

Sayings of Cleobolus.

Benefit your friends, that they may love you more dearly still; benefit your enemies, that they may at last become your friends. Never take the part of a rascal: you would make an enemy of his victim.

Many words and more ignorance: such is the majority of mankind.

Choose a wife from among your equals. If you take one from a higher rank, you will not have allies, but tyrants.

CHILON.

Chilon was a native of Sparta, and became one of the Ephori or chief magistrates of the state; and in fulfilling the duties of his high office, his judgments were always dictated by the strictest impartiality. A true Spartan, he entertained a profound veneration for the laws of Lycurgus, and considered the slightest deviation from their rigid execution, in spirit as well as in form, as the highest of offences; and for once failing in this point he all his life after reproached himself. One of his friends, it seems, had been guilty of some misdemeanor, and was brought before him for trial: Chilon had the firmness to condemn him, but advised him to appeal from his decision. Such was the fault with which this upright magistrate reproached himself: it is one from which he is absolved at the bar of posterity. The character of his eloquence and of his writings bespoke the Spartan: always bold, always nervous, and of few words. "Know thyself" is one of his admired aphorisms—a precept the difficulty of rightly fulfilling which has since become proverbial, and one of which, from the preceding anecdote, Chilon, as was to be expected, seems to have been no more capable than others, for had he thoroughly "known himself" his sensitive mind would have had cause to weep over not one but a thousand failings.

The Olympic games, at which all Greece assembled every fourth year, and in which rivals alike for literary and athletic fame competed, was the great arena of distinction for the Greeks. Sparta, of course, was not hindermost in the athletic contests; and in 597 B.C., a son of Chilon was a competitor in the games. He proved victor in the combat of the Cestus; and on his triumphal entrance into his native city, his aged sire, overcome with joy, died in the youth's arms while embracing him.

Sayings of Chilon.

Know thyself. Nothing is more difficult: self-love always exaggerates our merits in our own eyes.

You speak ill of others; do you not fear, then, the ill they will speak of you?

You bewail your misfortunes; if you considered all that others suffer, you would complain less loudly.

Distrust the man who always seeks to meddle with the affairs of others.

It is better to lose than to make a dishonest gain.

Your friends invite you to a feast; go late if you like. They call you to console them; hasten.

Do not permit your tongue to outrun reflection.

To keep a secret, to employ well one's leisure, and to support injuries, are three very difficult things.

Let your power be forgotten in your gentleness; deserve to be loved; avoid being feared.

The touchstone tries the quality of gold; gold, the quality of men.

PITTACUS.

Pittacus was distinguished alike as a warrior and as a philosopher: his victories in the field endeared him to his countrymen; and his wisdom was held in such high repute that many of his maxims were engraved on the walls of Apollo's oracular temple at Delphi. A patriot, a warrior, and a sage, he will live for posterity; virtuous, self-denying, and contented, his memory will be cherished by all good men. He was a native of Mytilene, in the island of Lesbos. His country was then groaning under the oppression of the tyrant Melanctrus; and as he grew up, young Pittacus resolved to attempt the liberation of his native isle. Alcæus, the great lyric poet, had roused the patriotic ar-

dor of his fellow-citizens by his stirring warlike odes, and his bold invective against tyranny; and his sons now associated themselves with Pittacus in his daring enterprise. Their efforts were successful. The citizens rose against the tyrant; and under the generalship of Pittacus, he was defeated and driven from the island. But scarcely had the Mytilenians begun to taste the sweets of freedom when a new danger arose, and they were menaced by a formidable invasion from the rival power of Athens. Pittacus was again chosen leader, and defeated the Athenians in several engagements, in one of which he killed the enemy's general in single fight. As the issue of the war seems in some way to have depended on the issue of this combat, it is recorded that Pittacus, besides his usual armor, provided himself with a net, which he concealed in the hollow of his shield, and during the fight he skillfully contrived to entangle his antagonist in its meshes, and thus came off victor.

His countrymen were not deficient in gratitude; and Pittacus was soon after created governor of the city, with kingly power. His reign was marked by justice and moderation; he introduced many wise laws and institutions; and at the end of ten years voluntarily abdicated the throne, alleging that the virtues and innocence of private life were incompatible with the possession of unlimited power. Filled with admiration for his noble conduct, his countrymen now sought to load him with marks of their esteem. But Pittacus declined the dangerous gift of wealth; and when offered an extensive tract of land, he refused to accept more than he could overcast with a javelin. A costly present is also said to have been sent to him by King Cræsus, which was declined in the same contented spirit of independence. His declining years were passed in peaceful retirement, employing much of his time in literary pursuits. His writings have perished; but they consisted, we are told, of a code of laws for his countrymen, a variety of moral precepts, and some elegiac verses. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-two, and died peacefully, full of years and of honors, 570 B.C.

Originally of obscure parentage, Pittacus is said to have had the weakness to marry a lady belonging to the class of the nobility, whose pride often disturbed his usual serenity of mind, and helped to embitter his otherwise tranquil existence. He had a high regard for the duties of children to their parents, and of parents to their off-spring; and nothing could be better suited to express this than one of his own maxims—"As you treated your father," he says, "so expect in your old age to be treated by your children." One day, we are told, a son was about to plead against his father, when Pittacus stopped him: "You will be condemned," said he to the youth, "if your cause is less just than his: if more so, you will still be condemned."

Sayings of Pittacus.

Happy is the prince whose subjects fear for him, and do not fear him.

Would you know a man? Invest him with great power.

The prudent man foresees evil; the brave man bears it without complaining.

You answer for another: repentance is at hand.

In commanding others, learn to govern yourself.

I love the house where I see nothing superfluous, and where I find everything necessary.

PERIANDER.

The enrolling Periander among the sages of Greece is nowadays regarded as derogatory to the high character of his colleagues; for in his case his vices and tyranny were more conspicuous, and are now oftener thought of than his wisdom and ability. The word "tyrant" in its original signification means "prince," and it was only in after times that it came to be applied as an epithet of reproach. But Periander was a tyrant in the worst sense of the term; so that some writers have been tempted to think that it was another Periander who lived about the same time that was the sage; but there is little authority for this supposition, and the general opinion is, that the tyrant and the sage were one person.