

I Symposium by Plato^①

Apollodorus. ②I believe I have got the story you inquire of pretty well by heart. The day before yesterday I chanced to be going up to town from my house in Phalerum, when one of my acquaintances caught sight of me from behind, some way off, and called in a bantering tone “Hullo, Phalerian! I say, Apollodorus, wait a moment.”

So I stopped and waited. Then, “Apollodorus,” he said, “do you know, I have just been looking for you, as I want to hear all about the ban-

① *Symposium* (《会饮》)是柏拉图(约公元前427年—约公元前347年)最负盛名的对话作品之一。本节的《会饮》英译本出自勒布版的《柏拉图对话集(含疑作)》(*The Dialogues of Plato with Apocryphal Works of Loeb Classical Library edition*)。这部作品含有多层对话结构:会饮现场七位对话者的对话;对这次对话的转述和再转述。此外,在苏格拉底的发言中还嵌入了他与狄奥提玛的长篇对话。这种复杂的对话结构显然透露出作者的精心设计。另外,这部对话作品英译本中单引号和双引号的使用比较复杂,有些段落过长。本书编者为方便读者阅读,对引号的使用和某些段落的长度略作了调整。

② Apollodorus, 中译名为阿波罗多洛斯,是这部作品最外层的转述者。阿波罗多洛斯在会饮发生时还只是个小孩子,且不在会饮现场。他是多年前从曾在会饮现场的阿里斯托得莫斯那里听来的会饮现场的对话。

quet that brought together Agathon^① and Socrates^② and Alcibiades^③ and the rest of that party, and what were the speeches they delivered upon love. For somebody else was relating to me the account he had from Phoenix, son of Philip, and he mentioned that you knew it too. But he could not tell it at all clearly so you must give me the whole story, for you are the most proper reporter of your dear friend's^④ discourses. But first tell me this," he went on, "were you at that party yourself, or not?" To which my answer was: "You have had anything but a clear account from your informant, if you suppose the party you are asking about to have been such a recent affair that I could be included."

"So I did suppose," he said. "How so, Glaucon?"^⑤ said I. "You must know it is many a year that Agathon has been away from home and country, and not yet three years that I have been consorting with Socrates and making it my daily care to know whatever he says or does. Before that time, what with running about at random and thinking I did things, I was the wretchedest man alive; just as you are at present, thinking philosophy is

① Agathon (约公元前 448 - 约公元前 400), 中译名为阿伽松, 是一位古希腊的悲剧诗人。他在公元前 416 年的悲剧竞赛中折桂, 请人到家庆贺畅谈。这就是柏拉图《会饮》故事的背景。阿伽松的作品已经散失。他是会饮现场的主要对话者之一。关于他的主要资料就出自柏拉图这部《会饮》。

② Socrates (约公元前 469 - 公元前 399), 中译名为苏格拉底, 古希腊著名的哲学家, 西方哲学的奠基者。他是柏拉图的老师, 也是会饮现场的核心对话者。

③ Alcibiades (公元前 450 - 公元前 404), 中译名为亚西比德或阿尔喀比亚德, 雅典城邦的政治家。青年时代钦佩哲学家苏格拉底, 与苏格拉底关系密切。他是会饮现场的主要对话者之一。

④ dear friend 指向阿波罗多洛斯转述会饮现场对话的阿里斯托得莫斯。

⑤ 看来, 这次转述之前, 阿波罗多洛斯刚向一个叫 Glaucon 的人转述过会饮的情况。Glaucon 是柏拉图对话录中常出现的角色。柏拉图有个哥哥叫 Glaucon。但是, 此处的 Glaucon 未见得一定是柏拉图的哥哥。

none of your business. ” “Instead of jeering at me,” he said, “tell me when it was that this party took place. ”

“When you and I were only children,” I told him, “on the occasion of Agathon’s victory with his first tragedy: the day after that of the dedicatory feast which he and his players held for its celebration. ” “Ah, quite a long while ago, it would seem,” said he, “but who gave you the account of it? Socrates himself?” “Goodness, no!” I answered. “It was the person who told Phoenix—Aristodemus of Cydathenaeum^①, a little man, who went always barefoot. He was of the company there, being one of the chiefs among Socrates’ lovers at that time, I believe. But all the same, I have since questioned Socrates on some details of the story I had from his friend, and he acknowledged them to be in accordance with his account. ” “Come then,” he said, “let me have it now; and in fact the road up to town is well suited for telling and hearing as we go along. ”

So on we went, discoursing the while of this affair; and hence, as I began by saying, I have it pretty well by heart. So, friends, if you too must hear the whole story, I had better tell it. For my own part, indeed, I commonly find that, setting aside the benefit I conceive they do me, I take an immense delight in philosophic discourses, whether I speak them myself or hear them from others; whereas in the case of other sorts of talk—especially that of your wealthy, money-bag friends—I am not only annoyed myself but sorry for dear intimates like you, who think you are doing a great deal when you really do nothing at all. From your point of view, I daresay, I seem a hapless creature, and I think your thought is true. I, however, do not think it

① Aristodemus of Cydathenaeum 就是前文的 dear friend, 即那个多年前陪同苏格拉底参加会饮的阿里斯托得莫斯。

of you; I know it for sure.

Companion. ① You are the same as ever, Apollodorus,—always defaming your self and every one else! Your view, I take it, is that all men alike are miserable, save Socrates, and that your own plight is the worst. How you may have come by your title of “crazy,” ② I do not know; though, of course, you are always like that in your way of speech—raging against yourself and everybody except Socrates.

Apollodorus. My dear sir, obviously it must be a mere crazy aberration in me, to hold this opinion of myself and of you all!

Companion. It is waste of time, Apollodorus, to wrangle about such matters now. Come, without more ado, comply with our request and relate how the speeches went.

Apollodorus. Well then, they were somewhat as follows,—but stay, I must try and tell you all in order from the beginning, just as my friend told it to me. ③

He said that he met with Socrates fresh from the bath and wearing his best pair of slippers—quite rare events with him—and asked him whither he was bound in such fine trim.

“To dinner at Agathon’s,” he answered. “I evaded him and his celebrations yesterday, fearing the crowd; but I agreed to be present today. So I got myself up in this handsome style in order to be a match for my handsome host. Now tell me,” said he, “do you feel in the mood for going unasked to dinner?”

① Companion 是《会饮》最外层对话中，与阿波罗多洛斯交谈的不具名的伙伴。

② 此处 crazy 可能是指阿波罗多洛斯对哲学的狂热以及对自我的过分不满。

③ 以下是阿波罗多洛斯的漫长转述。Companion 再未出现。

“For anything,” he said he replied, “that you may bid me do.”

“Come along then,” he said, “let us corrupt the proverb with a new version:

What if they go of their own accord,

The good men to our Goodman’s^① board?

Though indeed Homer may be said to have not merely corrupted the adage, but debauched it; for after setting forth Agamemnon as a man eminently good at warfare, and Menelaus as only ‘a spearman spiritless,’ he makes the latter come unbidden to the banquet of the former, who was offering sacrifice and holding a feast; so the worse man was the guest of the better.”^②

To this my friend’s answer, as he told me, was: “I am afraid mine, most likely, is a case that fits not your version, Socrates, but Homer’s—a dolt coming unbidden to the banquet of a scholar. Be sure, then, to have your excuse quite ready when you bring me; for I shall not own to coming unasked, but only on your invitation.”

“If two go along together,” he remarked, “there’s one before another in devising what we are to say. Well, off we go.”

After some such conversation, he told me, they started off. Then Socrates, becoming absorbed in his own thoughts by the way, fell behind him as they went; and when my friend began to wait for him he bade him go on ahead. So he came to Agathon’s house, and found the door open; where he found himself in a rather ridiculous position. For he was met immediately by a servant from within, who took him where the company was reclining,

① 据勒布版原注,在希腊语里“Goodman’s”与 Agathon 发音相似,此处暗指后者。

② 这段里的引文分别出自荷马史诗《伊利亚特》17. 587 和 2. 408。

and he found them just about to dine. However, as soon as Agathon saw him, "Ha, Aristodemus," he cried, "right welcome to a place at table with us! If you came on some other errand, put it off to another time: only yesterday I went round to invite you, but failed to see you. But how is it you do not bring us Socrates?"

"At that I turned back for Socrates," he said, "but saw no sign of him coming after me; so I told them how I myself had come along with Socrates, since he had asked me to dine with them".

"Very good of you to come," he said, "but where is the man?" "He was coming in just now behind me: I am wondering myself where he can be."

"Go at once," said Agathon to the servant, "and see if you can fetch in Socrates. You, Aristodemus, take a place by Eryximachus"^①.

So the attendant washed him and made him ready for reclining, when another of the servants came in with the news that our good Socrates had retreated into their neighbors' porch; there he was standing, and when bidden to come in, he refused.

"How strange!" said Agathon, "you must go on bidding him, and by no means let him go." But this Aristodemus forbade: "No," said he, "let him alone; it is a habit he has. Occasionally he turns aside, anywhere at random, and there he stands. He will be here presently, I expect. So do not disturb him; let him be."

"Very well then," said Agathon, "as you judge best. Come, boys," he called to the servants, "serve the feast for the rest of us. You are to set on

① Eryximachus 是古希腊的一位医生,生活于公元前5世纪中期到公元前5世纪末期或公元前4世纪早期。他是会饮现场的主要发言者之一。

just whatever you please, now that you have no one to direct you (a method I have never tried before). Today you are to imagine that I and all the company here have come on your invitation, so look after us, and earn our compliments. "Thereupon, he said, they all began dinner, but Socrates did not arrive; and though Agathon ever and anon gave orders that they should go and fetch him, my friend would not allow it. When he did come, it was after what, for him, was no great delay, as they were only about halfway through dinner. Then Agathon, who happened to be sitting alone in the lowest place, said: "Here, Socrates, come sit by me, so that by contact with you I may have some benefit from that piece of wisdom that occurred to you there in the porch. Clearly you have made the discovery and got hold of it for you would not have come away before. "

Then Socrates sat down, and "How fine it would be, Agathon," he said, "if wisdom were a sort of thing that could flow out of the one of us who is fuller into him who is emptier, by our mere contact with each other, as water will flow through wool from the fuller cup into the emptier. If such is indeed the case with wisdom, I set a great value on my sitting next to you; I look to be filled with excellent wisdom drawn in abundance out of you. My own is but meagre, as disputable as a dream; but yours is bright and expansive, as the other day we saw it shining forth from your youth, strong and splendid, in the eyes of more than thirty thousand Greeks. "

"You rude mocker, Socrates!" said Agathon. "A little later on you and I shall go to law on this matter of our wisdom, and Dionysus shall be our judge. For the present, let the dinner be your first concern. " After this, it seems, when Socrates had taken his place and had dined with the rest, they made libation and sang a chant to the god and so forth, as custom bids, till

they betook them to drinking. Then Pausanias^① opened a conversation after this manner: “Well, gentlemen, what mode of drinking will suit us best? For my part, to tell the truth, I am in very poor form as a result of yesterday’s bout, and I claim a little relief; it is so, I believe, with most of you, for you were at yesterday’s party; so consider what method of drinking would suit us best.”

On this Aristophanes^② observed: “Now that, Pausanias, is a good suggestion of yours, that we make a point of consulting our comfort in our cups; for I myself am one of those who got such a soaking yesterday.”

When Eryximachus, son of Acumenus, heard this, “You are quite right, sirs,” he said, “and there is yet one other question on which I request your opinion, as to what sort of condition Agathon finds himself in for drinking.”

“No, no,” said Agathon, “I am not in good condition for it either.” “It would be a piece of luck for us, I take it,” the other went on, “that is, for me, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, and our friends here, if you who are the stoutest drinkers are now feeling exhausted. We, of course, are known weaklings. Socrates I do not count in the matter; he is fit either way, and will be content with whichever choice we make. Now as it appears that nobody here present is eager for copious draughts, perhaps it will be the less irksome to you if I speak of intoxication, and tell you truly what it is. The practice of medicine, I find, has made this clear to me—that drunkenness is harmful to

① Pausanias 是会饮现场的主要发言者之一。历史上的 Pausanias 所留史料极少。据传他是阿伽松的同性恋恋人。关于他的资料主要出现在柏拉图和色诺芬的《会饮》中。

② Aristophanes(约公元前 446—约公元前 385), 古希腊喜剧诗人, 会饮现场的主要发言者之一。他曾在喜剧《云》(The Clouds)中将苏格拉底作为嘲讽的对象。

mankind; and neither would I myself agree, if I could help it, to an excess of drinking, nor would I recommend it to another, especially when his head is still heavy from a bout of the day before. ”

Here Phaedrus of Myrrhinus^① interrupted him, saying: “Why, you know I always obey you, above all in medical matters; and so now will the rest of us, if they are well advised. ” Then all of them, on hearing this, consented not to make their present meeting a tipsy affair, but to drink just as it might serve their pleasure.

“Since it has been resolved, then, ” said Eryximachus, “that we are to drink only so much as each desires, with no constraint on any, I next propose that the flute-girl who came in just now be dismissed: let her pipe to herself or, if she likes, to the women-folk within, but let us seek our entertainment today in conversation. I am ready, if you so desire, to suggest what sort of discussion it should be. ” They all said they did so desire, and bade him make his proposal.

So Eryximachus proceeded: “The beginning of what I have to say is in the words of Euripides^② Melanippe, for ‘not mine the tale’ that I intend to tell; it comes from Phaedrus here. He is constantly complaining to me and saying, —Is it not a curious thing, Eryximachus, that while other gods have hymns and psalms indited in their honor by the poets, the god of

① Phaedrus of Myrrhinus (约公元前 444 – 公元前 393), 中译名为斐德罗, 苏格拉底的朋友, 会饮现场的主要发言者之一。柏拉图有专门以他的名字命名的对话录《斐德罗篇》(*Phaedrus*)。

② Euripides (公元前 485 或前 480 – 公元前 406), 中译名欧里庇得斯, 古希腊悲剧诗人。Melanippe 是古希腊神话中一个女性。她因生下了海神波塞冬的一对双胞胎儿子, 而被自己的父亲下狱。孩子侥幸存活, 长大后成功救母。欧里庇得斯著有两部以 Melanippe 为主角的悲剧: *Melanippe The Prisoner* 和 *Melanippe The Philosopher*。

Love, so ancient and so great, has had no song of praise composed for him by a single one of all the many poets that ever have been? and again, pray consider our worthy professors, and the eulogies they frame of Hercules and others in prose, —for example, the excellent Prodicus^①. This indeed is not so surprising but I recollect coming across a book by somebody, in which I found Salt superbly lauded for its usefulness, and many more such matters I could show you celebrated there. To think of all this bustle about such trifles, and not a single man ever essaying till this day to make a fitting hymn to Love! So great a god, and so neglected! Now I think Phaedrus' protest a very proper one. Accordingly I am not only desirous of obliging him with a contribution of my own, but I also pronounce the present to be a fitting occasion for us here assembled to honor the god. So if you on your part approve, we might pass the time well enough in discourses; for my opinion is that we ought each of us to make a speech in turn, from left to right, praising Love as beautifully as he can. Phaedrus shall open first; for he has the topmost place at table, and besides is father of our debate. ”

“No one, Eryximachus,” said Socrates, “will vote against you; I do not see how I could myself decline, when I set up to understand nothing but love-matters; nor could Agathon and Pausanias either, nor yet Aristophanes, who divides his time between Dionysus and Aphrodite; nor could any other of the persons I see before me. To be sure, we who sit at the bottom do not get a fair chance; but if the earlier speakers rise nobly to the occasion, we shall be quite content. So now let Phaedrus, with our best wishes, make a beginning and give us a eulogy of Love. ”

① Prodicus(约公元前465—约公元前395),古希腊哲学家,受到柏拉图的尊敬,是苏格拉底的朋友。

To this they assented one and all, bidding him do as Socrates said. Now the entire speech in each case was beyond Aristodemus' recollection, and so too the whole of what he told me is beyond mine; but those parts which, on account also of the speakers, I deemed most memorable, I will tell you successively as they were delivered.

First then, as I said, he told me that the speech of Phaedrus began with points of this sort—that Love was a great god, among men and gods a marvel; and this appeared in many ways, but notably in his birth. “Of the most venerable are the honors of this god, and the proof of it is this: parents of Love there are none, nor are any recorded in either prose or verse. Hesiod says that Chaos came first into being—and thereafter rose Broad-breasted Earth, sure seat of all for aye, and Love. ①

“Acusilaus ② also agrees with Hesiod, saying that after Chaos were born these two, Earth and Love. Parmenides says of Birth that she ‘invented Love before all other gods.’ Thus Love is by various authorities allowed to be of most venerable standing; and as most venerable, he is the cause of all our highest blessings. I for my part am at a loss to say what greater blessing a man can have in earliest youth than an honorable lover, or a lover than an honorable favorite. For the guiding principle we should choose for all our days, if we are minded to live a comely life, cannot be acquired either by kinship or office or wealth or anything so well as by Love. What shall I call this power? The shame that we feel for shameful things, and ambition for what is noble; without which it is impossible for city or person

① 这几句出自公元前8-7世纪的古希腊诗人赫西俄德《神谱》116行。Chaos指宇宙最初的混沌。

② Acusilaus是公元前6世纪的一位希腊学者,致力于对神话的收集和解读。

to perform any high and noble deeds. Let me then say that a man in love, should he be detected in some shameful act or in a cowardly submission to shameful treatment at another's hands, would not feel half so much distress at anyone observing it, whether father or comrade or anyone in the world, as when his favorite did; and in the selfsame way we see how the beloved is especially ashamed before his lovers when he is observed to be about some shameful business. So that if we could somehow contrive to have a city or an army composed of lovers and their favorites, they could not be better citizens of their country than by thus refraining from all that is base in a mutual rivalry for honor; and such men as these, when fighting side by side, one might almost consider able to make even a little band victorious over all the world. For a man in love would surely choose to have all the rest of the host rather than his favorite see him forsaking his station or flinging away his arms; sooner than this, he would prefer to die many deaths; while, as for leaving his favorite in the lurch, or not succoring him in his peril, no man is such a craven that Love's own influence cannot inspire him with a valor that makes him equal to the bravest born; and without doubt what Homer calls a 'fury inspired' by a god in certain heroes is the effect produced on lovers by Love's peculiar power.

“Furthermore, only such as are in love will consent to die for others; not merely men will do it, but women too. Sufficient witness is borne to this statement before the people of Greece by Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, who alone was willing to die for her husband, though he had both father and mother. So high did her love exalt her over them in kindness, that they were proved alien to their son and but nominal relations; and when she achieved this deed, it was judged so noble by gods as well as men that, although

among all the many doers of noble deeds they are few and soon counted to whom the gods have granted the privilege of having their souls sent up again from Hades, hers they thus restored in admiration of her act. In this manner even the gods give special honor to zeal and courage in concerns of love. But Orpheus, son of Oeagrus, they sent back with failure from Hades, showing him only a wraith of the woman for whom he came; her real self they would not bestow, for he was accounted to have gone upon a coward's quest, too like the minstrel that he was, and to have lacked the spirit to die as Alcestis did for the sake of love, when he contrived the means of entering Hades alive. Wherefore they laid upon him the penalty he deserved, and caused him to meet his death at the hands of women; whereas Achilles, son of Thetis, they honored and sent to his place in the Isles of the Blest, because having learnt from his mother that he would die as surely as he slew Hector, but if he slew him not, would return home and end his days an aged man, he bravely chose to go and rescue his lover Patroclus, avenged him, and sought death not merely in his behalf but in haste to be joined with him whom death had taken. For this the gods so highly admired him that they gave him distinguished honor, since he set so great a value on his lover. And Aeschylus talks nonsense when he says that it was Achilles who was in love with Patroclus; for he excelled in beauty not Patroclus alone but assuredly all the other heroes, being still beardless and, moreover, much the younger, by Homer's account. For in truth there is no sort of valor more respected by the gods than this which comes of love; yet they are even more admiring and delighted and beneficent when the beloved is fond of his lover than when the lover is fond of his favorite; since a lover, filled as he is with a god, surpasses his favorite in divinity. This is the reason why they honored

Achilles above Alcestitis, giving him his abode in the Isles of the Blest.

“So there is my description of Love—that he is the most venerable and valuable of the gods, and that he has sovereign power to provide all virtue and happiness for men whether living or departed. ”

Such in the main was Phaedrus' speech as reported to me. It was followed by several others, which my friend could not recollect at all clearly; so he passed them over and related that of Pausanias, which ran as follows: “I do not consider, Phaedrus, our plan of speaking a good one, if the rule is simply that we are to make eulogies of Love. If Love were only one, it would be right; but, you see, he is not one, and this being the case, it would be more correct to have it previously announced what sort we ought to praise. Now this defect I will endeavor to amend, and will first decide on a Love who deserves our praise, and then will praise him in terms worthy of his godhead. We are all aware that there is no Aphrodite or Love-passion without a Love. True, if that goddess were one, then Love would be one; but since there are two of her, there must needs be two Loves also. Does anyone doubt that she is double? Surely there is the elder, of no mother born, but daughter of Heaven, whence we name her Heavenly; while the younger was the child of Zeus and Dione, and her we call Popular. It follows then that of the two Loves also the one ought to be called Popular, as fellow-worker with the one of those goddesses, and the other Heavenly.

“All gods, of course, ought to be praised; but none the less I must try to describe the faculties of each of these two. For of every action it may be observed that as acted by itself it is neither noble nor base. For instance, in our conduct at this moment, whether we drink or sing or converse, none of these things is noble in itself; each only turns out to be such in the doing,

as the manner of doing it may be. For when the doing of it is noble and right, the thing itself becomes noble; when wrong, it becomes base. So also it is with loving, and Love is not in every case noble or worthy of celebration, but only when he impels us to love in a noble manner.

“Now the Love that belongs to the Popular Aphrodite is in very truth popular and does his work at haphazard; this is the Love we see in the meaner sort of men; who, in the first place, love women as well as boys; secondly, where they love, they are set on the body more than the soul; and thirdly, they choose the most witless people they can find, since they look merely to the accomplishment and care not if the manner be noble or no. Hence they find themselves doing everything at haphazard, good or its opposite, without distinction; for this Love proceeds from the goddess who is far the younger of the two, and who in her origin partakes of both female and male. But the other Love springs from the Heavenly goddess who, firstly, partakes not of the female but only of the male; and secondly, is the elder, untinged with wantonness; wherefore those who are inspired by this Love betake them to the male, in fondness for what has the robuster nature and a larger share of mind.

“Even in the passion for boys you may note the way of those who are under the single incitement of this Love; they love boys only when they begin to acquire some mind—a growth associated with that of down on their chins. For I conceive that those who begin to love them at this age are prepared to be always with them and share all with them as long as life shall last; they will not take advantage of a boy’s green thoughtlessness to deceive him and make a mock of him by running straight off to another. Against this love of boys a law should have been enacted, to prevent the sad waste of at-

tentions paid to an object so uncertain; for who can tell where a boy will end at last, vicious or virtuous in body and soul? Good men, however, voluntarily make this law for themselves, and it is a rule which those 'popular' lovers ought to be forced to obey, just as we force them, so far as we can, to refrain from loving our freeborn women. These are the persons responsible for the scandal which prompts some to say it is a shame to gratify one's lover; such are the cases they have in view, for they observe all their reckless and wrongful doings; and surely, whatsoever is done in an orderly and lawful manner can never justly bring reproach.

"Further, it is easy to note the rule with regard to love in other cities; there it is laid down in simple terms, while ours here is complicated. For in Elis and Boeotia and where there is no skill in speech they have simply an ordinance that it is seemly to gratify lovers, and no one whether young or old will call it shameful, in order, I suppose, to save themselves the trouble of trying what speech can do to persuade the youths; for they have no ability for speaking. But in Ionia and many other regions where they live under foreign sway, it is counted a disgrace. Foreigners hold this thing, and all training in philosophy and sports, to be disgraceful, because of their despotic government; since, I presume, it is not to the interest of their princes to have lofty notions engendered in their subjects, or any strong friendships and communions; all of which Love is pre-eminently apt to create.

"It is a lesson that our despots learnt by experience; for Aristogeiton's love and Harmodius' friendship grew to be so steadfast that it wrecked their power. ① Thus where it was held a disgrace to gratify one's lover, the tradi-

① Aristogeiton 和 Harmodius 是约公元前 514 年刺杀古希腊独裁者而出名的两位英雄,被古希腊人视为民主的标志。

tion is due to the evil ways of those who made such a law—that is, to the encroachments of the rulers and to the cowardice of the ruled. But where it was accepted as honorable without any reserve, this was due to a sluggishness of mind in the law-makers. In our city we have far better regulations, which, as I said, are not so easily grasped.

“Consider, for instance, our saying that it is more honorable to love openly than in secret, especially when the beloved excels not so much in beauty as in nobility and virtue; and again, what a wonderful encouragement a lover gets from us all; we have no thought of his doing anything unseemly, and success in his pursuit is counted honorable and failure disgraceful; and how in his endeavors for success our law leaves him a free hand for performing such admirable acts as may win him praise; while the same acts, if attempted for any other purpose or effect to which one might be inclined, would bring one nothing in return but the sharpest reproach. For suppose that with the view of gaining money from another, or some office, or any sort of influence, a man should allow himself to behave as lovers commonly do to their favorites—pressing their suit with supplications and entreaties, binding themselves with vows, sleeping on doorsteps, and submitting to such slavery as no slave would ever endure—both the friends and the enemies of such a man would hinder his behaving in such fashion; for while the latter would reproach him with adulation and ill-breeding, the former would admonish him and feel ashamed of his conduct. But in a lover all such doings only win him favor; by free grant of our law he may behave thus without reproach, as compassing a most honorable end. Strangest of all, he alone in the vulgar opinion has indulgence from the gods when he forsakes the vow he has sworn; for the vow of love-passion, they say, is no vow.