Cratylus

By Plato

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By Plato

Written 360 B.C.E

Translated by Benjamin Jowett

Persons of the Dialogue

SOCRATES
HERMOGENES
CRATYLUS

Hermogenes. Suppose that we make Socrates a party to the argument?

Cratylus. If you please.

Her. I should explain to you, Socrates, that our friend Cratylus has been arguing about names; he says that they are natural and not conventional; not a portion of the human voice which men agree to use; but that there is a truth or correctness in them, which is the same for Hellenes as for barbarians. Whereupon I ask him, whether his own name of Cratylus is a true name or not, and he answers "Yes." And Socrates? "Yes." Then every man's name, as I tell him, is that which he is called. To this he replies- "If all the world were to call you Hermogenes, that would not be your name." And when I am anxious to have a further explanation he is ironical and mysterious, and seems to imply that he has a notion of his own about the matter, if he would only tell, and could entirely convince me, if he chose to be intelligible. Tell me, Socrates, what this oracle means; or rather tell me, if you will be so good, what is your own view of the truth or correctness of names, which I would far sooner hear.

Socrates. Son of Hipponicus, there is an ancient saying, that "hard is the knowledge of the good." And the knowledge of names is a great part of knowledge. If I had not been poor, I might have heard the fifty-drachma course of the great Prodicus, which is a complete education in grammar and language- these are his own words- and then I should have been at once able to answer your question about the correctness of names. But, indeed, I have only heard the single-drachma course,

and therefore, I do not know the truth about such matters; I will, however, gladly assist you and Cratylus in the investigation of them. When he declares that your name is not really Hermogenes, I suspect that he is only making fun of you;- he means to say that you are no true son of Hermes, because you are always looking after a fortune and never in luck. But, as I was saying, there is a good deal of difficulty in this sort of knowledge, and therefore we had better leave the question open until we have heard both sides.

Her. I have often talked over this matter, both with Cratylus and others, and cannot convince myself that there is any principle of correctness in names other than convention and agreement; any name which you give, in my opinion, is the right one, and if you change that and give another, the new name is as correct as the old- we frequently change the names of our slaves, and the newly-imposed name is as good as the old: for there is no name given to anything by nature; all is convention and habit of the users;- such is my view. But if I am mistaken I shall be happy to hear and learn of Cratylus, or of any one else.

Soc. I dare say that you be right, Hermogenes: let us see;- Your meaning is, that the name of each thing is only that which anybody agrees to call it?

Her. That is my notion.

Soc. Whether the giver of the name be an individual or a city?

Her. Yes.

Soc. Well, now, let me take an instance;- suppose that I call a man a horse or a horse a man, you mean to say that a man will be rightly called a horse by me individually, and rightly called a man by the rest of the world; and a horse again would be rightly called a man by me and a horse by the world:- that is your meaning?

Her. He would, according to my view.

Soc. But how about truth, then? you would acknowledge that there is in words a true and a false?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. And there are true and false propositions?

Her. To be sure.

Soc. And a true proposition says that which is, and a false proposition says that which is not?

Her. Yes; what other answer is possible?

Soc. Then in a proposition there is a true and false?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. But is a proposition true as a whole only, and are the parts untrue?

Her. No; the parts are true as well as the whole.

Soc. Would you say the large parts and not the smaller ones, or every part?

Her. I should say that every part is true.

Soc. Is a proposition resolvable into any part smaller than a name?

Her. No; that is the smallest.

Soc. Then the name is a part of the true proposition?

Her. Yes.

Soc. Yes, and a true part, as you say.

Her. Yes.

Soc. And is not the part of a falsehood also a falsehood?

Her. Yes.

Soc. Then, if propositions may be true and false, names may be true and false?

Her. So we must infer.

Soc. And the name of anything is that which any one affirms to be the name?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And will there be so many names of each thing as everybody says that there are? and will they be true names at the time of uttering them?

Her. Yes, Socrates, I can conceive no correctness of names other than this; you give one name, and I another; and in different cities and countries there are different names for the same things; Hellenes differ from barbarians in their use of names, and the several Hellenic tribes from one another.

Soc. But would you say, Hermogenes, that the things differ as the names differ? and are they relative to individuals, as Protagoras tells us? For he says that man is the measure of all things, and that things are to me as they appear to me, and that they are to you as they appear to you. Do you agree with him, or would you say that things have a permanent essence of their own?

Her. There have been times, Socrates, when I have been driven in my perplexity to take refuge with Protagoras; not that I agree with him at all.

Soc. What! have you ever been driven to admit that there was no such thing as a bad man?

Her. No, indeed; but I have often had reason to think that there are very bad men, and a good many of them.

Soc. Well, and have you ever found any very good ones?

Her. Not many.

Soc. Still you have found them?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And would you hold that the very good were the very wise, and the very evil very foolish?

Would that be your view?

Her. It would.

Soc. But if Protagoras is right, and the truth is that things are as they appear to any one, how can some of us be wise and some of us foolish?

Her. Impossible.

Soc. And if, on the other hand, wisdom and folly are really distinguishable, you will allow, I think, that the assertion of Protagoras can hardly be correct. For if what appears to each man is true to him, one man cannot in reality be wiser than another.

Her. He cannot.

Soc. Nor will you be disposed to say with Euthydemus, that all things equally belong to all men at the same moment and always; for neither on his view can there be some good and other bad, if virtue and vice are always equally to be attributed to all.

Her. There cannot.

Soc. But if neither is right, and things are not relative to individuals, and all things do not equally belong to all at the same moment and always, they must be supposed to have their own proper and permanent essence: they are not in relation to us, or influenced by us, fluctuating according to our fancy, but they are independent, and maintain to their own essence the relation prescribed by nature.

Her. I think, Socrates, that you have said the truth.

Soc. Does what I am saying apply only to the things themselves, or equally to the actions which proceed from them? Are not actions also a class of being?

Her. Yes, the actions are real as well as the things.

Soc. Then the actions also are done according to their proper nature, and not according to our opinion of them? In cutting, for example, we do not cut as we please, and with any chance instrument; but we cut with the proper instrument only, and according to the natural process of cutting; and the natural process is right and will succeed, but any other will fail and be of no use at all.

Her. I should say that the natural way is the right way.

Soc. Again, in burning, not every way is the right way; but the right way is the natural way, and the right instrument the natural instrument.

Her. True.

Soc. And this holds good of all actions?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And speech is a kind of action?

Her. True.

Soc. And will a man speak correctly who speaks as he pleases? Will not the successful speaker rather be he who speaks in the natural way of speaking, and as things ought to be spoken, and with the natural instrument? Any other mode of speaking will result in error and failure.

Her. I quite agree with you.

Soc. And is not naming a part of speaking? for in giving names men speak.

Her. That is true.

Soc. And if speaking is a sort of action and has a relation to acts, is not naming also a sort of action?

Her. True.

Soc. And we saw that actions were not relative to ourselves, but had a special nature of their own?

Her. Precisely.

Soc. Then the argument would lead us to infer that names ought to be given according to a natural process, and with a proper instrument, and not at our pleasure: in this and no other way shall we name with success.

Her. I agree.

Soc. But again, that which has to be cut has to be cut with something?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And that which has to be woven or pierced has to be woven or pierced with something?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. And that which has to be named has to be named with something?

Her. True.

Soc. What is that with which we pierce?

Her. An awl.

Soc. And with which we weave?

Her. A shuttle.

Soc. And with which we name?

Her. A name.

Soc. Very good: then a name is an instrument?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. Suppose that I ask, "What sort of instrument is a shuttle?" And you answer, "A weaving instrument."

Her. Well.

Soc. And I ask again, "What do we do when we weave?"- The answer is, that we separate or disengage the warp from the woof.

Her. Very true.

Soc. And may not a similar description be given of an awl, and of instruments in general?

Her. To be sure.

Soc. And now suppose that I ask a similar question about names: will you answer me? Regarding the name as an instrument, what do we do when we name?

Her. I cannot say.

Soc. Do we not give information to one another, and distinguish things according to their natures?

Her. Certainly we do.

Soc. Then a name is an instrument of teaching and of distinguishing natures, as the shuttle is of distinguishing the threads of the web.

Her. Yes.

Soc. And the shuttle is the instrument of the weaver?

Her. Assuredly.

Soc. Then the weaver will use the shuttle well- and well means like a weaver? and the teacher will use the name well- and well means like a teacher?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And when the weaver uses the shuttle, whose work will he be using well?

Her. That of the carpenter.

Soc. And is every man a carpenter, or the skilled only?

Her. Only the skilled.

Soc. And when the piercer uses the awl, whose work will he be using well?

Her. That of the smith.

Soc. And is every man a smith, or only the skilled?

Her. The skilled only.

Soc. And when the teacher uses the name, whose work will he be using?

Her. There again I am puzzled.

Soc. Cannot you at least say who gives us the names which we use?

Her. Indeed I cannot.

Soc. Does not the law seem to you to give us them?

Her. Yes, I suppose so.

Soc. Then the teacher, when he gives us a name, uses the work of the legislator?

Her. I agree.

Soc. And is every man a legislator, or the skilled only?

Her. The skilled only.

Soc. Then, Hermogenes, not every man is able to give a name, but only a maker of names; and this is the legislator, who of all skilled artisans in the world is the rarest.

Her. True.

Soc. And how does the legislator make names? and to what does he look? Consider this in the light of the previous instances: to what does the carpenter look in making the shuttle? Does he not look to that which is naturally fitted to act as a shuttle?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. And suppose the shuttle to be broken in making, will he make another, looking to the broken one? or will he look to the form according to which he made the other?

Her. To the latter, I should imagine.

Soc. Might not that be justly called the true or ideal shuttle?

Her. I think so.

SOC. And whatever shuttles are wanted, for the manufacture of garments, thin or thick, of flaxen, woollen, or other material, ought all of them to have the true form of the shuttle; and whatever is the shuttle best adapted to each kind of work, that ought to be the form which the maker produces in each case.

Her. Yes.

Soc. And the same holds of other instruments: when a man has discovered the instrument which is naturally adapted to each work, he must express this natural form, and not others which he fancies, in the material, whatever it may be, which he employs; for example, he ought to know how to put into iron the forms of awls adapted by nature to their several uses?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. And how to put into wood forms of shuttles adapted by nature to their uses?

Her. True.

Soc. For the several forms of shuttles naturally answer to the several kinds of webs; and this is true of instruments in general.

Her. Yes.

Soc. Then, as to names: ought not our legislator also to know how to put the true natural names of each thing into sounds and syllables and to make and give all names with a view to the ideal name, if he is to be a namer in any true sense? And we must remember that different legislators will not use the same syllables. For neither does every smith, although he may be making the same instrument for the same purpose, make them all of the same iron. The form must be the same, but the material may vary, and still the instrument may be equally good of whatever iron made, whether in Hellas or in a foreign country;- there is no difference.

Her. Very true.

Soc. And the legislator, whether he be Hellene or barbarian, is not therefore to be deemed by you a worse legislator, provided he gives the true and proper form of the name in whatever syllables; this or that country makes no matter.

Her. Quite true.

Soc. But who then is to determine whether the proper form is given to the shuttle, whatever sort of wood may be used? the carpenter who makes, or the weaver who is to use them?

Her. I should say, he who is to use them, Socrates.

Soc. And who uses the work of the lyremaker? Will not he be the man who knows how to direct what is being done, and who will know also whether the work is being well done or not?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. And who is he?

Her. The player of the lyre.

Soc. And who will direct the shipwright?

Her. The pilot.

Soc. And who will be best able to direct the legislator in his work, and will know whether the work is well done, in this or any other country? Will not the user be the man?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And this is he who knows how to ask questions?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And how to answer them?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And him who knows how to ask and answer you would call a dialectician?

Her. Yes; that would be his name.

Soc. Then the work of the carpenter is to make a rudder, and the pilot has to direct him, if the rudder is to be well made.

Her. True.

Soc. And the work of the legislator is to give names, and the dialectician must be his director if the names are to be rightly given?

Her. That is true.

Soc. Then, Hermogenes, I should say that this giving of names can be no such light matter as you fancy, or the work of light or chance persons; and Cratylus is right in saying that things have names by nature, and that not every man is an artificer of names, but he only who looks to the name which each thing by nature has, and is able to express the true forms of things in letters and syllables.

Her. I cannot answer you, Socrates; but I find a difficulty in changing my opinion all in a moment, and I think that I should be more readily persuaded, if you would show me what this is which you term the natural fitness of names.

Soc. My good Hermogenes, I have none to show. Was I not telling you just now (but you have forgotten), that I knew nothing, and proposing to share the enquiry with you? But now that you and I have talked over the matter, a step has been gained; for we have discovered that names have by nature a truth, and that not every man knows how to give a thing a name.

Her. Very good.

Soc. And what is the nature of this truth or correctness of names? That, if you care to know, is the next question.

Her. Certainly, I care to know.

Soc. Then reflect.

Her. How shall I reflect?

Soc. The true way is to have the assistance of those who know, and you must pay them well both in money and in thanks; these are the Sophists, of whom your brother, Callias, has- rather dearly-bought the reputation of wisdom. But you have not yet come into your inheritance, and therefore you had better go to him, and beg and entreat him to tell you what he has learnt from Protagoras about the fitness of names.

Her. But how inconsistent should I be, if, whilst repudiating Protagoras and his Truth, I were to attach any value to what he and his book affirm!

Soc. Then if you despise him, you must learn of Homer and the poets.

Her. And where does Homer say anything about names, and what does he say?

Soc. He often speaks of them; notably and nobly in the places where he distinguishes the different names which Gods and men give to the same things. Does he not in these passages make a remarkable statement about the correctness of names? For the Gods must clearly be supposed to call

things by their right and natural names; do you not think so?

Her. Why, of course they call them rightly, if they call them at all. But to what are you referring?

Soc. Do you not know what he says about the river in Troy who had a single combat with Hephaestus?

Whom the Gods call Xanthus, and men call Scamander.

Her. I remember.

Soc. Well, and about this river- to know that he ought to be called Xanthus and not Scamander- is not that a solemn lesson? Or about the bird which, as he says,

The Gods call Chalcis, and men Cymindis: to be taught how much more correct the name Chalcis is than the name Cymindis- do you deem that a light matter? Or about Batieia and Myrina? And there are many other observations of the same kind in Homer and other poets. Now, I think that this is beyond the understanding of you and me; but the names of Scamandrius and Astyanax, which he affirms to have been the names of Hector's son, are more within the range of human faculties, as I am disposed to think; and what the poet means by correctness may be more readily apprehended in that instance: you will remember I dare say the lines to which I refer?

Her. I do.

Soc. Let me ask you, then, which did Homer think the more correct of the names given to Hector's son- Astyanax or Scamandrius?

Her. I do not know.

Soc. How would you answer, if you were asked whether the wise or the unwise are more likely to give correct names?

Her. I should say the wise, of course.

Soc. And are the men or the women of a city, taken as a class, the wiser?

Her. I should say, the men.

Soc. And Homer, as you know, says that the Trojan men called him Astyanax (king of the city); but if the men called him Astyanax, the other name of Scamandrius could only have been given to him by the women.

Her. That may be inferred.

Soc. And must not Homer have imagined the Trojans to be wiser than their wives?

Her. To be sure.

Soc. Then he must have thought Astyanax to be a more correct name for the boy than Scamandrius?

Her. Clearly.

Soc. And what is the reason of this? Let us consider:- does he not himself suggest a very good reason, when he says,

For he alone defended their city and long walls? This appears to be a good reason for calling the son of the saviour king of the city which his father was saving, as Homer observes.

Her. I see.

Soc. Why, Hermogenes, I do not as yet see myself; and do you?

Her. No, indeed; not I.

Soc. But tell me, friend, did not Homer himself also give Hector his name?

Her. What of that?

Soc. The name appears to me to be very nearly the same as the name of Astyanax- both are Hellenic; and a king (anax) and a holder (ektor) have nearly the same meaning, and are both descriptive of a king; for a man is clearly the holder of that of which he is king; he rules, and owns, and holds it. But, perhaps, you may think that I am talking nonsense; and indeed I believe that I myself did not know what I meant when I imagined that I had found some indication of the opinion of Homer about the correctness of names.

Her. I assure you that I think otherwise, and I believe you to be on the right track.

Soc. There is reason, I think, in calling the lion's whelp a lion, and the foal of a horse a horse; I am speaking only of the ordinary course of nature, when an animal produces after his kind, and not of extraordinary births;- if contrary to nature a horse have a calf, then I should not call that a foal but a calf; nor do I call any inhuman birth a man, but only a natural birth. And the same may be said of trees and other things. Do you agree with me?

Her. Yes, I agree.

Soc. Very good. But you had better watch me and see that I do not play tricks with you. For on the same principle the son of a king is to be called a king. And whether the syllables of the name are the same or not the same, makes no difference, provided the meaning is retained; nor does the addition or subtraction of a letter make any difference so long as the essence of the thing remains in possession of the name and appears in it.

Her. What do you mean?

Soc. A very simple matter. I may illustrate my meaning by the names of letters, which you know are not the same as the letters themselves with the exception of the four e, u, o (short), o (long); the names of the rest, whether vowels or consonants, are made up of other letters which we add to them; but so long as we introduce the meaning, and there can be no mistake, the name of the letter is quite correct. Take, for example, the letter beta- the addition of e, t, a, gives no offence, and does not prevent the whole name from having the value which the legislator intended- so well did he know how to give the letters names.

Her. I believe you are right.

Soc. And may not the same be said of a king? a king will often be the son of a king, the good son or the noble son of a good or noble sire; and similarly the off spring of every kind, in the regular course of nature, is like the parent, and therefore has the same name. Yet the syllables may be disguised until they appear different to the ignorant person, and he may not recognize them, although they are the same, just as any one of us would not recognize the same drugs under different disguises of

colour and smell, although to the physician, who regards the power of them, they are the same, and he is not put out by the addition; and in like manner the etymologist is not put out by the addition or transposition or subtraction of a letter or two, or indeed by the change of all the letters, for this need not interfere with the meaning. As was just now said, the names of Hector and Astyanax have only one letter alike, which is t, and yet they have the same meaning. And how little in common with the letters of their names has Archepolis (ruler of the city)- and yet the meaning is the same. And there are many other names which just mean "king." Again, there are several names for a general, as, for example, Agis (leader) and Polemarchus (chief in war) and Eupolemus (good warrior); and others which denote a physician, as Iatrocles (famous healer) and Acesimbrotus (curer of mortals); and there are many others which might be cited, differing in their syllables and letters, but having the same meaning. Would you not say so?

Her. Yes.

Soc. The same names, then, ought to be assigned to those who follow in the course of nature?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And what of those who follow out of the course of nature, and are prodigies? for example, when a good and religious man has an irreligious son, he ought to bear the name not of his father, but of the class to which he belongs, just as in the case which was before supposed of a horse foaling a calf.

Her. Quite true.

Soc. Then the irreligious son of a religious father should be called irreligious?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. He should not be called Theophilus (beloved of God) or Mnesitheus (mindful of God), or any of these names: if names are correctly given, his should have an opposite meaning.

Her. Certainly, Socrates.

Soc. Again, Hermogenes, there is Orestes (the man of the mountains) who appears to be rightly called; whether chance gave the name, or perhaps some poet who meant to express the brutality and fierceness and mountain wildness of his hero's nature.

Her. That is very likely, Socrates.

Soc. And his father's name is also according to nature.

Her. Clearly.

Soc. Yes, for as his name, so also is his nature; Agamemnon (admirable for remaining) is one who is patient and persevering in the accomplishment of his resolves, and by his virtue crowns them; and his continuance at Troy with all the vast army is a proof of that admirable endurance in him which is signified by the name Agamemnon. I also think that Atreus is rightly called; for his murder of Chrysippus and his exceeding cruelty to Thyestes are damaging and destructive to his reputation- the name is a little altered and disguised so as not to be intelligible to every one, but to the etymologist there is no difficulty in seeing the meaning, for whether you think of him as ateires the stubborn, or as atrestos the fearless, or as ateros the destructive one, the name is perfectly correct in every point of view. And I think that Pelops is also named appropriately; for, as the name implies, he is rightly called Pelops who sees what is near only (o ta pelas oron).

Her. How so?

Soc. Because, according to the tradition, he had no forethought or foresight of all the evil which the murder of Myrtilus would entail upon his whole race in remote ages; he saw only what was at hand and immediate,- Or in other words, pelas (near), in his eagerness to win Hippodamia by all means for his bride. Every one would agree that the name of Tantalus is rightly given and in accordance with nature, if the traditions about him are true.

Her. And what are the traditions?

Soc. Many terrible misfortunes are said to have happened to him in his life- last of all, came the utter ruin of his country; and after his death he had the stone suspended (talanteia) over his head in the world below- all this agrees wonderfully well with his name. You might imagine that some person who wanted to call him Talantatos (the most weighted down by misfortune), disguised the name by altering it into Tantalus; and into this form, by some accident of tradition, it has actually been transmuted. The name of Zeus, who is his alleged father, has also an excellent meaning, although hard to be understood, because really like a sentence, which is divided into two parts, for some call him Zena, and use the one half, and others who use the other half call him Dia; the two together signify the nature of the God, and the business of a name, as we were saying, is to express the nature. For there is none who is more the author of life to us and to all, than the lord and king of all. Wherefore we are right in calling him Zena and Dia, which are one name, although divided, meaning the God through whom all creatures always have life (di on zen aei pasi tois zosin uparchei). There is an irreverence, at first sight, in calling him son of Cronos (who is a proverb for stupidity), and we might rather expect Zeus to be the child of a mighty intellect. Which is the fact; for this is the meaning of his father's name: Kronos quasi Koros (Choreo, to sweep), not in the sense of a youth, but signifying to chatharon chai acheraton tou nou, the pure and garnished mind (sc. apo tou chorein). He, as we are informed by tradition, was begotten of Uranus, rightly so called (apo tou oran ta ano) from looking upwards; which, as philosophers tell us, is the way to have a pure mind, and the name Uranus is therefore correct. If I could remember the genealogy of Hesiod, I would have gone on and tried more conclusions of the same sort on the remoter ancestors of the Gods,- then I might have seen whether this wisdom, which has come to me all in an instant, I know not whence, will or will not hold good to the end.

Her. You seem to me, Socrates, to be quite like a prophet newly inspired, and to be uttering oracles.

Soc. Yes, Hermogenes, and I believe that I caught the inspiration from the great Euthyphro of the Prospaltian deme, who gave me a long lecture which commenced at dawn: he talked and I listened, and his wisdom and enchanting ravishment has not only filled my ears but taken possession of my soul,and to-day I shall let his superhuman power work and finish the investigation of names- that will be the way; but to-morrow, if you are so disposed, we will conjure him away, and make a purgation of him, if we can only find some priest or sophist who is skilled in purifications of this sort.

Her. With all my heart; for am very curious to hear the rest of the enquiry about names.

Soc. Then let us proceed; and where would you have us begin, now that we have got a sort of outline of the enquiry? Are there any names which witness of themselves that they are not given arbitrarily, but have a natural fitness? The names of heroes and of men in general are apt to be deceptive because they are often called after ancestors with whose names, as we were saying, they may have no business; or they are the expression of a wish like Eutychides (the son of good fortune), or Sosias (the Saviour), or Theophilus (the beloved of God), and others. But I think that we had better leave these, for there will be more chance of finding correctness in the names of immutable essences;- there ought to have been more care taken about them when they were named,

and perhaps there may have been some more than human power at work occasionally in giving them names.

Her. I think so, Socrates.

Soc. Ought we not to begin with the consideration of the Gods, and show that they are" rightly named Gods?

Her. Yes, that will be well.

Soc. My notion would be something of this sort:- I suspect that the sun, moon, earth, stars, and heaven, which are still the Gods of many barbarians, were the only Gods known to the aboriginal Hellenes. Seeing that they were always moving and running, from their running nature they were called Gods or runners (Theous, Theontas); and when men became acquainted with the other Gods, they proceeded to apply the same name to them all. Do you think that likely?

Her. I think it very likely indeed.

Soc. What shall follow the Gods?

Her. Must not demons and heroes and men come next?

Soc. Demons! And what do you consider to be the meaning of this word? Tell me if my view is right.

Her. Let me hear.

Soc. You know how Hesiod uses the word?

Her. I do not.

Soc. Do you not remember that he speaks of a golden race of men who came first?

Her. Yes, I do.

Soc. He says of them-

But now that fate has closed over this race
They are holy demons upon the earth,
Beneficent, averters of ills, guardians of mortal men.

Her. What is the inference?

Soc. What is the inference! Why, I suppose that he means by the golden men, not men literally made of gold, but good and noble; and I am convinced of this, because he further says that we are the iron race.

Her. That is true.

Soc. And do you not suppose that good men of our own day would by him be said to be of golden race?

Her. Very likely.

Soc. And are not the good wise?

Her. Yes, they are wise.

Soc. And therefore I have the most entire conviction that he called them demons, because they were daemones (knowing or wise), and in our older Attic dialect the word itself occurs. Now he and other poets say truly, that when a good man dies he has honour and a mighty portion among the dead, and becomes a demon; which is a name given to him signifying wisdom. And I say too, that every wise man who happens to be a good man is more than human (daimonion) both in life and death, and is rightly called a demon.

Her. Then I rather think that I am of one mind with you; but what is the meaning of the word "hero"? (eros)

Soc. I think that there is no difficulty in explaining, for the name is not much altered, and signifies that they were born of love.

Her. What do you mean?

Soc. Do you not know that the heroes are demigods?

Her. What then?

Soc. All of them sprang either from the love of a God for a mortal woman, or of a mortal man for a Goddess; think of the word in the old Attic, and you will see better that the name heros is only a slight alteration of Eros, from whom the heroes sprang: either this is the meaning, or, if not this, then they must have been skilful as rhetoricians and dialecticians, and able to put the question (erotan), for eirein is equivalent to legein. And therefore, as I was saying, in the Attic dialect the heroes turn out to be rhetoricians and questioners. All this is easy enough; the noble breed of heroes are a tribe of sophists and rhetors. But can you tell me why men are called anthropoi?- that is more difficult.

Her. No, I cannot; and I would not try even if I could, because I think that you are the more likely to succeed.

Soc. That is to say, you trust to the inspiration of Euthyphro.

Her. Of course.

Soc. Your faith is not vain; for at this very moment a new and ingenious thought strikes me, and, if I am not careful, before tomorrow's dawn I shall be wiser than I ought to be. Now, attend to me; and first, remember that we of put in and pull out letters in words, and give names as we please and change the accents. Take, for example, the word Dii Philos; in order to convert this from a sentence into a noun, we omit one of the iotas and sound the middle syllable grave instead of acute; as, on the other hand, letters are sometimes inserted in words instead of being omitted, and the acute takes the place of the grave.

Her. That is true.

Soc. The name anthropos, which was once a sentence, and is now a noun, appears to be a case just of this sort, for one letter, which is the a, has been omitted, and the acute on the last syllable has been changed to a grave.

Her. What do you mean?

Soc. I mean to say that the word "man" implies that other animals never examine, or consider, or look up at what they see, but that man not only sees (opope) but considers and looks up at that which he sees, and hence he alone of all animals is rightly anthropos, meaning anathron a opopen.

Her. May I ask you to examine another word about which I am curious?

Soc. Certainly.

Her. I will take that which appears to me to follow next in order. You know the distinction of soul and body?

Soc. Of course.

Her. Let us endeavour to analyze them like the previous words.

Soc. You want me first of all to examine the natural fitness of the word psnche (soul), and then of the word soma (body)?

Her. Yes.

Soc. If I am to say what occurs to me at the moment, I should imagine that those who first use the name psnche meant to express that the soul when in the body is the source of life, and gives the power of breath and revival (anapsuchon), and when this reviving power fails then the body perishes and dies, and this, if I am not mistaken, they called psyche. But please stay a moment; I fancy that I can discover something which will be more acceptable to the disciples of Euthyphro, for I am afraid that they will scorn this explanation. What do you say to another?

Her. Let me hear.

Soc. What is that which holds and carries and gives life and motion to the entire nature of the body? What else but the soul?

Her. Just that.

Soc. And do you not believe with Anaxagoras, that mind or soul is the ordering and containing principle of all things?

Her. Yes; I do.

Soc. Then you may well call that power phuseche which carries and holds nature (e phusin okei, kai ekei), and this may be refined away into psuche. Her. Certainly; and this derivation is, I think, more scientific than the other.

Soc. It is so; but I cannot help laughing, if I am to suppose that this was the true meaning of the name.

Her. But what shall we say of the next word?

Soc. You mean soma (the body).

Her. Yes.

Soc. That may be variously interpreted; and yet more variously if a little permutation is allowed. For some say that the body is the grave (sema) of the soul which may be thought to be buried in our

present life; or again the index of the soul, because the soul gives indications to (semainei) the body; probably the Orphic poets were the inventors of the name, and they were under the impression that the soul is suffering the punishment of sin, and that the body is an enclosure or prison in which the soul is incarcerated, kept safe (soma, sozetai), as the name ooma implies, until the penalty is paid; according to this view, not even a letter of the word need be changed.

Her. I think, Socrates, that we have said enough of this class of words. But have we any more explanations of the names of the Gods, like that which you were giving of Zeus? I should like to know whether any similar principle of correctness is to be applied to them.

Soc. Yes, indeed, Hermogenes; and there is one excellent principle which, as men of sense, we must acknowledge,- that of the Gods we know nothing, either of their natures or of the names which they give themselves; but we are sure that the names by which they call themselves, whatever they may be, are true. And this is the best of all principles; and the next best is to say, as in prayers, that we will call them by any sort of kind names or patronymics which they like, because we do not know of any other. That also, I think, is a very good custom, and one which I should much wish to observe. Let us, then, if you please, in the first place announce to them that we are not enquiring about them; we do not presume that we are able to do so; but we are enquiring about the meaning of men in giving them these names,- in this there can be small blame.

Her. I think, Socrates, that you are quite right, and I would like to do as you say.

Soc. Shall we begin, then, with Hestia, according to custom?

Her. Yes, that will be very proper.

Soc. What may we suppose him to have meant who gave the name Hestia?

Her. That is another and certainly a most difficult question.

Soc. My dear Hermogenes, the first imposers of names must surely have been considerable persons; they were philosophers, and had a good deal to say.

Her. Well, and what of them?

Soc. They are the men to whom I should attribute the imposition of names. Even in foreign names, if you analyze them, a meaning is still discernible. For example, that which we term ousia is by some called esia, and by others again osia. Now that the essence of things should be called estia, which is akin to the first of these (esia = estia), is rational enough. And there is reason in the Athenians calling that estia which participates in ousia. For in ancient times we too seem to have said esia for ousia, and this you may note to have been the idea of those who appointed that sacrifices should be first offered to estia, which was natural enough if they meant that estia was the essence of things. Those again who read osia seem to have inclined to the opinion of Heracleitus, that all things flow and nothing stands; with them the pushing principle (othoun) is the cause and ruling power of all things, and is therefore rightly called osia. Enough of this, which is all that we who know nothing can affirm. Next in order after Hestia we ought to consider Rhea and Cronos, although the name of Cronos has been already discussed. But I dare say that I am talking great nonsense.

Her. Why, Socrates?

Soc. My good friend, I have discovered a hive of wisdom.

Her. Of what nature?

Soc. Well, rather ridiculous, and yet plausible.

Her. How plausible?

Soc. I fancy to myself Heracleitus repeating wise traditions of antiquity as old as the days of Cronos and Rhea, and of which Homer also spoke.

Her. How do you mean?

Soc. Heracleitus is supposed to say that all things are in motion and nothing at rest; he compares them to the stream of a river, and says that you cannot go into the same water twice.

Her. That is true.

Soc. Well, then, how can we avoid inferring that he who gave the names of Cronos and Rhea to the ancestors of the Gods, agreed pretty much in the doctrine of Heracleitus? Is the giving of the names of streams to both of them purely accidental? Compare the line in which Homer, and, as I believe, Hesiod also, tells of

Ocean, the origin of Gods, and mother Tethys. And again, Orpheus says, that

The fair river of Ocean was the first to marry, and he espoused his sister Tethys, who was his mother's daughter. You see that this is a remarkable coincidence, and all in the direction of Heracleitus.

Her. I think that there is something in what you say, Socrates; but I do not understand the meaning of the name Tethys.

Soc. Well, that is almost self-explained, being only the name of a spring, a little disguised; for that which is strained and filtered (diattomenon, ethoumenon) may be likened to a spring, and the name Tethys is made up of these two words.

Her. The idea is ingenious, Socrates.

Soc. To be sure. But what comes next?- of Zeus we have spoken.

Her. Yes.

Soc. Then let us next take his two brothers, Poseidon and Pluto, whether the latter is called by that or by his other name.

Her. By all means.

Soc. Poseidon is Posidesmos, the chain of the feet; the original inventor of the name had been stopped by the watery element in his walks, and not allowed to go on, and therefore he called the ruler of this element Poseidon; the e was probably inserted as an ornament. Yet, perhaps, not so; but the name may have been originally written with a double l and not with an s, meaning that the God knew many things (Polla eidos). And perhaps also he being the shaker of the earth, has been named from shaking (seiein), and then p and d have been added. Pluto gives wealth (Ploutos), and his name means the giver of wealth, which comes out of the earth beneath. People in general appear to imagine that the term Hades is connected with the invisible (aeides) and so they are led by their fears to call the God Pluto instead.

Her. And what is the true derivation?

Soc. In spite of the mistakes which are made about the power of this deity, and the foolish fears which people have of him, such as the fear of always being with him after death, and of the soul denuded of the body going to him, my belief is that all is quite consistent, and that the office and name of the God really correspond.

Her. Why, how is that?

Soc. I will tell you my own opinion; but first, I should like to ask you which chain does any animal feel to be the stronger? and which confines him more to the same spot,- desire or necessity?

Her. Desire, Socrates, is stronger far.

Soc. And do you not think that many a one would escape from Hades, if he did not bind those who depart to him by the strongest of chains?

Her. Assuredly they would.

Soc. And if by the greatest of chains, then by some desire, as I should certainly infer, and not by necessity?

Her. That is clear.

Soc. And there are many desires?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And therefore by the greatest desire, if the chain is to be the greatest?

Her. Yes.

Soc. And is any desire stronger than the thought that you will be made better by associating with another?

Her. Certainly not.

Soc. And is not that the reason, Hermogenes, why no one, who has been to him, is willing to come back to us? Even the Sirens, like all the rest of the world, have been laid under his spells. Such a charm, as I imagine, is the God able to infuse into his words. And, according to this view, he is the perfect and accomplished Sophist, and the great benefactor of the inhabitants of the other world; and even to us who are upon earth he sends from below exceeding blessings. For he has much more than he wants down there; wherefore he is called Pluto (or the rich). Note also, that he will have nothing to do with men while they are in the body, but only when the soul is liberated from the desires and evils of the body. Now there is a great deal of philosophy and reflection in that; for in their liberated state he can bind them with the desire of virtue, but while they are flustered and maddened by the body, not even father Cronos himself would suffice to keep them with him in his own far-famed chains.

Her. There is a deal of truth in what you say.

Soc. Yes, Hermogenes, and the legislator called him Hades, not from the unseen (aeides)- far otherwise, but from his knowledge (eidenai) of all noble things.

Her. Very good; and what do we say of Demeter, and Here, and Apollo, and Athene, and

Hephaestus, and Ares, and the other deities?

Soc. Demeter is e didousa meter, who gives food like a mother; Here is the lovely one (erate)- for Zeus, according to tradition, loved and married her; possibly also the name may have been given when the legislator was thinking of the heavens, and may be only a disguise of the air (aer), putting the end in the place of the beginning. You will recognize the truth of this if you repeat the letters of Here several times over. People dread the name of Pherephatta as they dread the name of Apollo- and with as little reason; the fear, if I am not mistaken, only arises from their ignorance of the nature of names. But they go changing the name into Phersephone, and they are terrified at this; whereas the new name means only that the Goddess is wise (sophe); for seeing that all things in the world are in motion (pheromenon), that principle which embraces and touches and is able to follow them, is wisdom. And therefore the Goddess may be truly called Pherepaphe (Pherepapha), or some name like it, because she touches that which is (tou pheromenon ephaptomene), herein showing her wisdom. And Hades, who is wise, consorts with her, because she is wise. They alter her name into Pherephatta now-a-days, because the present generation care for euphony more than truth. There is the other name, Apollo, which, as I was saying, is generally supposed to have some terrible signification. Have you remarked this fact?

Her. To be sure I have, and what you say is true.

Soc. But the name, in my opinion, is really most expressive of the power of the God.

Her. How so?

Soc. I will endeavour to explain, for I do not believe that any single name could have been better adapted to express the attributes of the God, embracing and in a manner signifying all four of them,- music, and prophecy, and medicine, and archery.

Her. That must be a strange name, and I should like to hear the explanation.

Soc. Say rather an harmonious name, as beseems the God of Harmony. In the first place, the purgations and purifications which doctors and diviners use, and their fumigations with drugs magical or medicinal, as well as their washings and lustral sprinklings, have all one and the same object, which is to make a man pure both in body and soul.

Her. Very true.

Soc. And is not Apollo the purifier, and the washer, and the absolver from all impurities?

Her. Very true.

Soc. Then in reference to his ablutions and absolutions, as being the physician who orders them, he may be rightly called Apolouon (purifier); or in respect of his powers of divination, and his truth and sincerity, which is the same as truth, he may be most fitly called Aplos, from aplous (sincere), as in the Thessalian dialect, for all the Thessalians call him Aplos; also he is Ballon (always shooting), because he is a master archer who never misses; or again, the name may refer to his musical attributes, and then, as in akolouthos, and akoitis, and in many other words the a is supposed to mean "together," so the meaning of the name Apollo will be "moving together," whether in the poles of heaven as they are called, or in the harmony of song, which is termed concord, because he moves all together by an harmonious power, as astronomers and musicians ingeniously declare. And he is the God who presides over harmony, and makes all things move together, both among Gods and among men. And as in the words akolouthos and akoitis the a is substituted for an o, so the name Apollon is equivalent to omopolon; only the second l is added in order to avoid the ill-omened sound of destruction (apolon). Now the suspicion of this destructive power still haunts the minds of

some who do not consider the true value of the name, which, as I was saying just now, has reference to all the powers of the God, who is the single one, the everdarting, the purifier, the mover together (aplous, aei Ballon, apolouon, omopolon). The name of the Muses and of music would seem to be derived from their making philosophical enquiries (mosthai); and Leto is called by this name, because she is such a gentle Goddess, and so willing (ethelemon) to grant our requests; or her name may be Letho, as she is often called by strangers- they seem to imply by it her amiability, and her smooth and easy-going way of behaving. Artemis is named from her healthy (artemes), well-ordered nature, and because of her love of virginity, perhaps because she is a proficient in virtue (arete), and perhaps also as hating intercourse of the sexes (ton aroton miseasa). He who gave the Goddess her name may have had any or all of these reasons.

Her. What is the meaning of Dionysus and Aphrodite?

Soc. Son of Hipponicus, you ask a solemn question; there is a serious and also a facetious explanation of both these names; the serious explanation is not to be had from me, but there is no objection to your hearing the facetious one; for the Gods too love a joke. Dionusos is simply didous oinon (giver of wine), as he might be called in fun,- and oinos is properly oionous, because wine makes those who drink, think (oiesthai) that they have a mind (noun) when they have none. The derivation of Aphrodite, born of the foam (aphoros), may be fairly accepted on the authority of Hesiod.

Her. Still there remains Athene, whom you, Socrates, as an Athenian, will surely not forget; there are also Hephaestus and Ares.

Soc. I am not likely to forget them.

Her. No, indeed.

Soc. There is no difficulty in explaining the other appellation of Athene.

Her. What other appellation?

Soc. We call her Pallas.

Her. To be sure.

Soc. And we cannot be wrong in supposing that this is derived from armed dances. For the elevation of oneself or anything else above the earth, or by the use of the hands, we call shaking (pallein), or dancing.

Her. That is quite true.

Soc. Then that is the explanation of the name Pallas?

Her. Yes; but what do you say of the other name?

Soc. Athene?

Her. Yes.

Soc. That is a graver matter, and there, my friend, the modern interpreters of Homer may, I think, assist in explaining the view of the ancients. For most of these in their explanations of the poet, assert that he meant by Athene "mind" (nous) and "intelligence" (dianoia), and the maker of names appears to have had a singular notion about her; and indeed calls her by a still higher title, "divine

intelligence" (Thou noesis), as though he would say: This is she who has the mind of God (Theonoa);- using a as a dialectical variety e, and taking away i and s. Perhaps, however, the name Theonoe may mean "she who knows divine things" (Theia noousa) better than others. Nor shall we be far wrong in supposing that the author of it wished to identify this Goddess with moral intelligence (en ethei noesin), and therefore gave her the name ethonoe; which, however, either he or his successors have altered into what they thought a nicer form, and called her Athene.

Her. But what do you say of Hephaestus?

Soc. Speak you of the princely lord of light (Phaeos istora)?

Her. Surely.

Soc. Ephaistos is Phaistos, and has added the e by attraction; that is obvious to anybody.

Her. That is very probable, until some more probable notion gets into your head.

Soc. To prevent that, you had better ask what is the derivation of Ares.

Her. What is Ares?

Soc. Ares may be called, if you will, from his manhood (arren) and manliness, or if you please, from his hard and unchangeable nature, which is the meaning of arratos: the latter is a derivation in every way appropriate to the God of war.

Her. Very true.

Soc. And now, by the Gods, let us have no more of the Gods, for I am afraid of them; ask about anything but them, and thou shalt see how the steeds of Euthyphro can prance.

Her. Only one more God! I should like to know about Hermes, of whom I am said not to be a true son. Let us make him out, and then I shall know whether there is any meaning in what Cratylus says.

Soc. I should imagine that the name Hermes has to do with speech, and signifies that he is the interpreter (ermeneus), or messenger, or thief, or liar, or bargainer; all that sort of thing has a great deal to do with language; as I was telling you the word eirein is expressive of the use of speech, and there is an often-recurring Homeric word emesato, which means "he contrived"- out of these two words, eirein and mesasthai, the legislator formed the name of the God who invented language and speech; and we may imagine him dictating to us the use of this name: "O my friends," says he to us, "seeing that he is the contriver of tales or speeches, you may rightly call him Eirhemes." And this has been improved by us, as we think, into Hermes. Iris also appears to have been called from the verb "to tell" (eirein), because she was a messenger.

Her. Then I am very sure that Cratylus was quite right in saying that I was no true son of Hermes (Ermogenes), for I am not a good hand at speeches.

Soc. There is also reason, my friend, in Pan being the double-formed son of Hermes.

Her. How do you make that out?

Soc. You are aware that speech signifies all things (pan), and is always turning them round and round, and has two forms, true and false?

Her. Certainly.

Soc. Is not the truth that is in him the smooth or sacred form which dwells above among the Gods, whereas falsehood dwells among men below, and is rough like the goat of tragedy; for tales and falsehoods have generally to do with the tragic or goatish life, and tragedy is the place of them?

Her. Very true.

Soc. Then surely Pan, who is the declarer of all things (pan) and the perpetual mover (aei polon) of all things, is rightly called aipolos (goat-herd), he being the two-formed son of Hermes, smooth in his upper part, and rough and goatlike in his lower regions. And, as the son of Hermes, he is speech or the brother of speech, and that brother should be like brother is no marvel. But, as I was saying, my dear Hermogenes, let us get away from the Gods.

Her. From these sort of Gods, by all means, Socrates. But why should we not discuss another kind of Gods- the sun, moon, stars, earth, aether, air, fire, water, the seasons, and the year?

Soc. You impose a great many tasks upon me. Still, if you wish, I will not refuse.

Her. You will oblige me.

Soc. How would you have me begin? Shall I take first of all him whom you mentioned first- the sun?

Her. Very good.

Soc. The origin of the sun will probably be clearer in the Doric form, for the Dorians call him alios, and this name is given to him because when he rises he gathers (alizoi) men together or because he is always rolling in his course (aei eilein ion) about the earth; or from aiolein, of which meaning is the same as poikillein (to variegate), because he variegates the productions of the earth.

Her. But what is selene (the moon)?

Soc. That name is rather unfortunate for Anaxagoras.

Her. How so?

Soc. The word seems to forestall his recent discovery, that the moon receives her light from the sun.

Her. Why do you say so?

Soc. The two words selas (brightness) and phos (light) have much the same meaning?

Her. Yes.

Soc. This light about the moon is always new (neon) and always old (enon), if the disciples of Anaxagoras say truly. For the sun in his revolution always adds new light, and there is the old light of the previous month.

Her. Very true.

Soc. The moon is not unfrequently called selanaia.

Her. True.

Soc. And as she has a light which is always old and always new (enon neon aei) she may very properly have the name selaenoneoaeia; and this when hammered into shape becomes selanaia.

Her. A real dithyrambic sort of name that, Socrates. But what do you say of the month and the stars?

Soc. Meis (month) is called from meiousthai (to lessen), because suffering diminution; the name of astra (stars) seems to be derived from astrape, which is an improvement on anastphope, signifying the upsetting of the eyes (anastrephein opa).

Her. What do you say of pur (fire) and udor (water)?

Soc. I am at a loss how to explain pur; either the muse of Euthyphro has deserted me, or there is some very great difficulty in the word. Please, however, to note the contrivance which I adopt whenever I am in a difficulty of this sort.

Her. What is it?

Soc. I will tell you; but I should like to know first whether you can tell me what is the meaning of the pur?

Her. Indeed I cannot.

Soc. Shall I tell you what I suspect to be the true explanation of this and several other words?- My belief is that they are of foreign origin. For the Hellenes, especially those who were under the dominion of the barbarians, often borrowed from them.

Her. What is the inference?

Soc. Why, you know that any one who seeks to demonstrate the fitness of these names according to the Hellenic language, and not according to the language from which the words are derived, is rather likely to be at fault.

Her. Yes, certainly.

Soc. Well then, consider whether this pur is not foreign; for the word is not easily brought into relation with the Hellenic tongue, and the Phrygians may be observed to have the same word slightly changed, just as they have udor (water) and kunes (dogs), and many other words.

Her. That is true.

Soc. Any violent interpretations of the words should be avoided; for something to say about them may easily be found. And thus I get rid of pur and udor. Aer (air), Hermogenes, may be explained as the element which raises (airei) things from the earth, or as ever flowing (aei pei), or because the flux of the air is wind, and the poets call the winds "air-blasts," (aetai); he who uses the term may mean, so to speak, air-flux (aetorroun), in the sense of wind-flux (pneumatorroun); and because this moving wind may be expressed by either term he employs the word air (aer = aetes rheo). Aither (aether) I should interpret as aeitheer; this may be correctly said, because this element is always running in a flux about the air (aei thei peri tou aera ron). The meaning of the word ge (earth) comes out better when in the form of gaia, for the earth may be truly called "mother" (gaia, genneteira), as in the language of Homer (Od. ix. 118; xiii. 160) gegaasi means gegennesthai.

Her. Good.

Soc. What shall we take next? Her. There are orai (the seasons), and the two names of the year,

eniautos and etos.

Soc. The orai should be spelt in the old Attic way, if you desire to know the probable truth about them; they are rightly called the orai because they divide (orizousin) the summers and winters and winds and the fruits of the earth. The words eniautos and etos appear to be the same,- "that which brings to light the plants and growths of the earth in their turn, and passes them in review within itself (en eauto exetazei)": this is broken up into two words, eniautos from en eauto, and etos from etazei, just as the original name of Zeus was divided into Zena and Dia; and the whole proposition means that his power of reviewing from within is one, but has two names, two words etos and eniautos being thus formed out of a single proposition.

Her. Indeed, Socrates, you make surprising progress.

Soc. I am run away with.

Her. Very true.

Soc. But am not yet at my utmost speed.

Her. I should like very much to know, in the next place, how you would explain the virtues. What principle of correctness is there in those charming words- wisdom, understanding, justice, and the rest of them?

Soc. That is a tremendous class of names which you are disinterring; still, as I have put on the lion's skin, I must not be faint of heart; and I suppose that I must consider the meaning of wisdom (phronesis) and understanding (sunesis), and judgment (gnome), and knowledge (episteme), and all those other charming words, as you call them?

Her. Surely, we must not leave off until we find out their meaning.

Soc. By the dog of Egypt I have not a bad notion which came into my head only this moment: I believe that the primeval givers of names were undoubtedly like too many of our modern philosophers, who, in their search after the nature of things, are always getting dizzy from constantly going round and round, and then they imagine that the world is going round and round and moving in all directions; and this appearance, which arises out of their own internal condition, they suppose to be a reality of nature; they think that there is nothing stable or permanent, but only flux and motion, and that the world is always full of every sort of motion and change. The consideration of the names which I mentioned has led me into making this reflection.

Her. How is that, Socrates?

Soc. Perhaps you did not observe that in the names which have been just cited, the motion or flux or generation of things is most surely indicated.

Her. No, indeed, I never thought of it.

Soc. Take the first of those which you mentioned; clearly that is a name indicative of motion.

Her. What was the name? Soc. Phronesis (wisdom), which may signify Phoras kai rhou noesis (perception of motion and flux), or perhaps Phoras onesis (the blessing of motion), but is at any rate connected with Pheresthai (motion); gnome (judgment), again, certainly implies the ponderation or consideration (nomesis) of generation, for to ponder is the same as to consider; or, if you would rather, here is noesis, the very word just now mentioned, which is neou esis (the desire of the new); the word neos implies that the world is always in process of creation. The giver of the name wanted

to express his longing of the soul, for the original name was neoesis, and not noesis. The word sophrosune is the salvation (soteria) of that wisdom (phronesis) which we were just now considering. Epioteme (knowledge) is akin to this, and indicates that the soul which is good for anything follows (epetai) the motion of things, neither anticipating them nor falling behind them; wherefor the word should rather be read as epistemene, inserting en. Sunesis (understanding) may be regarded in like manner as a kind of conclusion; the word is derived from sunienai (to go along with), and, like epistasthai (to know), implies the progression of the soul in company with the nature of things. Sophia (wisdom) is very dark, and appears not to be of native growth; the meaning is, touching the motion or stream of things. You must remember that the poets, when they speak of the commencement of any rapid motion, often use the word esuthe (he rushed); and there was a famous Lacedaemonian who was named Sous (Rush), for by this word the Lacedaemonians signify rapid motion, and the touching (epaphe) of motion is expressed by sophia, for all things are supposed to be in motion. Good (agathon) is the name which is given to the admirable (agasto) in nature; for, although all things move, still there are degrees of motion; some are swifter, some slower; but there are some things which are admirable for their swiftness, and this admirable part of nature is called agathon. Dikaiosune (justice) is clearly dikaiou sunesis (understanding of the just); but the actual word dikaion is more difficult: men are only agreed to a certain extent about justice, and then they begin to disagree.

For those who suppose all things to be in motion conceive the greater part of nature to be a mere receptacle; and they say that there is a penetrating power which passes through all this, and is the instrument of creation in all, and is the subtlest and swiftest element; for if it were not the subtlest, and a power which none can keep out, and also the swiftest, passing by other things as if they were standing still, it could not penetrate through the moving universe. And this element, which superintends all things and pieces (diaion) all, is rightly called dikaion; the letter k is only added for the sake of euphony. Thus far, as I was saying, there is a general agreement about the nature of justice; but I, Hermogenes, being an enthusiastic disciple, have been told in a mystery that the justice of which I am speaking is also the cause of the world: now a cause is that because of which anything is created; and some one comes and whispers in my ear that justice is rightly so called because partaking of the nature of the cause, and I begin, after hearing what he has said, to interrogate him gently: "Well, my excellent friend," say I, "but if all this be true, I still want to know what is justice." Thereupon they think that I ask tiresome questions, and am leaping over the barriers, and have been already sufficiently answered, and they try to satisfy me with one derivation after another, and at length they quarrel. For one of them says that justice is the sun, and that he only is the piercing (diaionta) and burning (kaonta) element which is the guardian of nature. And when I joyfully repeat this beautiful notion, I am answered by the satirical remark, "What, is there no justice in the world when the sun is down?" And when I earnestly beg my questioner to tell me his own honest opinion, he says, "Fire in the abstract"; but this is not very intelligible. Another says, "No, not fire in the abstract, but the abstraction of heat in the fire." Another man professes to laugh at all this, and says, as Anaxagoras says, that justice is mind, for mind, as they say, has absolute power, and mixes with nothing, and orders all things, and passes through all things. At last, my friend, I find myself in far greater perplexity about the nature of justice than I was before I began to learn. But still I am of opinion that the name, which has led me into this digression, was given to justice for the reasons which I have mentioned.

Her. I think, Socrates, that you are not improvising now; you must have heard this from some one else.

Soc. And not the rest?

Her. Hardly. Soc. Well, then, let me go on in the hope of making you believe in the originality of the rest. What remains after justice? I do not think that we have as yet discussed courage (andreia),-injustice (adikia), which is obviously nothing more than a hindrance to the penetrating principle

(diaiontos), need not be considered. Well, then, the name of andreia seems to imply a battle;- this battle is in the world of existence,