

forehead, wreathed with large garlands, opposite the entrance, in order that those who come in may see that he has sacrificed an ox. When he has been taking part in a procession of the knights, he will give the rest of his accoutrements to his slave to carry home; but, after putting on his cloak, will walk about the market-place in his spurs. He is apt, also, to buy a little ladder for his domestic jackdaw, and to make a little brass shield, wherewith the jackdaw shall hop upon the ladder. Or if his little Melitean dog has died, he will put up a little memorial slab, with the inscription, a scion of Melita. If he has dedicated a brass ring in the temple of Asclepius, he will wear it to a wire with daily burnishings and oilings. It is just like him, too, to obtain from the prytaneis by private arrangement the privilege of reporting the sacrifice to the people; when, having provided himself with a smart white cloak and put on a wreath, he will come forward and say: 'Athenians! we, the prytaneis, have been sacrificing to the Mother of the Gods meetly and auspiciously; receive ye her good gifts!' Having made this announcement he will go home to his wife and declare that he is supremely fortunate.

XXII. The Mean Man

Meanness is an excessive indifference to honour where expense is concerned. The Mean man is one who, when he has gained the prize in a tragic contest, will dedicate a wooden scroll to Dionysus, having had it inscribed with his own name. When subscriptions for the treasury are being made, he will rise in silence from his place in the Ecclesia, and go out from the midst. When he is celebrating his daughter's marriage, he will sell the flesh of the animal sacrificed, except the parts due to the priest; and will hire the attendants at the marriage festival on condition that they attend their own board. When he is trierarch, he will spread the steersman's rugs under him on the deck, and put his own away. He is apt, also, not to send his children to school when there is a festival of the Muses, but say that they are unwell, in order that they may not contribute. Again, when he has bought provisions, he will himself carry the meat and the vegetables from the market-place in the bosom of his cloak. When he has sent his cloak to be scoured, he will keep the house. If a friend is raising a subscription, and has spoken to him about it, he will turn out of the street when he descries him approaching, and will go home by a roundabout way. Then, he will not buy a maid for his wife, though she

brought him a dower; but will hire from the women's market the girl who is to attend her on the occasions she goes out. He will wear his shoes patched with cobbler's work, and say that it is as strong as horn. He will sweep out his house when he gets up, and polish the sofas; and, in sitting down, he will twist aside the coarse cloak which he wears himself.

XXIII. The Boastful Man

Boastfulness would seem to be, in fact, pretension to advantages which one does not possess. The Boastful Man is one who will stand in the bazaar talking to foreigners of the great sums which he has at sea; he will discourse of the vastness of his money-lending business, and the extent of his personal gains and losses; and, while thus drawing the long-bow, will send of his boy to the bank, where he keeps — a drachma. He loves, also, to impose upon his companion by the road with a story of how he served with Alexander, and on what terms he was with him, and what a number of gemmed cups he brought home; contending, too, that the Asiatic artists are superior to those of Europe; and all this when he has never been out of Attica. Then he will say that a letter has come from Antipater — 'this is the third' — requiring his presence in Macedonia; and that, though he was offered the privilege of exporting timber free of duty, he has declined it, that no person whatever may be able to traduce him further for being more friendly than is becoming with Macedonia. He will state, too, that in the famine his outlay came to more than five talents in presents to the distressed citizens: ('he never could say No;') and actually, although the persons sitting near him are strangers, he will request one of them to set up the counters; when, reckoning by sums of six hundred drachmas or of a mina, and plausibly assigning names to each of these, he will make a total of as many as ten talents. This, he will say, was what he contributed in the way of charities; adding that he does not count any of the trierarchies or public services which he has performed. Also he will go up to the sellers of the best horses, and pretend that he desires to buy; or, visiting the upholstery mart, he will ask to see draperies to the value of two talents, and quarrel with his slave for having come out without gold. When he is living in a hired house he will say (to any one who does not know better) that it is the family mansion; but that he means to sell it, as he finds it too small for his entertainments.

XXIV. The Arrogant Man

Arrogance is a certain scorn for all the world beside oneself. The Arrogant man is one who will say to a person who is in a hurry that he will see him after dinner when he is taking his walk. He will profess to recollect benefits which he has conferred. As he saunters in the streets, he will decide cases for those who have made him their referee. When he is nominated to public offices, he will protest his inability to accept them, alleging that he is too busy. He will not permit himself to give any man the first greeting. He is apt to order persons who have anything to sell, or who wish to hire anything from him, to come to him at daybreak. When he walks in the streets, he will not speak to those whom he meets, keeping his head bent down, or at other times, when so it pleases him, erect. If he entertains his friends, he will not dine with them himself, but will appoint a subordinate to preside. As soon as he sets out on a journey, he will send some one forward to day that he is coming. He is not likely to admit a visitor when he is anointing himself, or bathing, or at table. It is quite in his manner, too, when he is reckoning with any one, to bid his slave push the counters apart, set down the total, and charge it to the other's account. In writing a letter, he will not say 'I should be much obliged,' but 'I wish it to be thus and thus'; or 'I have sent to you for' this or that; or 'You will attend to this strictly'; or 'Without a moments delay.'

XXV. The Coward

Cowardice would seem to be, in fact, the shrinking of the soul through fear. The Coward is one who, on a voyage, will protest that the promontories are pirates; and, if a high sea gets up, will ask if there is any one on board who has not been initiated. He will put up his head and ask the steersman if he is half-way, and what he thinks of the face of the heavens; remarking to the person sitting next him that a certain dream makes him feel uneasy; and he will take of his tunic and give it to his slave; or he will beg them to put him ashore. On land also, when he is campaigning, he will call to him those who are going out to the rescue, and bid them come and stand by him and look about them first; saying that it is hard to make out which is the enemy. Hearing shouts and seeing men falling, he will remark to those who stand by him that he has forgotten in his haste to bring his sword, and will run to the tent; where,

having sent his slave out to reconnoitre the position of the enemy, he will hide the sword under his pillow, and then spend a long time in pretending to look for it. And seeing from the tent a wounded comrade being carried in, he will run towards him and cry ‘Cheer up!’; he will take him into his arms and carry him; he will tend and sponge him; he will sit by him and keep the flies off his wound — in short, he will do anything rather than fight with the enemy. Again, when the trumpeter has sounded the signal for battle, he will cry, as he sits in the tent, ‘Bother! you will not allow the man to get a wink of sleep with your perpetual bugling!’ Then, covered with blood from the other’s wound, he will meet those who are returning from the fight, and announce to them, ‘I have run some risk to save one of our fellows’; and he will bring in the men of his deme and of his tribe to see his patient, at the same time explaining to each of them that he carried him with his own hands to the tent.

XXVI. The Oligarch

The oligarchical temper would seem to consist in a love of authority, covetous, not of gain, but of power. The Oligarch is one who, when the people are deliberating whom they shall associate with the archon as joint directors of the procession, will come forward and express his opinion that these directors ought to have plenary powers; and, if others propose ten, he will say that ‘one is sufficient,’ but that ‘he must be a man .’. Of Homer’s poetry he has mastered only this line, — No good comes of manifold rule; let the ruler be one: of the rest he is absolutely ignorant. It is very much in his manner to use phrases of this kind: ‘We must meet and discuss these matters by ourselves, and get clear of the rabble and the market-place’; ‘we must leave off courting office, and being slighted or graced by these fellows’; ‘either they or we must govern the city.’ He will go out about the middle of the day with his cloak gracefully adjusted, his hair daintily trimmed, his nails delicately pared, and strut through the Odeum Street, making such remarks as these: ‘There is no living in Athens for the informers’; ‘we are shamefully treated in the courts by the juries’; ‘I cannot conceive what people want with meddling in public affairs’; ‘how ungrateful the people are — always the slaves of a largess or a bribe’; and ‘how ashamed I am when a meagre, squalid fellow sits down by me in the Ecclesia!’ ‘When,’ he will ask, ‘will they have done ruining us with these public services and trierarchies? How detestable that set of

demagogues is! Theseus' (he will say) 'was the beginning of mischief to the State. It was he who reduced it from twelve cities to one, and undid the monarchy. And he was rightly served, for he was the people's first victim himself.' And so on to foreigners and to those citizens who resemble him in their disposition and their politics.

XXVII. The Late-Learner

Late - learning would seem to mean the pursuit of exercises for which one is too old. The Late-Learner is one who will study passages for recitation when he is sixty, and break down in repeating them over his wine. He will take lessons from his son in 'Right Wheel,' 'Left Wheel,' 'Right-about-face.' At the festivals of heroes he will match himself against boys for a torch-race; nay, it is just like him, if haply he is invited to a temple of Heracles, to throw off his cloak and seize the ox in order to bend its neck back. He will go into the palaestras and try an encounter; at a conjuror's performance he will sit out three or four audiences, trying to learn the songs by heart; and, when he is initiated into the rites of Sabazius, he will be eager to acquit himself best in the eyes of the priest. Riding into the country on another's horse, he will practise his horsemanship by the way; and, falling, will break his head. On a tenth-day festival he will assemble persons to play the flute with him. He will play at tableaux vivants with his footman; and will have matches of archery and javelin-throwing with his children's attendant, whom he exhorts, at the same time, to learn from him, — as if the other knew nothing about it either. At the bath he will wriggle frequently, as if wrestling, in order that he may appear educated; and, when women are near, he will practise dancing-steps, warbling his own accompaniment.

XXVIII. The Evil-Speaker

The habit of Evil-speaking is a bent of the mind towards putting things in the worst light. The Evil-speaker is one who, when asked who so-and-so is, will reply, in the style of genealogists, 'I will begin with his parentage. This person's father was originally called Sosias; in the ranks he came to rank as Sosistratus; and, when he was enrolled in his deme, as Sosidemus. His mother, I may add, is a noble damsel of Thrace — at least she is called "my life" in the language of

Corinth — and they say that such ladies are esteemed noble in their own country. Our friend himself, as might be expected from his parentage, is — a rascally scoundrel.’ He is very fond, also, of saying to one: ‘Of course — I understand that sort of thing; you do not err in your way of describing it to our friends and me. These women snatch the passers-by out of the very street...That is a house which has not the best of characters...Really there is something in that proverb about the women...In short, they have a trick of gossiping with men, — and they answer the hall-door themselves.’ It is just like him, too, when others are speaking evil, to join in:— ‘And I hate that man above all men. He looks a scoundrel — it is written on his face; and his baseness — it defies description. Here is proof — he allows his wife, who brought him six talents of dowry and has borne him a child, three copper coins for the luxuries of the table; and makes her wash with cold water on Poseidon’s day.’ When he is sitting with others, he loves to criticise one who has just left the circle; nay, if he has found an occasion, he will not abstain from abusing his own relations. Indeed, he will say all manner of injurious things of his friends and relatives, and of the dead; misnaming slander ‘plain speaking,’ ‘democratic,’ ‘independence,’ and making it the chief pleasure of his life. [Thus can the sting of ill temper produce in men the character of insanity and frenzy.]

XXIX. The Patron of Rascals

The patronising of Rascals is a form of the appetite for vice. The Patron of Rascals is one who will throw himself into the company of those who have lost lawsuits and have been found guilty in criminal causes; conceiving that, if he associates with such persons, he will become more a man of the world, and will inspire the greater awe. Speaking of honest men, he will add ‘so-so,’ and will remark that no one is honest, — all men are alike; indeed, one of his sarcasms is, ‘What an honest fellow!’ Again, he will say that the rascal is ‘a frank man, if one will look fairly at the matter.’ ‘Most of the things that people say of him,’ he admits, ‘are true; but some things’ (he adds) ‘they do not know; namely that he is a clever fellow, and fond of his friends, and a man of tact;’ and he will contend in his behalf that he has ‘never met with an abler man.’ He will show him favour, also, when he speaks in the Ecclesia or is at the bar of a court; he is fond, too, of remarking to the bench, ‘The question is of the cause,

not the person.' 'The defendant,' he will say, 'is the watch-dog of the people, — he keeps an eye on evil-doers. We shall have nobody to take the public wrongs to heart, if we allow ourselves to lose such men.' Then he is apt to become the champion of worthless persons, and to form conspiracies in the law-courts in bad causes; and, when he is hearing a case, to take up the statements of the litigants in the worst sense. [In short, sympathy with rascality is sister to rascality itself; and true is the proverb that 'Like moves towards like.']

XXX. The Avaricious Man

Avarice is excessive desire of base gain. The Avaricious man is one who, when he entertains, will not set enough bread upon the table. He will borrow from a guest staying in his house. When he makes a distribution, he will say that the distributor is entitled to a double share, and thereupon will help himself. When he sells wine, he will sell it watered to his own friend. He will seize the opportunity of taking his boys to the play, when the lessees of the theatre grant free admission. If he travels on the public service, he will leave at home the money allowed to him by the State, and will borrow of his colleagues in the embassy; he will load his servant with more baggage than he can carry, and give him shorter rations than any other master does; he will demand, too, his strict share of the presents, — and sell it. When he is anointing himself at the bath, he will say to the slave-boy, 'Why, this oil that you have bought is rancid' — and will use someone else's. He is apt to claim his part of a copper coin found by his servants in the streets, and to cry 'Shares in the luck!' Having sent his cloak to be scoured he will borrow another from an acquaintance, and delay to restore it for several days, until it is demanded back. These, again, are traits of his. He will weigh out their rations to his household with his own hands, using 'the measure of the frugal king,' with the bottom dented inward, and carefully brushing the rim. He will buy a thing privately, when a friend seems ready to sell it on reasonable terms, and will dispose of it at a raise price. It is just like him, too, when he is paying a debt of thirty minas, to withhold four drachmas. Then, if his sons, through ill-health, do not attend the school throughout the month, he will make a proportionate deduction from the payment; and all through Anthesterion he will not send them to their lessons because there are so many festivals, and he does not wish

to pay the fees. When he is receiving rent from a slave, he will demand in addition the discount charged on the copper money; also, in going through the account of the manager <he will challenge small items>. Entertaining his clansmen, he will beg a dish from the common table for his own servants; and will register the half-radishes left over from the repast, in order that the attendants may not get them. Again, when he travels with acquaintances, he will make use of their servants, but will let his own slave out for hire; nor will he place the proceeds to the common account. It is just like him, too, when a club-dinner is held at his house, to secrete some of the fire-wood, lentils, vinegar, salt, and lamp-oil placed at his disposal. If a friend, or a friend's daughter, is to be married, he will go abroad a little while before, in order to avoid giving a wedding present. And he will borrow from his acquaintances things of a kind that no one would ask back, — or readily take back, if it were proposed to restore them.