

ALL.—I will take an order, stranger, if that is what you mean: but our terms are cash for you Hellenes, especially for all the philosophers of the Hellenes, ever since a certain Thrasymachus, having tasted my wares, as claiming to be a fore-staller (11) in pork, escaped my notice leaving the city.

BUR.—For with you Hellenes it is customary, Socrates, is it not, for deities and heroes to act in this way: since I seem to remember hearing of one Heracles acting so.

SOC.—According to the poet Aristophanes (12), my friend: since I do not believe that heroes act so; as I have told Thrasymachus before now (13). But come, Chaerephon, do you wish that we examine the philosophic and the trading life, that we may know which of the two is the more blessed?

CHAE.—Certainly.

SOC.—Then do you answer for philosophy and the stranger will answer for trade; and I will ask questions. But the Bursar and the woman will be the jury and the interpreters, if the gentleman stumble with his Hellenic. Let us begin, then, where is the natural beginning of such an enquiry. Tell me, O advocate of the trading life, you have a function, have you not?

ALL.—What does the man mean, bursar?

BUR.—You have a work to do.

ALL.—Why did he not say so? The Hellenes love hard words. Of course, I have.

SOC.—To make something, is it not?

ALL.—Sausages.

SOC.—And you, Chaerephon, what do you philosophers make?

CHAE.—Wise and educated young men, Socrates; such as you yourself have made.

SOC.—Good, O most modest pupil! but whatsoever thing is, in actuality, that which it is, must first have been that which it is only potentially; is not that so? Answer, O excellent sausage-seller.

ALL.—ὦ νό γ' Ἀμύων—(14)

BUR.—He is beginning to swear, Socrates, by our gods; but I will answer for him that you speak truly.

SOC.—The sausage in actuality was then at first a potential sausage only?

BUR.—Yes.

SOC.—And by what name was it called, then?

BUR.—It was a pig, or, perhaps, a calf.

SOC.—And you, Chaerephon, before I made you a wise and educated young man, what were you?

CHAE.—A schoolboy, Socrates.

SOC.—Were you then also wise?

CHAE.—Least of all; since I spent my time in eating and in writing love-poems to maidens.

SOC.—Therefore, it seems likely, though I shrink from saying it, O Chaerephon, that you were then, in respect of eating, a sort of human pig.

CHAE.—Perhaps.

SOC.—But in respect of love-poems, a variety calf.

CHAE.—I have not what I may say.

SOC.—So far, then, the raw material of the philosopher and the pork-packer is tolerably the same?

CHAE.—It may be, Socrates. But looking to what do you say this?

SOC.—Never mind. Next, O sweetest sausage-seller, what do you do to your pig when you have received him.

ALL.—We first, Socrates, remove his bristles.

SOC.—By what means?

ALL.—With boiling water, Socrates, and sharp, razor-like knives.

SOC.—But your schoolboy, Chaerephon, when first he leaves his school-master and attends instead at the gymnasia where the philosophers teach, has he bristles?

CHAE.—How should he have bristles Socrates?

SOC.—Upon his cheeks and chin my serious friend.

CHAE.—You seem to mean the first beard; perhaps he has this at least.

SOC.—And perhaps this at least—for the moustache I also leave alone—he now first removes.

CHAE.—Perhaps.

SOC.—Surely not with boiling water and sharp, razor-like knives?

CHAE.—It seems likely.

SOC.—So then here is a second point of contact between the pork-packer's and the philosopher's sty.

CHAE.—I can not deny it, but why do you say this?

SOC.—Never mind. And what do you do next, stranger?

ALL.—We take off the skin of the beast, Socrates; and for the most part we prepare new skins for him.

SOC.—How do you say?

ALL.—I mean the beautiful, many-coloured skins which we see upon the Egyptian sausage and the bright red skin of the Hyperborean sausage, (15) and many others also.

SOC.—And when your young men, Chaerephon, have made smooth their cheeks and throat, do they not also shed their old and dusty skin, like snakes, and assume instead, for the most part, a new clothing of many colours?

CHAE.—I do not know, Socrates.

SOC.—O wonderful Chaerephon, well do men call you "the bat," (16) for you are in very truth like one who sees not; tell me, have you never observed Alcibiades and his friends how they delight clothing themselves in himatia of many colours and in chitons as red as the Hyperborean sausage?

CHAE.—Now that you mention it, I have seen it.

SOC.—Then in heaven's name where is the resemblance between the potential sausage and the potential philosopher about to cease? for it now reaches many furlongs (17). But what is put into this new and brilliant skin, stranger?

ALL.—It is packed and stuffed and crammed, so to speak, with many ingredients, Socrates, till it is ready to burst with its own size; and then it is examined to see if it is what it should be, and is put upon the market.

SOC.—Babai!

CHAE.—What is the matter, Socrates.

SOC.—This is strange news; for I seem, oh Chaerephon, to remember as in a dream some one telling me how the teachers in Athens stuff and pack and—this same word—cram their pupils with all sorts of mental food, till they too are more bursting than ever with their own size and wisdom; and then—so my informant seemed to say—having displayed themselves before examiners they are let loose upon the public.

BUR.—Yes, Socrates, and not only so but just as sometimes in spite of the examination of the sausages, some of them go forth to the world, seeming rather than being, the flesh of pigs, so that, indeed, our citizens having feasted abundantly, are conscious afterwards of having partaken of puppies, so also let Chaerephon now say if in the case of some of these wise and educated young men there is not sometimes the same fraud against the public?

SOC.—You tell my own dream, (18) friend. I have noticed this a thousand times, if I may answer for Chaerephon, who is a little deaf. But what are these many ingredients you speak of, O sausage-seller.

ALL.—First there is a little sweet spice, Socrates.

SOC.—Which is by interpretation, Chaerephon, Hellenic literature.

ALL.—And, there is also a great deal of gristle.

SOC.—Oimoi! what is this? you seem to speak of geometry and the writings of our Euclid? (19).

ALL.—And, last, there is now also in our times at least, when all things have become worse, a quantity of unwholesome wind and air to make the sausage seem larger than itself.

SOC.—Hush! hush! my friend; you surely do not accuse our teachers of youth that they introduce the theory of atoms and the other sciences of nature, as they are called, into the souls of their pupils, to make them more windy and swollen than ever? I almost repent of having followed this argument so far, to such conclusions is it bringing us.

BUR.—Yes, Socrates, and therefore just as one pricks this gentleman's wares with a fork's point before roasting them, so also you are wont, as I have heard, to prick those other windbags with a pointed question, lest they should burst themselves.

SOC.—For I am anxious for their safety.

CHAE.—All this is nothing to Dionysos. (20)

SOC.—Rather, it is everything, O clever Chaerephon; did not this sausage-seller say sausage-selling was better than philosophy?

CHAE.—Yes.

SOC.—But you said no, but the life of the philosopher was far superior to that of the merchant, let alone the sausage-seller.

CHAE.—Yes.