

of wines from the Midi, carpets from Brussels, and such like things—stuff that I can see any day in my own home.” There was a pause. Then, “Continue, O Pindar,” said the tutor.

“Another grievance is that we older Hellenes are swamped by the westerners who take the prizes away from our runners. After all, the whole of the Athenian ἀρχή is very little bigger than the territory of our Lord of Syracuse.”

“Yes, I know from the lists of victors how often the youths of Himera, for instance, conquered in the sprints.”

“They train too hard, making a penance of what should be a pleasure. Look at Croton, and the sort of life they make their athletes live there; at it day and night. And what do they produce after all? People like Milo, who is certainly strong, indeed disproportionately so, who can, so they say, eat a whole roast ox at a sitting, but whom I feel sure no right thinking sculptor would choose for a model. I have never written in praise of Milo.”

“And yet, Pindar, you wrote odes to many a battered-eared boxer. Surely, in them the harmony of soul, if any, was not reflected in a beautiful body?”

“Well, what would you have? I must earn my living like the rest of the world. One cannot always be singing in praise of a Theoxenos.”

“True, sir, we must take what the gods allow.”

“Nowadays, also, many whose speech might pass muster for Hellenic in Thrace, or be understood around the Euxine, but is certainly not up to our Doric standards, are allowed to enter themselves as competitors at the great games.”

“Pindar, what would you say if I were to tell you that at the Olympic games to-day nearly all the prizes are won by βαρβαροφώνοι? There was even an Ethiopian! The Hellenes are in a very small minority among the competitors.”

“Why then call that Olympic which is not even Hellenic?”

“Trickery is even resorted to. For instance, at the Leukon Teichos I saw a runner bored off the track to ensure the victory of a competitor who came from the same country as did the runner who played the unfair trick.”