# Plato and the Times He Lived in

J. W. G. VAN OORDT

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BY

**J. W. G. VAN OORDT**
LIT. HUM. DR.
MEMBER OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE UNIVERSITY-COUNCIL

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# PLATO AND THE TIMES HE LIVED IN.

## § I. INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

For the present state of civilisation of the European race we are mainly indebted to two nations, the Israelites and the Greeks. To call Christianity—the dominant religion among the European race—the outcome of Israelitic, or Jewish thought would be utterly at variance with the convictions of those professing the Christian faith; but its first apostles were Jews, and whatever divine revelation was believed by the Israelites to have been bestowed upon themselves, is incorporated with the sacred books of Christianity. Men of high standing who, in our days, do not believe in Christian revelation, still admit that the maintenance of Christian morality and of the practical effects of the spirit of Christianity is essential to the welfare of human society. Rarely has a higher praise been given to that spirit than by the late M. Taine in a volume published after his death.* As to the Jews, not only are those forming part of European society possessed of an influence on it unrivalled by that of any other section of the community, but it is a remarkable fact that, when in the 18th century a tendency began to prevail to break with the belief in Christian revelation, the best and worthiest representatives of this tendency took a Jew who had lived a century before them, Spinoza, as their guide.

It is hardly necessary to dwell on the fact that the Greeks have not less proved our educators in secular wisdom than

* Le Régime Moderne, vol. II p. 79 &c. and especially pp. 118—119.

their Semitic brethren in matters religious. But while we have the Jews, like the poor, always with us, hardly anything is seen of the Greeks, except in the immortal works of ancient Greece which have reached our times. From these works we know Greece as the great civilising power of the world for many a century, and the Greeks as a nation altogether unrivalled in mental capacity by any other of earlier or later ages. They had, however, to share the fate of all ruling races, and at a time when their influence was about to spread over a larger part of the world than they had ever dreamt of, two facts showed that the day of their decline had come. The one was that of their having to submit to a ruler who, although priding himself on being a genuine son of Greece, was in reality a foreigner. The other was that, with the great philosopher who had been compelled by fate to take charge of the education of the man called to rule the Greeks, the time began when learning and science were to take the place, in Greece, of that spontaneous productivity of the Grecian mind, which was characteristic of it when it was at its best.

The countries conquered by Alexander were mainly destined to become provinces of an Empire founded by a nation which was scarcely known to him and his contemporaries; and while Greek civilisation went hand in hand with Roman institutions in spreading over the Empire, it had lost its vitality and its productive force, the fruits of which, together with the maxims of administration and jurisprudence which were the main productions of the Roman mind, were to become the inheritance of the barbarous nations whose descendants are now ruling the world, until they have to make room for the inferior races whose days, unless the course of things be altered, are coming.

Plato, the subject of this study, has exercised by his philosophy an influence on Christian thought hardly inferior to that of Aristotle, and is not less a genuine Greek of the noblest type than the greatest of his contemporaries and

predecessors. Still even in his works the signs of the times that were coming are not wanting, and it is chiefly with a view to delineate his position as one of the last representatives of a great race bordering on its decline, that I have ventured upon this sketch.

## § II. THE AGE OF THE POETS.

"To children," says Aristophanes, "the schoolmaster makes things clear; to those who have reached manhood the poet." So it was in the days of his youth, and if any country owed its greatness to its poets, it certainly was Greece. When Herodotus tells his readers that they are indebted to Homer and Hesiod for their knowledge of the gods, there is a great deal of truth in what he says, although, for all that, the study of the mythology and the primitive religious ideas of the Greeks is a most important one, and absolutely necessary for a proper understanding of their history. The Greeks of the oldest days worshipped rivers and nymphs, trees, and perhaps snakes, as is usual with primitive nations; they worshipped Zeus and Hera, Athene and Apollo, whether or not in consequence of their acquaintance with Semitic ideas and usages; they looked up to the summit of Mount Olympus as to the abode of the heavenly gods, hidden from them by clouds except during the days when its divine inhabitants had gone to feast with the men of the glowing faces, living in the distant countries where the sun sets and rises. But how could they, without the Homeric poems, have had before their eyes that splendid picture of divine life on Olympus which even in our days enraptures the minds of those who get a glance at it? How could they, without the theogony and the genealogical poems standing in Hesiod's name, have seen the connection between the many existing myths and religious traditions, or that between the gods and their own hereditary rulers?

What the men of our days learn from Homer and Hesiod is the state of society in Greece at a time when it was much akin to that of primitive races, notwithstanding the fact that the existence of a comparatively high state of pre-Homeric civilisation can be, and is being, studied from ancient monuments; and likewise the moral and religious thoughts prevailing in the poets' days. The traditions of tribal life are still paramount in the Iliad and Odyssey, although, in the latter, the state of matters wears a slightly more modern aspect. There are subordinate chiefs and heads of tribes; all are called kings, although the king of the tribe or nation is superior to the other chiefs; and even he, when an expedition like that against Troy is undertaken, has to submit to a king paramount. The king of the tribe is in possession of a domain cut out of the tribal lands. On the shield of Achilles the king is seen holding his sceptre and standing in his domain, where the young men of his tribe, performing their duties towards their chief, assist in cutting corn, and where an ox is killed and prepared for their dinner by the official servants of royalty. *

Now among nations where tribal traditions prevail, there is a strong aristocratic tendency, and there is likewise ancestor-worship. Of this worship, however, although there is ample evidence of its existence in Greece and of its effects on the public mind, very little is found in the Homeric poems. This may be partly accounted for from the effects of historical events—which, however, as all our knowledge of them is based on poetical and popular traditions, it would be difficult to follow—and partly from the national spirit of the Greeks, who, looking up to Olympus as the residence of their Gods, saw in their kings not so much the descendants of the founders

* That ἔριθοι are the young men of the tribe bound to assist the king in the cultivation of his domain, is evident both from the passage referred to and from an expression in the narrative of Nausicaa's dream in the Odyssey. Θῆτες are free men compelled by poverty to work, as overseers or otherwise, on the estates of landed proprietors.

and primitive lawgivers of their tribes, as those on whom Zeus had bestowed the sceptre. The life, too, of kings surrounded by the great men of their tribes is like that of the Olympian gods; the main difference is that the gods were immortal, whereas men were doomed to die.

There is, perhaps, no passage in Homer which both shows more intuitive knowledge, on the part of the poet, of the motives by which man's conduct is governed, and at the same time gives a clearer insight into the relative position of Grecian kings in the Homeric times, than that about the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. Achilles, of course, does his duty in calling, inspired as he was by Hera, the Grecian army together for the purpose of devising measures to avert Apollo's anger, and in asking a soothsayer to assist them; but by pledging himself to protect Calchas, should even Agamemnon be pointed out by him as the cause of the evil, he naturally gives offence to the king paramount, who now insists on his rights as such, and ultimately goes so far as to signify his intention to make Achilles pay for the loss inflicted on him by the soothsayer's announcement. Had not Athene intervened, bloodshed would have followed at once; but even without this the evils caused to the army by the conflict between the bravest of the Grecian chiefs and the king paramount were such as fully to justify Horace's words: "quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi."

What, however, in Horace's eyes, was a moral lesson conveyed by Homer, was for the men in whose days the wrath of Achilles was the subject of the most recent song, the narrative of an event which no one thought strange. It might be an unfortunate accident that the quarrel had arisen, but the fault lay with both parties, and the fact that the army mainly relied, for its defence, on Achilles, counterbalanced Agamemnon's claim to be respected as holder of the sceptre bestowed on him by Zeus. But when Thersites, coming forward as the champion of the rights of the army at large, wants to have his say about the doings of its leader,

and gets for his pains a smart blow from Odysseus, all the Greeks are perfectly satisfied that the latter is right.

In fact, with Homer the masses are nowhere. They are only heard of when a few remarks are exchanged between those filling the ranks, or when, being killed by the leaders of the enemy, they perish as nameless as Hesiod's men of the brazen age. When in the latter part of the Iliad mention is made of steersmen and stewards of vessels being present in the assembly where the reconciliation between Achilles and Agamemnon is to take place, a comparison between this passage and one further on,* where we find the ridiculous story of a divine assembly on Olympus, attended by every river and every nymph, is sufficient to show that a later poet is trying to outdo a former and superior one, and spoils his own work by undue exaggeration. In the Odyssey even the wholesale slaughter of the noblest youths of Ithaca and the neighbouring islands by the king in his palace is represented as an event by no means unnatural. Homeric society is not only essentially aristocratic, but the real heroes of the Homeric poems know as little of restraint when asserting themselves, as the men who, in history, have secured for their individualities the largest and most prominent places; and although the Homeric gods are supporters of the legitimate order of things and protectors of strangers and supplicants, the connection between them and men is not till then seen in the clearest and most gratifying light when, as in Athene's relations with Diomedes and Odysseus, mortals are befriended by gods on account of a similarity of qualities which is only met with in the very highest of the former.

Genealogical poetry like that by Hesiod or other poets of his time, was chiefly intended for those who in the Works and Days are called kings: the men who, at the time when the town or state had been substituted for the tribe as political unit, were sufficiently wealthy to allow their lands to be cultivated by others, and to reside themselves in the towns,

*Compare Il. XIX vs. 42 sqq. with Il. XX vs. 7 sqq.

where they managed all political and judicial matters. But Hesiod himself, as known from his most important poem, did not belong to them, and he bitterly complains of a state of society where venality has taken the place of justice; where instead of the heroes who had fought and perished in the Theban and Trojan wars, an iron race is ruling, to be followed by a still worse one in days of evil unmixed with any good; and where various devices, partly recommended as novelties in our own enlightened 19th century, are resorted to by those least favoured by fortune, in order to eke out an existence and keep clear of the worst evils of life. But Works and Days stands alone, in the days following the Homeric times, in taking this view of life, unless the poem on the various origin of womankind, by Simonides of Amorgos, be considered an echo of it. Better days were in store for the Greeks when, under the auspices of the Delphian god, colonisation was to open up fertile countries all along the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, hitherto inhabited by barbarous nations, but soon to be teeming with a population better fitted for ruling inferior races than any other in the world.

It would be rash, with the data we have or are likely to obtain, to enter upon chronological calculations about the length of time which separates Archilochus, the oldest poet of the colonising age, from the poet of Works and Days; but it will not be denied that a considerably longer period must have elapsed between the former and Aristophanes the comic poet. Still there is a much greater difference between Hesiod's poetry and that of Archilochus, than between the latter and the comedies acted during the Peloponnesian war. Hesiod lives in, and breathes the air of, a world where might has got the better of right, and where not even a prospect of improvement is within view. Archilochus, though railing at those who, with himself, get the worse share of the new things to be had, and not less railing at those implicated in his own personal disappointments, is fully prepared to enjoy life in

spite of grievous losses; and instead of bewailing the departure of justice and reverence from the earth, he on one side relies on the beneficent rule of the gods, and on the other on his own power of stating the evils he has suffered from those who have caused them. On the whole, this brighter view of life is common, though not to all in the same degree, to the great luminaries of the lyric period of Greek poetry, * whether, like Alcman, they apply their art to the requirements of Spartan life; like Sappho they impart to erotic poetry, then in its infancy, at once the very highest character it was to attain in Greece; like Alcaeus they mix up poetry in the political struggles of the day; like Mimnermus and Anacreon they celebrate the joys of life, not without reference to the shortness of the time they are limited to; like Theognis they comment on the political, social and moral phenomena of the time; or like Simonides and Pindar they combine, with a lofty flight of imagination and a wonderful command of the resources of their art, a deep study of the spirit of the times they live in, and of the means of both reproducing the sentiments and interesting the minds of the public they address.

Colonisation of foreign countries tends, in most cases, to develop democratic propensities, and it is impossible to read the fragments of Archilochus' poetry which have reached us, especially after a perusal of Hesiod's Works and Days, without seeing in him the harbinger of democracy. In a newly

*When speaking of the lyric poets of Greece I include Archilochus, for although he is not one in the sense of Pindar or even of Alcman and Alcaeus, his iambic and elegiac poems are marked by a subjectivity and a loftiness of views and language which are characteristic of lyric poetry The latter quality is not met with in Hipponax, the cynical iambic poet of Ephesus and its neighbourhood, nor will it do to include, among the lyric poets, Tyrtaeus, Solon, Xenophanes and, on the whole all such elegists as mainly use their poetical powers for didactic purposes. This, however, is not the case with Mimnermus, whose elegies bear a lyric character, nor even with Theognis, who is too subjective to be classed with Solon and other poets of the same description, although not a few verses included in the poem or poems standing in his name are probably theirs rather than his.

founded colony the traditions brought from the old country are apt to lose their influence; and not the man of the best family or of the highest rank but the one who knows best how to act for himself and for the community is preferred to others. What is noticed in our own days—that the influence of colonial ideas soon makes itself felt in the mother-country—must have been likewise observed in ancient Greece. But on the whole the times were not ripe for democracy, and the oldest democratic movements recorded in Grecian history—such for instance as that in Sicyon in the 7th century—end in the establishment of tyrannic power by their leaders. In not a few cases the rise of tyranny must have proved a boon for communities either oppressed, for many years, by an unprogressive oligarchy, or exhausted by political strife. At Mytilene, much against the wish of Alcaeus, a power akin to that of a tyrant was voluntarily bestowed by the people on Pittacus. Notwithstanding the harshness and cruelty which marked Periander's long reign at Corinth, the fact of his having made his native town the centre of an extensive trade, supported by numerous settlements on the coasts of the Ionic and Aegaean Seas, joined to that of his being counted as one of the seven wise men of Greece, is sufficient evidence that his rule must have been productive of good as well as evil. And does not the flourishing state of lyric poetry during the time when tyranny was rife, plead in favour of a form of government which, though feared and condemned by public opinion, was revived in Grecian states as often as there was no central power to prevent its rise?

Of course, during the struggles which ended in the rise of tyrants, often the worst instincts of humanity came to the surface. Not that there is much in the complaints that nothing was thought worth anything except gold, for these are heard in all ages, and are on a level with those by Hesiod about venality in matters of justice. But when we find, in the poetry of the day, constant references to the power and action of the gods, it is somewhat surprising to meet with utterances

such as in our own days are heard from anarchists and the like, men lost to all sense of the higher aims of life, and to see that Solon, according to his own statement, was blamed by some of his fellow-citizens for not having availed himself of the opportunity offered him by divine power to set up as a tyrant, since even one day of tyranny in so wealthy a town as Athens would be a sufficient compensation for the sufferings which might be the consequence of it. The bright side of the age of lyrics in Greece will always remain in view, though veiled by the melancholy thought that soon old age and the descent to the kingdom of Hades would follow; to deny that there was a dark one is impossible in the face of Solon's evidence.

## § III. LAWGIVERS AND PHILOSOPHERS.

When the Homeric poets celebrated the heroes of the Trojan war, the power of the house of Pelops had made room, in continental Greece, for that of Doric invaders, whose migration has long been considered the land-mark separating the mythical from the historical age of Greece. That rule brought innovations ignored by the oldest poets, but of great importance for the political and social state of Greece. Most important of all was the legislation which enabled that part of the conquerors to whose lot Laconica had fallen, not only to maintain their power for many a century, but also to reduce to virtual slavery the mixed population of Messenia, and to make their influence paramount over a number of confederate states. The laws of Sparta could not have prevailed among a nation deficient in those qualities which enable man to submit, for the good of the community or for any other definite purpose, to very severe restrictions; but the circumstances of the country were such as to render legislation of this character a matter of necessity, and the Spartan law was certainly calculated to give compensation for its extreme

strictness by fostering, especially among the younger members of the ruling community, an ambition by no means limited to matters directly referring to the interests of the state. Without the youthful citizens who did duty as a secret police, it would have been impossible for the Spartan government to keep down the Helots; without an intercourse between the sexes which made approval and praise by the fair sex the reward of the stronger one, it would have been difficult to keep the latter to their duty. Even in those parts of Greece where there was little of the Doric spirit, the Spartan institutions, whether or not they were known and understood in their entirety, did not fail to attract the notice, and command the admiration, of thinking members of the community.

Though not recorded in writing, the Spartan laws, being learned by heart by the Spartan youth, were not on a level with the rules which constituted, in days of old, the unwritten laws of Grecian states. Those rules, which in the most glorious period of Grecian history were thought more binding and more worthy of reverence than any human legislation, were not sufficient, however, to maintain, in times of social and political difficulties, the order and welfare of the state; and Athens, the metropolis of the Ionic race, had recourse to written legislation in the times of Draco and of Solon. When the latter was intrusted with the settlement of disputes of the worst description between rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed, he acted as a true patriot, not abstaining, where circumstances required it, from taking measures which he himself, on account of their revolutionary nature, prohibited for the future,* but taking a middle course between parties,

* The oath taken by the members of the court of law called heliaea cannot, in the form in which it has reached us, date from Solon's time; but that part of it by which the heliasts bound themselves not to vote either for such interference with landed property as, in our days, is often called agrarian law, or for a general cancelling of debts, must be as old as Solon, since in his days, and not afterwards, the matters referred to in it were burning questions.

with a view to relieve the people from the worst evils they suffered from, and at the same time make them follow the higher classes as their natural leaders. Of course he met with only a very partial success, and after a series of party struggles which extended over nearly one third of a century, he saw, in his old age, a tyranny established which lasted, with some interruptions, about half a century, and which, although his laws nominally and in many respects really remained in force, put a period to a self-government which the Athenians of those days were by no means fit for.

Legislation, in Solon's time, was not the only subject which drew the attention of the Grecian mind after the widening of its horizon by a long period of territorial expansion. Colonisation made the Greeks better acquainted with the old civilisation of Egypt and Asia than they were when, as in Homer's days, commerce was mostly in the hands of Phoenician traders; and had the effect of this not been generally felt, the tradition could not have arisen that, at the time when Solon lived, Greece could boast of seven wise men, who marked the walls of the temple at Delphi with the results of their collective wisdom. Among the seven was Thales of Miletus, the father of Greek philosophy. In the religious ideas of the ancient Greeks a creator of the world had no place; when in Hesiod's Theogony the genealogy of the gods is sketched, the empty space which first came into existence is filled by the earth and by love as the generating power, and after them, as descendants either of the empty space or of the earth, come those generations of divine beings of whom the occupants of Olympus are the last. Thales, starting from the idea that the visible world had obtained its present form by a general development from one original element, and thus arriving at a quasi-scientific system of cosmogony, was followed by not a few others who, though there was much difference between the results brought by their inquiries and speculations, were afterwards considered to form together a first philosophical school.

Thales undoubtedly availed himself of discoveries made by the foreign nations the Greeks had come into contact with; but he cannot be considered as having reproduced foreign ideas and speculations, nor had his philosophy anything in common with such legislative work as Solon and perhaps others of the seven had to deal with. The next generation, however, to that of the seven saw also direct attempts at propagating foreign doctrines in Greece by means of societies, more or less secret and partly of a religious, partly of a philosophical character. A religious society was that which derived its name from Orpheus, alleged to have been a poet in the mythical age, although his name is not mentioned by any one before the 6th century. It was considered by Herodotus to be of Egyptian origin, and this is sufficient evidence that there must have been some peculiarities in the ways and habits of the sect which reminded him of Egypt; but the information we have about its religious creed—that Dionysus, destined by his father Zeus to be the future ruler of the world, had been devoured by the Titans, who were killed by Zeus in punishment for their crime, and that from their ashes man had sprung—does not point to an Egyptian origin, containing as it does an attempt to explain the origin of sin in a manner bearing neither an Egyptian nor a Grecian character. Such attempts, however, are generally caused by a longing for purity which is the mother of asceticism, and closely connected with a desire for, and belief in, continued existence after death. That such a desire did exist in Greece is evident from the mysteries of Eleusis, which were thought to secure happiness in the kingdom of Hades, and which were older than the Orphic sect and probably of Egyptian origin.*

* The main argument for the comparative antiquity of the Eleusinian mysteries is the fact that the Homeric hymn in honour of Demeter, where they are mentioned, evidently dates from a time when Eleusis did not yet resort under Athens, and that it will not do to assume that this was not the case in Solon's days, Grote's argument in favour of

Of greater importance is the philosophical sect founded by Pythagoras. Having obtained such knowledge of mathematics as was to be got in Egypt and, perhaps, in other foreign countries, Pythagoras made an attempt to find an explanation of the cosmic system in the doctrine of numbers and geometrical forms, passing from geometrical to tangible bodies; nor did he, taking the harmony which he found in music as well as in numbers as prevailing, or bound to be realised, in the whole of the world, fail to apply the same principle to matters moral and social. A strict rule of life, in some respects akin to asceticism and also pointing to Egyptian reminiscences, was to be observed by those who joined his sect. His belief in metempsychosis and immortality of souls, in regard to the former of which he is said to have laid claim to special powers of remembrance granted to him in a former period of existence, was so well known to the public at large that in the days of Herodotus the popular belief of a nation near the Danube in life after death was ascribed, in Greece, to the influence of an alleged former slave of Pythagoras; but on the whole strict secrecy was enjoined to his followers, who for many years held together in the Greek towns of southern Italy as a community possessed, at times, of considerable political influence.

Pythagoras, among Greek philosophers, was the first to assume the character of a moralist in the usual sense of the word, nor is it strange that this distinction should have fallen to the lot of one more influenced by ideas borrowed from

the latter view having proved fallacious. Arguments for the Egyptian origin of the mysteries are the scenes enacted, by those attending the ceremonies, at the bridge over the Cephisus—which are akin to what Herodotus tells about an Egyptian festival, although, of course, the women of Attica will probably have shown more modesty than their Egyptian sisters—and, in connection with them, the well-known story of Baubo, which, however, may have been an Orphic invention to explain these scenes, Onomacritus, the reputed author of the oldest Orphic poems, having spent part of his life at Athens in the latter half of the 6th century.

foreign nations than by those of Grecian origin. Neither he, however, nor Thales and his successors thought fit to attack the religious traditions of the Greeks. The first to venture upon this was Xenophanes of Colophon, the reputed founder of the Eleatic school, who strongly condemned the anthropomorphism prevailing in Homer's theology, as both irrational and immoral. Nor was this strange in a philosopher influenced both by the moral doctrines of Pythagoras and by the cosmical speculations common to all the oldest philosophers of Greece. Still the feeling of the Greeks that the divine beings worshipped by man must be akin to him and differ from him solely by their being superior to him in power, beauty and happiness and above all, by their being immortal, whereas he is not, shows a much keener and higher appreciation of the religious wants of the human race, than the philosophical pantheism which induced Xenophanes to represent the deity as having a spherical shape.

With the rise of philosophy and of religious sects in Greece is connected that of certain religious ideas which would appear to have originated and spread in the century which saw the seven wise men. One is that of the expiation of crimes through penalties either suffered by the perpetrator's descendants, or by himself in a new appearance of his soul on earth. This belief, of which hardly any traces or rather forerunners are met with in Greek poetry before Pindar and Aeschylus, * would appear to have partly originated with stories connected with oracles, of which some have been preserved by Herodotus, and partly with the Orphic sect and other such bodies, which professed to supply remedies for the evils referred

* The hearing of curses by the Erinyes in the case of Phoenix, who remained childless in consequence of them (Il. IX 451 sqq.), a reference in Hesiod's Works and Days (282 sqq.) to the fate of perjurors, and, perhaps, the penalty inflicted, according to Stesichorus, by Aphrodite on Tyndareos, who had neglected to sacrifice to her, and whose daughters, for this reason, were made to lead disreputable lives after marriage, are the only instances I remember.

to. The other is the belief in a supposed disposition of the divine rulers of the world (τὸ θεῖον) not to allow any human being to enjoy too large a share of happiness; a belief intensely Greek, since it was simply a new development of the old contrast between happy gods and wretched mortals, and likely to spread and become more accentuated in an age of tyranny, when the ups and downs of life were more frequently exemplified than at any other period. In Plato's works and in what is left in records about Socrates the latter belief, known from Herodotus, has made room for other ideas. The former, well known from tragedy and showing a more serious view of life and morality than the longing for tyrannical power common at Athens in Solon's days, had not lost his influence on the minds when Plato wrote his dialogues.

## § IV. THE TRAGEDY OF GRECIAN HISTORY.

More than eighty years after Solon had finished his work as lawgiver for Athens, the tyranny of which he had witnessed the beginning was put a period to with the assistance of Sparta, which had then already uprooted tyrannical power in many a state, substituting for it oligarchical governments bound by laws and dependent, for the maintenance of their powers, on Spartan aid. Athens would also have become a Spartan dependency, had not Clisthenes, one of the leading adversaries of tyrannic rule, raised the banner of democracy, and not only compelled the Lacedaemonians to abstain from further interference with the affairs of Athens, but also introduced such changes in the Solonian constitution and the old traditions it had left unaltered, as would prevent a renewal of tyranny and set aside whatever gave to the few an undue preponderance over the many. The reforms of Clisthenes, who himself belonged to one of the oldest and noblest families of Athens, were accepted, it would appear, in a conciliatory and patriotic spirit by the higher as well as the lower classes;

and not only is the success gained shortly afterwards by the Athenians over neighbouring states quoted by Herodotus as evidence of the beneficial effects of liberty and equality before the law, but also the victory at Marathon, where the Athenians fought under the command of a man who himself had held the position of a tyrant in a wealthy country, clearly shows the wonderful success of the policy inaugurated by Clisthenes.

After Marathon came the expedition of Xerxes, came Salamis and Plataeae, came the offensive operations carried on by the Greeks, first under Sparta's leadership and afterwards under that of Athens, against the Persian Empire. Nothing, in the whole of history, equals the brilliancy of that period of Athenian supremacy which begins at the formation of the Delian league by Aristides, and ends with the defeat of the Athenians in Sicily, and no other period is so intensely tragical. Tragical because the fall of Athens was not caused by that decline which sets in whenever a pinnacle of success and glory is reached, but by the sudden effect of a tendency inseparable from the course which had led Athens to occupy the high position she held for many years.

To understand the character of Athenian democracy it should be remembered that notwithstanding the existence of manufacturing industry in Attica, its pottery being exported far and wide, and of a considerable amount of commerce with foreign countries, Attica was, in the days of Clisthenes, essentially an agricultural country, even the division of the people into classes for taxing purposes being based on the quantity of agricultural produce which a citizen could grow on his landed property. Closely connected with this fact is that the first advantage obtained, in consequence of a successful war, by the Athenians after the establishment of democracy by Clisthenes, was the occupation of a splendid tract of country, on a neighbouring island, by Athenian settlers. Slavery existed at Athens as elsewhere in Greece, and strangers,

settled in the country for trading and other purposes, had no political and only limited civil rights, so that even democracy did not do away to the same extent as in our days, with the difference between man and man. At Marathon the conquerors of the Persian army must have been mainly men accustomed to handling the plough and ordering about their farm-labourers, and everywhere in Greece there was a feeling that those who fought their country's battles were entitled to a share in its government.

Now at Salamis the victory over the Persian fleet was gained by the rowers employed in the galleys as well as by the men who fought on deck, and the more evident it became that in a country like Greece real power was mainly to be had by means of naval supremacy, the more it was felt that the men who served as rowers, whether free or slaves, were the real support of Athens as a ruling state.* During the first years after Salamis the council of the Areopagus, the most conservative and least democratic public body of the state, had according to Aristotle the principal share in the general conduct of affairs, owing to their having taken, as in Rome the senate after the battle of Cannae, the right steps at the moment of the greatest danger for the state to defend it against a powerful enemy. Men of remarkable ability, both as generals and as statesmen, were not wanting. The scanty information we have about them renders it very difficult in our days to form a definite idea of what they were and did for their country; but when a historian like Thucydides goes out of his way to present his reader with a sketch of Themistocles as the most gifted man of Athens, modern writers on Grecian history are fully justified in putting together the various scraps they find about him and his rivals Aristides and Cimon, so as to give an idea of what the points at issue between them may or must have been. For the purpose of this essay it is unnecessary to follow

*See the passage in Aristophanes' Knights, where old Demos is offered a rug to sit on *ἵνα μὴ τρίβῃς τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι.*

them, and the main facts of the history of the first twenty years after Plataeae—that Sparta had to leave the conduct of the Persian war to Athens, which in consequence of this became the head of a league of island- and coast-states, and that, after Themistocles had been removed from active politics, the rivalry between Athens and Sparta led to open warfare—are generally known.

It is also known that when hostilities had actually commenced, but when Sparta was not yet openly engaged in war with Athens, Ephialtes and Pericles, who continued the policy of Themistocles as Cimon that of Aristides, succeeded in depriving the Areopagus of its political power, and that, at a time when a Lacedaemonian army was encamped in Boeotia on the Attic frontier, ready for an invasion of Attica if it could be attempted with a prospect of success, such a prospect offered itself by an invitation of the Athenian malcontents to assist them in bringing about a change of policy. Pericles saw the necessity of marching at once against the hostile army, so as to nip in the bud any attempt at making use of its presence on the border for revolutionary purposes; and although the Athenians were defeated at Tanagra, its leader fully attained his object.

What was the reason why the opponents of the ruling party did not scruple to make common cause with the enemy? They wanted, says Thucydides, to get rid of democracy and of the building of the long walls, which were to connect Athens with the sea, and so to render the town impregnable as long as the Athenians retained their naval supremacy, a blockade being, in those days, the only effectual means of besieging and reducing a town. The full meaning of this statement by Thucydides, which Grote has understood to some extent, has been lost sight of by later historians. *

* This misconception, for such it is, is partly owing to a statement by Plutarch that Cimon, who in the day of Tanagra was an exile in consequence of the ostracism inflicted on him by his political opponents, had before that time taken preparatory measures for building the long

The struggle between the conservative and democratic parties, which in itself cannot have been very fierce, since even conservatives had to admit, as in our own days, that the demands of the democratic party could not be disregarded, had assumed a much more dangerous character than before by becoming one between the country party and the townspeople. A large influx of population into the town had taken place since Athens had become a naval power, and although certain features of democracy, unpleasant to the better classes, must have become more pronounced on account of this, it does not appear that this was objected to. But how could the "landed gentry" of Attica view otherwise than with dismay a policy which was sure to lead to what was actually witnessed less than thirty years afterwards: a defence of Athens against a foreign invader which would

walls. But Cimon, renowned though he was for his military talent, his magnanimity and his sincere patriotism, was not considered to be a far-sighted statesman, and the danger connected with the plan may not have been felt by him and his partisans before the work was actually taken in hand. Besides it has not been noticed by the writers who make light of what Thucydides says about the long walls, that the Eumenides of Aeschylus, where allusions are made to the Areopagus clearly showing the poet's disapproval of the policy followed in regard to it, leave hardly any doubt that the point at issue between the parties mainly referred to the question of defence. Athena, in opening the first sitting of the new tribunal established by her, is made to tell the people of Athens that, by duly honouring it, they will have "a defence of the country and a safety for the town such as no man has", and that the council is to be "an ever watchful defensive force". The recently discovered work of Aristotle or one of his followers on the Athenian Republic gives better evidence than we had before of the probability that the measure taken, on the advice of Ephialtes and Pericles, against the Areopagus is anterior to the Eumenides, but this does not disprove that one of the principal reasons why the democratic leaders wanted to curtail the power of the council, must have been that they knew that the building of the long walls would be opposed by it; and it appears from a passage in Aeschines that in his days, when the Areopagus had recovered part of its old authority, it was intrusted with special power in regard to the sacred soil of Athens.

allow the soil of Attica, with its splendid plantations and its valuable buildings, to be devastated without a hand being raised in its defence? Better come to terms with Sparta and abandon all attempts at being the leading power of Greece, than submit to so dire an evil!

Pericles could not fail to see the danger of disunion which threatened Athens. There were reasons for not allowing Spartan influence to prevail in Boeotia and other parts of middle Greece, as it was sure to prevail since the expedition which ended in the battle of Tanagra; but to combine, with the naval supremacy of Athens, a power over inland states was a most dangerous policy, since it would saddle the country with too extensive and heavy responsibilities. By taking such a course, however, Pericles would avert, for a number of years, all danger of an invasion of Attica, and thus momentarily pacify the opponents of the long walls' policy; and this must have been his reason for resorting to it. Boeotia and the adjoining countries became temporarily as dependent on Athens as many a state in Peloponnesus was on Sparta, and Pericles did not fail to take advantage of the naval resources of Athens for the purpose of strengthening her position in Greece by occupying several points on the Peloponnesian coasts. But after a few years, during a truce made with Sparta in order to allow Athens to recover her position in the Eastern seas, Athenian power in Boeotia came to grief, and it was a great boon for Athens that in 446 an invasion of Attica by a Spartan army, combined with other dangers, was prevented, and that the next year a thirty years' truce was arrived at by means of concessions which deprived Athens of material advantages she had gained during the war.

Still the position of Athens was, at that time, really better than it had been in days when her arms and her foreign policy appeared to meet with most brilliant success. She had consolidated her naval supremacy by obtaining a more effectual control over the financial resources of the league

she presided over, and had reduced most of her allies to the condition of subjects. She was formally recognized, by Sparta and her allies, as the head of a league, as Sparta herself was. She had settled her position on the coasts of the Persian Empire in a satisfactory manner. But the greatest advantage gained for Athens by Pericles was that, when in 431 the Peloponnesian war broke out, it was found that there was no longer any serious opposition to the plan of defence which formerly had caused the country party to resort to treasonable negotiations. And how had Pericles—for he was, says Thucydides, virtually a monarch in what was called a democracy—attained this end? By a policy tending to make it felt by every citizen of Athens that it was his own personal interest to do everything in his power for the maintenance of the naval supremacy of his native country. To that supremacy he was indebted, not only for the outward splendour of Athens, which inspired him with just pride, and for the many advantages of town life as it then existed at Athens, but also for the facility he enjoyed of obtaining either a livelihood by serving the state, or actual wealth by means of commerce or manufacturing industry, by dealing with the dependent states or their citizens, or by getting his share of that large amount of landed property which had been allotted, or might be allotted, in dependent territories to men of Athens. Democracy brought its evils, which are described in forcible language in a short essay on the Athenian Republic, standing in Xenophon's name but probably dating from an earlier time than his, all historical allusions in it being anterior to the Peloponnesian war of 431.* But democracy, even when coupled with the compulsory

* The removal of the Athenian country people to the town is mentioned, but in such terms that it need not be taken for granted that it had actually taken place; and if it had, it is difficult to understand why the pestilence which followed it should not have been touched upon. Cannot the essay be an early production of Antiphon's pen? It tallies very much with what we know about him from Thucydides and other sources.

town life the Athenians had to put up with after the outbreak of the war, was not unbearable for Athenians who did not believe in giving political and legislative powers to shoemakers and fullers, carpenters and hucksters, but who were fully aware of the opportunities they had of improving their own positions as citizens of a state ruling over a host of dependent ones, and owing its power over them to a policy which could not help being democratic.

Whatever Themistocles and Aristides, Cimon and Ephialtes may have done for Athens, there is no doubt that Pericles ranks first among Athenian statesmen, not as regards large political views and conceptions—for in this respect Themistocles may have been superior to him—but as far as a clear understanding of what he aimed at, and a persistency which enabled him to gain his object, are concerned. Democracy was, in his day, a necessity for Athens, and he succeeded in imparting to democratic Athens an amount of strength which rendered it equal to the task of withstanding the attacks of the united forces of the most renowned states of Greece, even at a time when his death had left the management of affairs to men in every respect his inferiors, and often led by the people instead of leading them.

A state wielding a power like that of Athens is sure to decline when it is not progressing, and there is no lack of evidence that Pericles was aware of this and knew that Athens was bound to extend her rule. But to lead Athens onward a man equal to Pericles was required, and neither Nicias whose great object was to be considered a safe general and statesman, Demosthenes who aimed at renewing the policy followed after Tanagra, nor Cleon who was no general at all, and who owed his power to his ability as a demagogue, his success on one particular occasion, and his measures to provide for the wants of the people, * were up

* Aristophanes, in his Clouds (spring of 423), mentions Cleon's first election as a general, which, judging by a reference to an eclipse of the sun mentioned by Thucydides, must have taken place in the spring or the

to the mark. Not inferior, perhaps superior in energy and talent to Pericles was his youthful relative Alcibiades, who began to make his influence felt at a time when prospects opened for a new agreement with Sparta. Though thwarted in his first attempts at striking out a policy of his own, and only partially successful in renewing one which in former days had led to good results, he soon became the leading statesman of Athens. But Pericles had owed part of his influence to the well-known fact that he carefully abstained from making personal profit by his position in the state, whereas Alcibiades displayed a luxury in his private and public life which clearly showed that he took another course, and did not even lay claim to an unselfishness which, it must be admitted, was certainly not characteristic of the age he lived in.

The naval supremacy of Athens in the eastern waters of the Mediterranean was so well known and inspired such respect that the great naval power of the West, Carthage, thought it the safest plan to keep aloof from the Grecian settlements in Sicily. It was known, however, that the more powerful of those settlements were more in sympathy with Sparta than with Athens, and Pericles, for this reason, had never lost

beginning of summer of 424. Nothing is known of his doings in 424, but shortly after the Clouds was acted, the war between Athens and Sparta was interrupted by a one year's truce. In his Wasps (spring of 422) the poet mentions Cleon as having made, through his good luck, a splendid stroke of business for the state, and in the same play reference is made to measures taken in regard to Euboea for the benefit of the Athenian people. In a scholion on this passage an expedition to Euboea is mentioned on the authority of Philochorus, who places it in the Attic year (midsummer 424 to midsummer 423) when the truce was made; and as Euboea was under Athenian rule, the truce did not prevent its being occupied by an Athenian force. This expedition, not mentioned by Thucydides—who also on other occasions makes no reference to events not directly connected with the war—must have aimed at, and ended in, giving further allotments of land on the island to Athenian citizens; and if Cleon, which is very probable, was in command of the Athenian forces, he must have been considered, in 422, as having bestowed a substantial benefit on the people. Measures of this description are those I refer to.

sight of the possibility that it would become necessary to bring them under Athenian rule. Alcibiades, at a time when a truce between Athens and Sparta was in existence but did not prevent both powers from injuring each other as much as they could without openly infringing the treaty, was induced by what he knew of the condition of affairs in Sicily, to believe that the time had arrived for extending Athenian power over all the Grecian states of the West; and it would appear that he intended to make such use of the new resources which would, in this manner, accrue to Athens, as to secure for her an undoubted preponderance over Sparta. When Alcibiades laid his plan before the people of Athens, it was not only approved of, but a very large force was placed at the disposal of the commanders of the expedition, and of these commanders Alcibiades was the one whose military and political ability was most relied upon by those who, as soldiers or sailors, had to embark on the fleet.

It was then that a sacrilege, committed at the very time when the fleet was to lift its anchors, caused consternation all over Athens; and Alcibiades was implicated in a charge connected with it. He insisted on being brought up at once for trial, but his enemies, being aware that moral pressure exercised in his behalf by the men of the expedition might lead to a verdict in his favour, came to the front with reasons why he had better go, and go he did, though fully aware of the object they had in view. He was recalled, from Sicily, at a moment when he had met already with no small success; and knowing as he did that his recall meant certain death for him, he left the vessel which was to take him to Athens, and went to Sparta, where he assisted with all his might in bringing about measures which resulted in an unparalleled disaster for Athens.

Here we have reached the catastrophe of the tragedy. To judge Alcibiades fairly it must be remembered that he had not, like Pericles and the men who came before him, brought about or strengthened Athenian democracy. He found it

existing, he had to deal with it like other statesmen of his time, and he succeeded in gaining the confidence of the people in his ability. The people, as such, did not forsake or betray him, but his political enemies, men who evidently did not hold views different, in principle, from his—for his policy was not abandoned after his recall—simply wanted to get rid of him because they were aware of his superiority to themselves. Rumours were spread that tyrannical power was his object, and that this was behind the sacrilege imputed to him; and by this means the people who had remained at home were induced to recall him. That his position, had he met with the success in Sicily he counted upon, might have become similar to that of a tyrant is quite possible, since Thucydides represents him as speaking, at Sparta, of warlike barbarians from the West whom he would have enlisted in the service of Athens for the conquest of Peloponnesus, and the command of an army of barbarous mercenaries might have served him as a stepping-stone for ascending to a position which would have made him both the ruler and the enemy of his fellow-citizens. But there is no evidence whatever that he had such an object in view; on the contrary, the course he took as soon as he was informed of his recall shows that he must have acted from a strong sense of the grievous injustice inflicted on him. There *is* evidence that his enemies, unknown demagogues, betrayed their country when its highest interests were at stake, by depriving it of the only man who was able to safeguard those interests.* Athens owed her greatness to those men of real superiority who had been her leaders, and had felt that democracy was an absolute necessity for her development. Her fall was caused, not by a democracy which had shown, in the days of Pericles and his predecessors, that it could appreciate real greatness, but by her hangers-on: by Thersites the demagogue who, otherwise than in the Iliad, got

* See especially Thuc. VI 28 and 29, compared with the same book C. 15.

the better of Achilles and of that real superiority which men of his stamp—and they are many—always detest.

It is unnecessary, for the purpose of this essay, to enter upon a review of what happened after the defeat of the Athenians in Sicily;—of the success the Carthaginians met with in conquering part of Sicily, and the consequent establishment of tyranny in those Grecian states on the island which were not conquered by a foreign foe; of the various tribulations which Sparta and Athens had to pass through during the last years of the war; or of the events which made the Persian king a most important factor in Grecian politics, until the tide turned and both Persia and Greece had to submit to a new power. To understand Plato some insight is required into that period of history which he chiefly refers to in his dialogues, and of which, in the days of his youth, he saw the end. Of events contemporaneous with the days when he wrote, those who study his works are hardly ever reminded.

## § V. SOCRATES.

ATHENS, in the days of Pericles, had become both democratic and wealthy, and both wealth and democracy made it a favourite resort with those who made money by their brains. It was not, perhaps, the proper place for philosophers. Anaxagoras, last among the successors of Thales, made mind, not matter or anything connected with it, the ruling principle of the universe, and was therefore, to use the language of the present day, more of a spiritualist than of a materialist, although, in giving his views on the action of nature, he mostly dwelt on the physical forces which fell under his observation. But the fact of his holding views not at all akin to atheism did not prevent his statement that the sun was a glowing mass of matter being so resented by the Athenians, as utterly at variance with their religious senti-

ments, that his friendship with Pericles was barely sufficient to save his life. Nor are instances wanting that even in much later times, such as that of Stilpo, the Megarean philosopher of the early days of Macedonian rule, philosophers were easily suspected at Athens of holding irreligious views, and that, this being the case, they were at once made to leave. The sophists, however, men who made a practical use of the studies which philosophy had given rise to, met on the whole with a better reception.

The idea of study, in the usual sense of the word, is foreign to nations which have not either reached a comparatively high stage of development, or taken it over from those that have. Nestor and Menestheus were, in Homer's time, famous for their tactics; the sons of Aesculapius for their medical skill; Menelaus had in his service the cleverest navigator of Greece. But centuries had to elapse before either tactics, medicine or navigation was studied and taught in the sense now attached to these words. There were medical guilds as there were those of Homeric rhapsodists and of soothsayers; guilds whose origin was probably due to family traditions. It is not unlikely that the medical guilds were the first to substitute something like rational study of medicine for a mere communication of empirical knowledge by older generations to younger ones, especially after the age of philosophy had commenced. But when, in the days of the Peloponnesian war, a sophist, in other words a teacher of the higher branches of knowledge, set up as a professor of military art, and was found to teach simply tactics, or the art of directing military manœuvres as they were then practised, this was, it would appear, a novelty, since nobody, till then, had thought of giving lessons in tactics. So it was with arithmetic and geometry, with astronomy and geography. The study of philosophy had thrown light over these subjects and made their study popular, and the sophists made a living by giving instruction in them. But then it was customary, for lads who had first learnt reading and writing, and after-

wards been trained to sing and play the cithern, and to strengthen their bodies by gymnastics, also to be made acquainted with poetry, old and new; and closely related to the latter study was that of reasoning and speaking to the point. Such a study could not be otherwise than popular with the rising generation in a town where it was naturally felt that success in politics and, in many cases, success in life were greatly dependent on acquaintance with the art of properly addressing the people; and although the first written treatises on this art came from Sicily, those who professed to teach it were sure to find an excellent market for their mental merchandise at Athens. So there is nothing strange in the fact that Aristophanes the comic poet, when shortly after the death of Pericles he first tried his hand at writing a piece for the stage, took as his subject the difference in language and manners between a youth trained in the modest fashion of the good days of old, and one at home in the novel ways of speaking and behaving which had gained ground in the circles young Alcibiades belonged to.

Now the sophists taught for money, and why not do so in a country where, as Pericles is made to say by Thucydides, it was no disgrace to be poor, but it was held to be disgraceful not to get rid of poverty by exertion? This view, however, was both new and democratic. At Athens it was considered genteel to belong to the landed gentry, and not genteel to be a man of business. An Athenian who invested his money in a tannery or a lamp-manufactory, worked by his slaves under their foreman, was sneered at as the leather-seller or the lampman; but such investments were nevertheless very common, and evidently paid well. To be a sophist was not genteel either, though not a few sophists were highly considered; but even they—Protagoras and Prodicus, Hippias and Gorgias,—made no secret of their imparting their wisdom to no one who did not pay the customary price for it.

There was, however, one man at Athens, not a foreigner

but a citizen born, not a man of rank or of wealth but not compelled either by poverty to gain a livelihood by continuous manual labour, who was seen the whole day and everywhere discussing serious subjects with men of all classes and all ages, without claiming any payment for the benefit derived from his conversation,* and who was evidently made much of even by young men of the highest distinction and the best prospects, such as Alcibiades and Critias. This man was Socrates, Plato's teacher and the father of that philosophy which has produced the highest results. With features reminding his fellow-citizens of a Satyr or a Silenus, walking barefooted with a goose's gait and rolling eyes, wrapped up in an old and threadbare cloak, Socrates was certainly not the man to make, by his outward appearance, a pleasing impression on a public known for its high appreciation of physical beauty and elegance of bearing; and still his personal influence on young Athens was seen to eclipse that of the most renowned sophists.

Sources of information about Socrates are not wanting. Aristophanes made him the subject of one of his best comedies, the Clouds. Xenophon, one of his most faithful followers, has written lengthy accounts of his sayings and doings. Plato has made him, in nearly all his dialogues, the mouthpiece of the ideas which he himself thought to contain the highest truths, and has thus professed to be his humble scholar, instead of coming to the front as an original thinker. But there is a great difference between Xenophon's Socrates and that of Plato, and that of Aristophanes is not even a caricature but, in every sense of the word, a misrepresentation.

* There were friends of Socrates, such as Crito, who intrusted him with a kind of supervision over their sons when nearly grown up (Xen. Symp. c. 4, Plato Euthyd. 306 D, Lach. 200 D), and, of course, their presents must have enabled him to provide for the very few wants he had, and to enjoy a leisure which would not have fallen to his lot, had he been obliged regularly to work at his original trade, that of a sculptor.

Still for the study of Socrates and his time the Clouds gives information of the highest importance.

Aristophanes shows himself, from the very beginning, to be a staunch conservative, longing for the happy rural life enjoyed before the war and, as it has been pointed out already, contrasting in his earliest comedy the results of such a life with those of the education given to the young men in town. A similar tendency is met with in the first of those plays of his which have been preserved in their entirety; but here another peculiarity of his has to be noticed. Hating war he takes a most deserving general of those days—and it must be admitted that even the name he bore, Lamachus, was a temptation for the poet to do so—as a model of a perfect swashbuckler, thinking of nothing but war except when his fellow-generals order him out just as he is about to enjoy a festival; and even in his later plays Lamachus has to act the same part, until after his death on the battle-field the poet makes amends by mentioning him as a real hero. In his next play, the Knights, Aristophanes goes against Cleon the demagogue. Him he attacks, not as the representation of a class or a political tendency, but as the leading statesman of the day; and the favour in which Cleon was held by the people did not prevent the full success of the comedy. But the Cleon of the Knights, the leather-seller who would have held his own in consequence of his impudence, his mean flattery of the people and his intense vulgarity, had it not been for the sausage-vendor who surpassed even him in all this, is nothing but a caricature, most excellently drawn but proved to be one by a later play, where Cleon is represented as moving in good society.

The Knights was followed in 423 by the Clouds, which met with a most unfavourable reception on the part of the public. The poet, who put a very high value on this particular comedy, and was quite right in doing so, brought it afterwards again on the stage, probably in 420, but with no better success. In the form it has survived in it is a

mixture of the first and second editions, part of it belonging undoubtedly to the latter, whereas another part cannot have been reproduced in it.* Still, on the whole, it can hardly be pointed out, with any degree of certainty, which parts of the play we have must have belonged to the first and which to the second edition; and on the whole the Clouds makes the impression of having been written after one definite plan, both well-devised and consistently carried out.

When Aristophanes attacked Cleon, it was on account of his being the leader of the war-party at a moment when peace might be made, and of his favouring war not on grounds similar to those on which Brasidas shortly afterwards did so at Sparta, whose forces, under his command, gained one advantage after another, but on less justifiable ones. Cleon would not consent to peace unless on conditions which Sparta could not possibly agree to, although no less a man than Alcibiades thought it quite feasible, in those days, to come to terms; and whether or not his motives were as selfish and base as Aristophanes represents them to be, he certainly, as is shown by the military events of 424, had not prepared a plan of action which would have compelled Sparta to submit to any terms.

Now even the war, especially at a time when the discomfiture of the Lacedaemonians at Pylos had put a period to the annual devastation of Attica by the enemy, was not, in the eyes of Aristophanes, so unmitigated an evil for his

* The passage from the first edition is that which represents Cleon as alive and holding the office of general. The other passage is that where not only is mention made of a play by Eupolis, which is stated to have been brought on the stage in 421, but also Cleon referred to in terms showing that he was no longer among the living; for how could the poet have boasted that, having hit so great a man as Cleon under the belt, he had not thought it proper to kick him when he was down, had Cleon been alive and, as he remained until his death, the most powerful man of Athens? The reference to Eupolis makes it probable that not more than a year after his comedy was acted, the Clouds was brought up for the second time.

country as the new-fangled ideas which gained ground among the rising generation. Instead of keeping to the faith, the habits and modes of thought and the unwritten laws of their fathers, the men who were soon to hold the reins of government indulged, under the influence of sophists and others, in fanciful speculations which destroyed their belief in divine power; they substituted gross materialism for the moral sentiments which formerly prevailed; and they made light of law and justice as mere figments. So matters represented themselves to the poet, and is there anything strange in this? In our days enormous progress has been made in the investigation of the laws of nature, and even religiously minded people need not see in a plague of drought or locusts a chastisement from heaven they have in all humility to submit to, instead of doing everything in their power to cope with the evil; but would a state of society in which no one saw the hand of God in anything happening, be a desirable one? To this question a negative answer will be given from many sides even in our own days; and still, is not the present religious belief of mankind based on much firmer grounds than that of Greece in the days of Aristophanes, when there was neither an infallible church nor an infallible collection of sacred books to be referred to, and when nothing was known about the gods except from poetry or from local tradition? From a conservative point of view—and what would become of human society without the conservative element?—Aristophanes was fully justified in attacking the tendencies which he thought subversive of moral and social order.

In doing so—and this is the great merit of the Clouds,—he did not go against either the particular tenets of one school of thought, or various mutually unconnected errors he found fault with, but he studied all the moral phenomena of his days, put all of them together, and represented them in such a manner as to render it evident that they really were parts of one system and had one common origin. First

come the scientific studies of the day, comprising the questions—which in our times, too, would be studied if they had not been answered long ago—how great is the distance, taking its own feet as measure, which a flea can jump, and what is the cause of the humming of mosquitoes, as well as geometry and astronomy. Then we meet with abstract thought, assisted by its mixture with the air whose substance is one with the human mind; nor are grammatical and metrical questions forgotten. But then, the knowledge of nature gathered by the wise men of the day so clearly explained all its phenomena, that the gods could be put aside, and Zeus had to make room for "ethereal circumvolution". The explanations of rain, thunder and lightning, given in the play, are by no means beside the mark, and even the most comical of them are quite in keeping with what may or must have been taught by contemporaneous professors of science.* Then comes the art required by the Athenian rustic in the play, that of making, in courts of law and elsewhere, the worse argument appear the better one; an art put into practice by our barristers too, and, if the exercises of forensic oratory standing in Antiphon's name are really his, studied at Athens to some purpose. Aristophanes, however, very cleverly puts it in such a light that at the same time the tendency is brought to notice to make the traditions about the gods serve the ends of sensuality instead of those of morality; nor does Euripides, whom Aristophanes dislikes on account of his bringing subjects of every day life and the low talk of the market on the tragical stage, get off without a severe reprimand for the fearful moral aberrations of human nature which he did not scruple to lay before the public. Ultimately a father gets a thrashing from his own son, whom he had foolishly, and for evil purposes of his own, sent to learn the newly invented wisdom, and who, taking his stand on

* See, for instance, the interesting linguistical observation about the connection between the words *ῥοντή* and *ποῤῥή*.

the often mentioned difference between natural and human law, clearly proves his right to act as he had done.

When thus combining all the new tendencies he condemned, and representing them as the effects of one principle, Aristophanes had to find one personage in whom they could be embodied, as the fighting propensities of the age were in Lamachus. His choice fell on Socrates, of whom he probably knew little else than his outward appearance and his meddling with, and in some cases supervising, young people. Socrates is, to him, the head of a thinking establishment like the secret society founded by Pythagoras, imparting to his scholars a training which shows its effects in their wretched appearance, and paid, it would seem, in bags of meal and the like. It would not do, for Aristophanes, to go against Prodicus or any other well-known sophist, not responsible for any teaching except his own, and highly considered in the circles which the poet himself moved in. But ill-looking and ill-clad Socrates, with his friend Chaerephon of the bat's face and his meddling with everybody and everything, was he not the proper man to be made responsible for the sins of all corrupters of the youthful mind?

Aristophanes must have thought so, and was mistaken. Socrates did not make money by anything he taught or was supposed to teach; he kept aloof from quasi-science and generally even from such science as was worthy of the name; he was too good a citizen and too sensible a man to go against the religious belief of his countrymen. This must have been well known, not only to the philosopher's nearest friends but also to many others; and neither Alcibiades and the *jeunesse dorée* of Athens, nor the rather numerous herd of those who affected to prefer Spartan simplicity to Attic refinement, could be pleased on seeing Socrates misrepresented on the stage. This must have been a reason why Aristophanes could not succeed, having taken Socrates as the principal character of his play. Whether it would have been a success in any shape is questionable. What Aristophanes deeply and

justly felt—that there was great danger in allowing ideas to creep in, which must, in the long run, ruin both public and private morality—was naturally ignored by those who either dabbled in the new wisdom or took little notice of it. So on the Athenian stage the Clouds was doomed to be a failure; but had it not reached our time, little would be known of the currents of thought prevailing in the days when Socrates had to accomplish the task he had devoted his life to.

Xenophon, who must have written his Reminiscences of Socrates several years after the latter's death, commences his work by a defence of his friend against the charges brought by his accusers at the time of his trial, and then gives instances of the manner in which he dealt with those he came into contact with, assisting them with advice when they were in want of it, and reprimanding them when he disapproved of their doings and sentiments. The scientific researches and speculations of his contemporaries he partly thinks useless and even foolish, as they cannot possibly lead to definite and practical results, partly too abstruse to engage the attention of those who cannot devote all their time to them. The subjects he himself is anxious to discuss are connected with practical morality and such social questions as in his days came to the fore; and far from disbelieving, as stated by his accusers, in the deities worshipped at Athens, he both believes in special revelations bestowed on himself by divine power, and advises his friends to make use of such revelations as are to be obtained by the public, viz. the replies of the Pythian oracle. The advice he renders, whether to friends who have to cope with the difficulties of life, to those who require warnings, or to those who are in a position to effect something good provided they take the trouble to do so, is generally characterised by sound homely wisdom, sometimes by considerable tact and wit, rarely by a tinge of cynicism or meddlesomeness. In a single case—that of his conversation with Ischomachus in a sequel to the Reminiscences—he is found to inquire into matters he has to learn, rather than to

teach; in his well-known discussion with Aristippus on the proper course to be followed in life, he does not think it below his dignity to substitute a moral story by Prodicus for such arguments as he himself may find. There are indications in Xenophon that Aristippus was the one of his scholars whose questions he sometimes evaded, although Xenophon himself thinks fit to deny it; and in fact, the views which Aristippus and Socrates took of life were so widely different from one another, and Socrates, it must be added, seems to have been so little able to understand his scholar from Cyrene, that there could not be the sympathy between them which bound both Xenophon and Plato to their teacher. On the whole, from a religious point of view Xenophon's Socrates is remarkable for the keen feeling he displays of what revelation means for religion. Otherwise he is a moralist, and an excellent one at a time when old-fashioned morality was somewhat at a discount; but he is nothing beyond this, and his moral teachings are mostly based on old and time-honoured principles.

There is little, if anything, to support the views of those who, taking their stand on rumours recorded by later authors, try to prove, from passages in both Plato's and Xenophon's works, that the two were at enmity with one another; for if Xenophon wrote his Banquet in reply to Plato's, his reason for doing so must simply have been his desire to have his say on a subject which interested him. Much older than Plato Xenophon cannot have been, since at the time of the retreat of the ten thousand he was one of the youngest among the generals, and he cannot have been much beyond thirty when taking service under Cyrus. So the difference between Socrates as seen by Plato and Socrates as seen by Xenophon cannot have been either that their acquaintance with him dated from different times, or that Xenophon was anxious to show Socrates in another light than Plato did in his dialogues; and the reason for it cannot be easily explained.

In attempting to give an explanation I shall first point out that Xenophon, if not in his Banquet, at all events in

his Reminiscences of Socrates, evidently records either what he has witnessed himself or what he has been informed of by men of his own time. A story is told by him of a conversation between Pericles and Alcibiades, but nothing definite or explicit is stated about the connection between Alcibiades and Socrates. A reason is given why the friendship between Socrates and Critias came to an end, but this is all we hear about the latter, except that, when one of the Thirty, he treated Socrates with a harshness which Xenophon finds fault with. Of several conversations between Socrates and others, recorded by Xenophon—those with Lamprocles, Aristarchus, Eutherus, Crito, Pericles the younger and Glauco—it is evident that they must have taken place within the last ten years of the philosopher's life, nor are there any which are likely to date from an earlier time. Now is there anything in Xenophon's Reminiscences which tends by any means to explain that wonderful fascination which Alcibiades, according to his speech in Plato's Banquet, experienced when coming into contact with Socrates?

It will be said in reply that Alcibiades himself need not have said what Plato makes him say. But Plato entered social life under the auspices of friends of the great statesman, such as Critias, and must have had information about many things which happened between Socrates and his friends before the time when he himself counted among the latter. Nor would, when at a later time Euthydemus had, according to Xenophon's own report, to be coaxed by Socrates into seeking for his friendship, Alcibiades and Critias, whose paths lay in the highest walks of life, have been so partial to Socrates as they evidently were, had it not been for some gifts of his of which Xenophon gives us hardly any idea. *

* Xenophon, in the opening chapter of the fourth book of his Reminiscences, observes that Socrates did not fail to approach young men of different gifts, characters and positions in different manners, and the whole book makes an impression as if it must have been added to the first three after the writer had, by studying Plato's dialogues, discovered

Is it an unwarranted supposition that Socrates, when conversing in his old age with the men whose intercourse with him is recorded by Xenophon, spoke to them in such a manner as was most likely to benefit second-rate men, after having, in the days when he himself was young and when he had young friends to deal with whose prospects in life were most brilliant, shown much higher powers of thought and a much deeper knowledge of the real questions and highest interests of life? Both Xenophon and Plato, having passed from childhood into the happiest time of life, found their country involved in such miseries and difficulties that the rising generation could not on any account indulge in the dreams of greatness which must have charmed Alcibiades in the days of his friendship with Socrates. Xenophon took matters as they were, and was glad to exchange the life he could lead at Athens for the service of a Persian prince. Of Plato's life before Socrates fell a victim to the prejudices of his countrymen, little is known, except that, as seen from the only reference made to him by Xenophon, he was held in high estimation by his teacher and friend. But cannot Socrates have seen in him a true chip of the old block, on whom he could, without any danger of misspending his gifts, bestow those highest treasures of his mind which, in days of old, Alcibiades and the best of his contemporaries had been blessed with? This is, if not a solution of the difficulty which the contrast between Xenophon's Socrates and that of Plato offers, at all events an attempt at solving it.

Plato's Socrates is known from Plato's works, and a sketch of him, in an essay on Plato, may be dispensed with. As, however, the treatment which Socrates experienced at the hands of his countrymen after the expulsion of the Thirty and the restoration of democracy has evidently had no small influence on Plato's career, it is necessary to dwell for a moment on the circumstances connected with his death.

that he had not done full justice to Socrates. The fourth book, however, can hardly be considered an improvement on the former three.

Socrates was known to be a man of undaunted courage. On the battle-field at Potidaea he saved the life of Alcibiades, and would have obtained the prize for bravery, had he not resigned it in his young friend's favour. At the retreat from the disastrous battle of Delium, he distinguished himself by a coolness and determination offering a favourable contrast with the conduct of an otherwise highly esteemed general. * Nor was his moral courage in political life less conspicuous than his conduct in war. He did not meddle with politics, and never filled any office, until, in 406, he became a member of the senate of Five-hundred. It then fell to his lot to preside over the assembly of the people where it had to be decided whether or not the fate of the generals who had fought at the Arginusae was to be made dependent on one vote of the assembly; and notwithstanding the threats of the people he declined to put the question to the vote, since it was, in his opinion, contrary to law to do so. † When the Thirty held the reins of government Socrates not only freely indulged in a criticism of their conduct which drew on him the ire of their leaders, but also disregarded the order given him to join others in seizing the person of a much respected citizen whom the Thirty wanted to get rid of, although he was fully aware that his own death might be the consequence. Still he then remained unhurt, and it was not until the triumph of the moderate democrats under Thrasybulus that he was charged with disbelief in the gods worshipped by the state, and with corrupting the morals of the rising generation.

* The story of his saving Xenophon's life at Delium cannot be correct, since it is evident from the Anabasis, as stated a few pages before this, that at the time of the battle Xenophon must have been too young to join a military expedition.

† The presiding member, whether called *πρύτανις* as by Thucydides or *ἐπιστάτης* as by Xenophon and Aristotle, held his power for one day only (Ar. de Rep. Ath. C. 44), and so it would appear that the version of the matter given in the dialogue called Axiochus—that the assembly adjourned to the following day—is the most probable one, although it is quite possible that the author is at sea when mentioning the *πρόεδροι*.

Both Xenophon and Plato have written in defence of Socrates against these charges. The former not only in his Reminiscences but also in a short essay which partly goes over different ground, and certainly does not present more similarity to the Reminiscences than his Agesilaus does to his Hellenica. He writes, of course, from what others had told him. Plato was at Athens when Socrates had to appear in court, and his defence of Socrates has the form of a speech, or rather a series of speeches, delivered by the defendent in person. It would be rash, however, to infer from this that the "Apology" standing in Plato's name is not Plato's own work, written after his friend's death for the purpose of putting the injustice he had been treated with in its proper light. That Socrates, in addressing the court, took a position calculated to prejudice its members against himself; that he referred to a reply of the Pythian oracle to a question put by a friend of his, stating that he, Socrates, was the wisest of men; can be taken for granted from what is said by both authors. That he may have mentioned the effects which the attacks on him in the Clouds had produced on the minds of his countrymen, is not unlikely. Plato refers to them; Xenophon, in his defence, does not, but in his Banquet one of his personages is a stranger who provides entertainments at dinners, and who, taking offence at something done by Socrates, asks him whether he is not the man of the speculations on heavenly matters and of the measurement of the jumping of fleas he has been told about. Though nearly a quarter of a century had elapsed between the time when the Clouds was acted and that of the trial of Socrates, it is quite natural that those old stories had retained their hold on the people's minds, although, when they were first made public, they did not meet with approval.

It is, however, difficult to believe that Socrates, as he is made to do by Plato, should have come to the front with the story of a conspiracy between politicians and mechanics, poets and orators to take revenge on him for having proved,

during his intercourse with them, that they hardly knew their own business and were ignorant of everything else. Anytus and Meletus, his principal accusers, may have had private reasons for hating him, the latter having obeyed the wicked behests of the Thirty in the very case in which Socrates declined to do so, whereas Anytus, a man of wealth and influence, had brought his own son to grief by employing him in a business his money was invested in, instead of giving him a liberal education, and would appear to have resented the philosopher's allusions to this conduct of his. This, however, is something altogether different from a general conspiracy to ruin a man on account of the argumentative power displayed by him in private conversation; and while Socrates himself cannot have thought of having recourse to such arguments, Plato's use of them may be taken as evidence that at the time when he wrote the Apology he was not in possession of that power of discrimination which makes it felt what is likely and what is not.

The reason why Socrates was condemned by a large majority of the court, although the charges brought against him were utterly groundless, may partly have been his independent and even defiant behaviour in court, but there must have been another and by no means unnatural one. Athens had attained a high degree of power and prosperity in the days of Pericles, but at that very time the tendencies began to prevail which were attacked by the poet of the Clouds. Since then the disaster in Sicily had been the signal of the decline of Athenian power, and ultimately the Thirty had ruled the state with a cruelty and rapacity unheard of, as it was then considered, in the history of tyranny. Liberty was restored, but the evils from which Athens had suffered still made themselves felt; and what was, under such circumstances, more natural than to look for the primary causes of them in the abandonment of those sentiments and habits of older generations which, viewed from a distance, so often assume the appearance of being infinitely superior to those

which have taken their place? Socrates surely was neither a disbeliever in divine power, nor a corrupter of youth; but he certainly was one of those who, with the Euripides of the Frogs, could glory in having taught the Athenians to talk. "That I grant", is the reply of Dionysus to the tragic poet; "would that you had burst asunder before this teaching of yours!" Development of reasoning and argumentative faculties can be a danger in a state of affairs when religion and morality rest on very weak foundations; and to this danger the minds are open in times of such public calamities as Athens had suffered from. This must have been one of the main reasons why, like Palamedes by the Greeks of the Trojan war, Socrates was put to death by the Athenians, though in reality he was the best of them.

## § VI. PLATO'S LIFE.

Not much is known of Plato's life, and very little indeed of the days of his youth. Even the questions connected with the few scraps of information we have about his earliest years are often hardly worth attending to. According to one report he was born at Aegina, to another in the ward of Collytus, forming part of the town of Athens; and a certain amount of ink has been spilt on the question which of the two stories is the more likely one. The fact is that, if he was born at Aegina, his birth must have taken place at a time when his parents were on a visit to certain landed property allotted to his father on the island after its inhabitants, in the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, had been compelled to leave it; but this is not inconsistent with his belonging, by birth, to the community of Collytus, and with his having been educated at Athens; for Athenians possessed of property in conquered countries were not bound to live there, and spent, as a rule, most of their time in their native town. Then there is the question about his

name, that of Plato—which was shared by other Athenians,—having taken, according to tradition, the place of that of his grandfather Aristocles, which had been originally bestowed on him; but although questions connected with Greek names are in themselves by no means uninteresting, the study of Plato and his time has little to do with them. The year of his birth is differently given, but it is likely that he was born shortly after the death of Pericles, and that he was about twenty-eight years of age at the time when Socrates had to drink the fatal hemlock.

Of much importance is the fact that Plato belonged by birth to the old nobility of Athens. Little is known of his father Aristo, but the contemporary poet who celebrated in verse the valour shown by his sons in a battle near Megara—it may have been Critias, who about that very time must also have written his poem addressed to Alcibiades,—would hardly have called them "sons of Aristo, divine offspring of a famous father", had not Aristo, who is never mentioned in the history of his time, belonged to a family of high rank. More is known of Plato's mother. She was a sister to Charmides son of Glauco, a man of highly aristocratic instincts, and a niece to Callaeschrus, father of Critias and descended from Dropides, Solon's relative and intimate friend. *

* It is well-known, and a good many instances might be added to those given by Athenaeus, that Plato, in his dialogues, is always at sea in his chronology. This was a common fault with the Greeks of his time; even Herodotus was not wholly exempt from it, and a remarkable instance of it is seen in that wonderful sketch of the relations between Athens and Sparta before the war of 431, met with in a speech by Andocides, which must be genuine since Aeschines took the sketch over with such variations as clearly show that he borrowed it from his predecessor. It does not, however, appear to have been noticed that the pedigree given in Plato's Timaeus of the family to which Critias belonged must be quite wrong. Critias the younger cannot have been much older than fifty when, in 403, he was killed in battle. When he and Alcibiades are mentioned together, they are represented as men of the same age; his father Callaeschrus was, in 411, a man of influence among the Four-hundred (Lys. in Er. 66). Still he is stated to have heard, being

Plato must have reached the age when he could think of preparing for public life at a time when, according to Thucydides, things were, for the first time during the author's life, managed at Athens in a proper spirit. The rule of the Four-hundred was put a period to; the sentence passed on Alcibiades was revoked on a motion by Critias; democracy was tempered by the registration of five thousand citizens capable of serving in the army as sole members of the assembly of the people, and by the repeal of the laws or regulations allowing payment for taking part in the administration of public affairs. It is not stated anywhere how long this state of matters continued; but as Alcibiades, who had been intrusted with the management of all military affairs, was deprived of his command in 407; as about the same time Critias had to go into exile; as in 406 demagogues like Archedemus of the sore eyes and Cleophon the lyremaker were in power and not only introduced or re-introduced *

ten years of age, from his grandfather Critias son of Dropides, who was then ninety, a story told to him by Solon in his youth. Now Solon, having been archon in 594, must have been very old when, in 560, Pisistratus established tyranny at Athens, and Critias the son of Dropides must have been a grown-up man when Solon addressed him in verse, telling him to listen to his father's advice. So if the pedigree in the Timaeus was right, he would have reached, when telling Solon's story to his grandson, the ripe age, not of ninety but of something like a hundred and forty years, which does not appear very probable. But even in our days educated people of decent birth are met with who, when referring to their ancestors, are found to take their great-grandfathers for their grandfathers.

* The allowance paid, from the treasury, to those who wanted to attend the public representations in the theatre, but had to pay for their seats, is stated by Plutarch to have been introduced by Pericles; but of the διωβελία, as this allowance was called, no mention is made by contemporary authors before Xenophon in his narrative of the events of 406, and Aristophanes when alluding to it in his Frogs (405). The administration of the money was, it would appear from Xenophon, connected at that time with the leadership of the people, and in Aristotle's treatise on the Athenian Republic Cleophon is stated to have been the first to introduce the allowance.

certain payments to the people which, under existing circumstances were infinitely more onerous and dangerous to the state, than in the happy days before the expedition to Sicily, but also opposed any attempt at making peace; and as at the same time the number of debtors to the treasury, who as such had lost their political privileges, was so large that their restoration to them had become the turning question of the day;* it is evident that the democracy of former days must have been fully restored, and that the happy time referred to by Thucydides had been followed by one during which no moderate man would meddle with politics, unless compelled by his position to do so. In one of the letters standing in Plato's name it is stated that, when the Thirty took office, he had an excellent opportunity of entering public life, the men in power being his friends and anxious to avail themselves of such services as he could render them, but that he declined, seeing how they mismanaged public affairs, and especially how badly they behaved towards Socrates; and that, when the old form of government was restored, he might again have thought of a political career, had it not been for his friend's trial and death. Whether or not this information is derived from a genuine work of Plato's, it certainly has the merit of giving a very plausible explanation of Plato's keeping aloof from public affairs at Athens.

* The restoration of the ἄτιμοι is strongly recommended in the parabasis of the Frogs, and the poet's true patriotism is nowhere seen in a more brilliant light. The measure was not resorted to till after the defeat of the Athenian fleet at Aegos Potami, when it was too late. As to the reason why the restoration of citizens deprived of their rights had become, on this occasion, of greater importance than on any other, it may have been that, when Alcibiades was deprived of his command, a change of policy took place not only restoring full democracy at Athens, but also excluding, from anything connected with the management of public affairs, all those who had had a share in the government from 411 to 407, and were unable to give a full account of their management. There is no direct evidence of this, but it is difficult to read the advice given in the Frogs to the people, without feeling that some such change of policy must have taken place.

Not only Plato's older relatives and their friends take parts in his dialogues, but also a goodly number of his fellow-scholars and others of his own age, and among them are his own brothers Adimantus and Glauco. A passage in the Apology, from which it might be inferred that Adimantus had been instrumental in committing Plato to the care of Socrates, renders it not unlikely that he was Plato's elder brother. Glauco was the youngest of the three. Of those friends and scholars of Socrates who are named in one of the Platonic dialogues as having been present at his death, some are known as having continued their studies and founded philosophical schools of their own; others, like Ctesippus, are made to take such parts in Plato's dialogues as to render it evident that they were favourites of his. Of the former class, Phaedo of Elis and Euclides of Megara are mentioned in the introductory parts of Platonic dialogues, but do not join the main discussion. Cebes and Simias the Thebans, who did not found schools but simply wrote some dialogues, of which one has survived, are the principal interlocutors of Socrates at his last interview with his friends. Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynical school, is not named in the whole of Plato's works, except that he is stated to have been present on that occasion; no mention at all, by name, is made of Aristippus, except that at that time he was absent. Plato is reported to have spent some time, after his teacher's death, at Megara in company with Euclides; but on the whole he evidently went his own way in his studies, without caring for his former fellow-students. Aristotle informs his readers that on one occasion, when Plato spoke in such a manner as if he could point to definite results which his teachings would bring, Aristippus observed that their old friend would not have said any such thing. The report is too vague to give a clear idea of what was meant by this remark, unless it be that Socrates, always starting from a conviction that he had everything to learn, would have expressed himself less dogmatically than Plato.

There is no evidence whatever that the reports met with in Greek and Latin authors of later times about Plato's visits to Egypt and the Western colonies of Greece during the period between his teacher's death and his setting up a philosophical school in the Academy at Athens, cannot be substantially correct. The ancient wisdom of Egypt, with her sacerdotal caste, her monuments and her traditions and records, must have, in Greece, inspired men not wholly devoid of means and anxious to acquire more learning than the common herd of mankind, with a desire to visit so remarkable a country, especially as it was in constant commercial intercourse with Greece, and as a passage to it was to be had at a very low price indeed. That Plato did visit Egypt might, had no statements to this effect been preserved, be inferred from the notice he takes, in his dialogues, of a good many peculiarities of the country: of its civilisation which, while of a much earlier date than anything recorded in Grecian history or tradition, showed no evidence of progress; of its old traditions about learning, which in our days remind Plato's readers of learned Brahmins, who, although well-read, are very anxious for a knowledge of their most sacred literature enabling them to recite the longest poems by heart; and of the unwillingness of its people to admit strangers to their meals. Attic authors contemporaneous with, or little older than, Plato,—say Sophocles when he wrote his last tragedy, and Aristophanes,—generally, when referring to Egypt, express themselves in such terms as to make it felt that they must have derived their knowledge of it from Herodotus; Plato never does. Italy and Sicily were old seats of philosophical schools, remnants of Pythagorean societies being still found in some of their towns in Plato's time; and although he does not often mention any other by name than the old Eleatic school, the very fact of his taking Timaeus of Locri as the mouth-piece of his own cosmical and physical theory shows that he was aware of being under some obligation to them. So a visit to those countries must not have been less interesting to him than one to Egypt.

Plato, having visited Italy and there, it would appear, become acquainted with Archytas of Tarent, the well-known Pythagorean philosopher, also went to Sicily, where Syracuse was then governed by Dionysius the elder. The monarchical power which Dionysius had obtained, had fallen to his lot in consequence of the great difficulties which the Greeks of Sicily had to contend with during the last years of the Peloponnesian war, when some of their most flourishing towns had been conquered by the Carthaginians, and when civil dissensions greatly interfered with the defence of the other Greek settlements. At the tyrant's court young Dion, his brother-in-law, was one of the rising men. Instead of plunging into a life of luxury and pleasure, such as Sicily was then noted for, Dion was anxious to improve his mind and for this reason highly pleased with Plato's visit. Plutarch, who in his "Life of Dion" gives this information, adds that Plato was introduced to Dionysius, but gave offence by his outspokenness, so that it was thought the safest plan for him to leave. The tyrant, however, bore such rancour towards his guest, that when the latter left in a vessel in which also the Spartan Pollis had taken his passage, he requested Pollis to make away with his fellow-passenger. Plato was not killed, but landed at Aegina, which was then at war with Athens, and sold as a slave. By one of Plutarch's contemporaries mention was made of imminent danger of life which the philosopher was exposed to at Aegina, and of his being soon redeemed from captivity and sent back to Athens. As to Pollis—who is well known from Xenophon's Hellenica, and who afterwards, as admiral of the Spartan fleet, lost the battle of Naxos against the Athenians under Chabrias—the same authority states that the gods punished him for his conduct towards Plato by causing him to become a victim of the fearful earthquake which, not long after the battle of Naxos, destroyed the Achaean town of Helice. *

* It would appear that the expression *ἐν Ἑλίκῃ καταποντωθῆναι*, used by Favorinus (Diog. Laërt. III 14), has not been understood; it

Now there is this to be said in favour of this report that it agrees with chronology. Plato, according to a statement in one of the letters standing in his name, was not far from forty years of age when he visited Syracuse for the first time. That the war between Athens and Aegina broke out about 389 B. C. cannot only be inferred from the rather loose chronology of the Hellenica, but also from the fact that the Athenian general Pamphilus, who commanded the troops sent to Aegina in the beginning of the war, and who, having been anything but successful, would appear to have been punished for his doings by confiscation of his property (Demosth. p. 1014), was threatened already with this fate by Aristophanes in his Plutus, which was acted early in 388. But, according to Plutarch, Plato's visit to Syracuse had this effect that, when upwards of twenty years after it Dionysius the elder had been succeeded by his son and namesake, Dion induced the young ruler to send for Plato as a most admirable adviser; and of the philosopher's second visit, as also of a third, ample information is given in Dion's biography. Plutarch, however, in giving it relies mostly, though not wholly, on Plato's letters; and although it is true that, even if the opinion that these letters are not genuine is correct, there is sufficient reason not to doubt, on this account, that Plato really visited Dionysius the younger, the question of their authenticity is, for various reasons, worthy of being considered in this essay.

The letters standing in Plato's name are thirteen in number, seven of which, including all the longer ones, refer to his relations with Syracuse. The first, written to Dionysius the younger, cannot be Plato's, since what it says about the writer is in accordance with history when referring to Dion, and simply nonsense when applied to Plato; and on this

must refer to the earthquake, which happened not very long after the battle of Naxos, and which caused the sea to rise and destroy the town. (Pausan. VII 24.)

point there is not much difference of opinion. Of the other letters three (2, 3 and 13) are addressed to Dionysius, one (4) to Dion, two (7 and 8) to the friends left by Dion at Syracuse when he was murdered there. Of these letters, of which Cicero, Plutarch and others make ample use, and whose authenticity was not doubted in antiquity, the seventh is by far the longest and most important one, giving as it does an apologetic report of Plato's relations with Dion and Dionysius the younger, preceded by a brief notice of his early career, and containing besides some political advice and some philosophical information. The letter purports to have been written at a time when Dionysius, having been expelled from Syracuse, was in Italy, and when, at Syracuse, his half-brother Hipparinus, nephew to Dion, had obtained or was obtaining the reins of power in his native town, in or about the year 352. The main events recorded are that Dionysius, shortly after his accession to power in 367, had invited Plato to his court; that the latter, who fancied himself able to bestow, in conjunction with Dion, great benefits on Syracuse and the whole of Sicily by his influence on Dionysius, met with a splendid reception but was, within a few months after his arrival, grievously disappointed when Dion was banished from Sicily; and that for this reason he was glad to be able, after some time, to return to Athens, where he was already at the head of a philosophical school. Having resumed his duties he was once more invited to visit Syracuse by Dionysius, who appears to have been really partial to philosophical research and anxious to be known to the outer world as Plato's friend; and although the philosopher was at that time, about 362, several years on the wrong side of sixty, and unwilling to set sail again for Sicily, he was induced to do so by pressure, not only on the part of Dionysius but also on that of Dion and his fellow exiles, who wanted his assistance in effecting their return to their country. As, however, Dionysius, though receiving Plato with great distinction, would not listen to his remonstrances

in favour of Dion, and even treated the latter with more harshness than before, his guest soon longed for permission to leave him, which he did not get until his Pythagorean friends at Tarent, between whom and Dionysius he had, on his way home from his former visit, brought about a friendly understanding, sent a vessel in which he went back to Athens. His return must have taken place before the middle of 360.

If the letters are genuine, the thirteenth must have been written very soon after Plato's first return to Athens, since it displays most friendly feelings on his part towards Dionysius, mention being made of presents destined for him and his wife, orders executed, friends recommended, etc. After it comes the second, in which Plato contradicts a rumour as if at the Olympic games—they must have been those of 364, and there is no reason why they should not—he had spoken of Dionysius in not very complimentary terms, and in which the question of the relations between rulers and literary men is discussed, to be followed by an observation on a sphere, in the astronomical sense of the word, which Dionysius had sent to Plato to report upon, and by a reply, in guarded terms, to a philosophical question put to him.—The third letter, which clearly shows that the friendship between the two was altogether on the wane, and which begins with rather a strange and seemingly uncalled-for remark about headings of messages, belongs to the time after Plato's second return to Athens. It is seen, from the seventh letter, that Plato had met Dion at the Olympic games of 360, and had been invited by him to join, or favour, an expedition which he had planned for the expulsion of Dionysius from Syracuse; but he had declined to do so, both on account of his age and because, after all, Dionysius had not treated him so very badly, and he was loth to be thought ungrateful. Dionysius, however, had been informed that Plato made common cause with Dion, and Plato reviews his own dealings with the whole affair, arguing that it would not do for him to forsake his

older friend for his correspondent, with the prospect of being charged with allowing himself to be bribed. Besides Plato mentions another rumour, spread from his correspondent's quarters, to the effect that it was owing to him that Syracuse had obtained no alleviation of the burthens she had to bear under tyrannical rule, and that the other towns of Sicily had not been recolonised and provided with proper governments. This rumour was, says he, incorrect, since he had been in favour of both measures, provided Dionysius was first educated towards bringing them about. That there was something ludicrous in this proviso would seem to have escaped him.

Dion entered upon his expedition in 357, and met with success. To the period of his rule at Syracuse belongs the brief and not very important letter (4) in which Plato warns him against being too self-willed. Then follows the seventh letter, the eighth being evidently of a slightly later date. In this letter a suggestion is made to Dion's friends to restore the ruling dynasty—that of Dionysius the elder and his supporter Hipparinus, Dion's father,—by bestowing a limited authority on Dion's son, on Hipparinus son of Dionysius the elder, and on Dionysius the younger, then still in Italy, so as to have a government with hereditary rulers but under strict laws, somewhat like that of Sparta.—The other letters can, for the present, be left untouched.

Now what are the reasons for denying the authenticity of the Platonic letters? They are mainly three in number. Their language, style and arguments, although giving evidence of so intimate an acquaintance of the writer with the dialogues that even first-rate critics consider them genuine, are still not worthy of Plato, but redolent of the influence of those schools of rhetoric to which other such productions owe their existence. Then they contain historical misrepresentations which Plato cannot have made. The third reason is that the scraps of philosophy found in them are of such a nature that, being totally at variance with what is known

of Plato's doctrine, they cannot possibly have come from his pen. *

In regard to the first point it has been observed that it is one thing to write a philosophical dialogue and another to write a letter, and that neither the negligence and confusedness occasionally marking the style of the letters, nor the frequent repetition of certain words and expressions which occur in them is a sufficient reason for denying that they are Plato's work. There is something in this, but it has been rightly observed that all literary criticism is at an end if such differences of style are lost sight of. There is, however, another point to be attended to. The earliest of the letters referred to till now is of a time when Plato was some years past sixty; the latest of one when he was about twelve years older. Old age does not tell upon a Goethe or a Gladstone, but it does tell on other men of mark, and surely, Plato's older contemporary Aristophanes, when he wrote his Ecclesiazusae and his Plutus, had much declined since the day that his Birds was acted. That Plato was more like Aristophanes than like England's late prime minister is seen from his Laws, in which some of the very peculiarities are met with which are found fault with in the letters; and both repetition of particular expressions and looseness of structure are almost natural features of the style of those old men whose minds are not endowed with eternal youth. But more of this anon.

Then there are the historical inaccuracies. The writer of the letters is blamed for giving, in his seventh letter, wrong information about the rule of the Thirty, since he speaks of fifty-one men ruling Athens, the Thirty and, under their supervision, the Eleven and the Ten of the Piraeus. Were

* Great benefit has been derived by the writer of this essay, in treating this question of the authenticity of Plato's letters, from a Latin dissertation by Professor H. T. Karsten, of Amsterdam, on the subject, although the conclusions arrived at by the latter are directly at variance with his own.

not the Eleven a well-known body, with definite functions, in the days of democracy? Of course they were, but the fact that Satyrus, who was at their head during the rule of the Thirty, had been in the year before a leading politician at Athens (Lys. c. Nic. 12 and 14), renders it evident that under the Thirty they held virtually a much higher position than before, as will always be the case with the police department under such rule. Then it is thought strange that there is no reference in the letter to Plato's earlier travels, but that his visit to Italy and Sicily is represented as the consequence of his meditations about the difficulty of finding anywhere good government.* But why should Plato mention his visit to Egypt in a letter to his friends at Syracuse? Again, Dion is stated to have pointed out to Plato, about 366, that his own nephews, half-brothers to Dionysius the younger, might be of assistance to him when visiting Syracuse, being well-disposed towards his ideas; but how could they be, seeing that the elder of the two, Hipparinus, is stated by Plato in 352 to have the same age (about twenty) as Dion had at the time of his first visit to Sicily? Quite right: but in Plato, writing when upwards of seventy years of age, a mistake about the age of one whom he remembers having seen as a youth but who has since grown into manhood, is both natural and excusable. Then, in the eighth letter, a reference to Dion's son is condemned because this son had perished more than a year before, and so is one to a murder of Syracusian generals, shortly before Dionysius

* There are those who infer, from the silence of the letters about Plato's visit to Egypt, that he quietly remained at Athens, and in whose opinion Plato's Republic must have been written in these early days, the comedy of the Ecclesiazusae having been got up with a view to ridicule it. But the Republic was written many years after the Ecclesiazusae, which need not have had any such definite object in view as the Clouds and the Frogs; and still less defensible, if possible, is the contention of some that Plato, whom Xenophon knew by no other name can have been Aristyllus, the dirtiest specimen of humanity met with in Aristophanes.

the elder's accession to power. But Grote's conjecture that, as regards this murder, Plato may have taken an event which happened elsewhere in Sicily as forming part of Syracusian history, is very plausible; and by Dion's son may have been meant the child his widow gave birth to shortly after his death.

The philosophical information contained in the letters, which is of rather an important nature and not such as to give *prima facie* evidence of its not being genuine, will be dealt with when the works of Plato's old age are under consideration. But it may be asked—and here a question presents itself, the real bearings of which would appear to have been lost sight of—how the letters have come to be written, if not by Plato himself. They must be, is the reply, the work of some admirer of Plato, well acquainted with his writings, and anxious to defend his conduct and character against misrepresentations made by his enemies. Plato *had* enemies, and friends too, eager to take his part, but what is the impression made by his letters, especially by the seventh? Not that they were written by an admirer, trying to justify his conduct and glorify his character, but that they are from the pen of a man by no means free of the vanity, the diffuse style of writing, the weakening of discriminating power and the pettishness so often met with in old persons, and withal sufficiently fair-minded not to be carried away either by personal spite or by the allurements which vanity is open to. If they are taken as such, their shortcomings are explained at once, except perhaps to those rendered blind by Plato worship; if they are held to have been written, with an apologetic object, by anybody else, how is it that, instead of placing the great man whose defence the writer takes in a most favourable light, he exactly reproduces what a highly estimable but pettish, vainglorious and not always judicious old man would have stated under the circumstances? This is sufficient reason not to take it for granted, on the evidence brought forward against the authenticity of the letters, that they are not genuine productions of Plato's old age.

The eighth letter, indeed, if it were the only one preserved, might be considered the work of a sincere and not untalented admirer of the great philosopher, but there is no reason to take another view of it than of the seventh. *

From the letters as well as from Dion's life by Plutarch an idea may be formed of Plato's doings when visiting the court of the Sicilian tyrant. When he came to Syracuse, he was a man of mature age and of high standing among philosophers. His Republic must have been written and known to the public long before he left Athens, and there are even indications in the letters (s. g. p. 316 A) that he had been working already at his Laws. He knew, from his former visit, the luxury and loose morals prevailing in Sicily, but he disliked the idea of being, when an opportunity offered to effect in real life what he had sketched in his dialogues, found wanting in courage and activity, and as he was well aware that it is no easy matter so to change the constitution of a state and the habits of its people as to give all the power to philosophers, he thought it the better plan to convert an actual ruler to philosophical ideas about the government of the country under his rule. But it is questionable whether, even under most favourable circumstances, he might have succeeded in putting things right at Syracuse, and the circumstances were not at all favourable. Dionysius, however well-disposed and naturally gifted, was not in a position to render himself independent either of his surroundings or of the influences he had been under in his early youth. Dion may or may not have been worthy, in every respect, of his brother-in-law's full confidence, † but he was not a man of a conciliating character, and was sure of being

* Certain doubtful points in the letters, such as the strange references to Socrates in the second and eleventh, will be touched upon in another part of this essay.

† Dion was brother-in-law both to the elder and to the younger Dionysius, the former having married his sister and given him his daughter in marriage.

represented by his enemies at court as aiming at objects directly at variance with those of the ruler of the state. As to Plato himself, he may have been quite right in not advising Dionysius to proceed at once to the reforms required for Syracuse and for the Grecian interests in Sicily; but it was to be expected that, being foreign to actual political life, and holding ideas on matters political which in our days are considered utterly unpractical and fantastic, he would not, at his age, prove the proper adviser for a young ruler and intending reformer; and the fact that he admits, and even, to some extent, glories in, having given advice which was afterwards justly ridiculed by Dionysius—that about the latter's having to be educated before proceeding to reforms—is in itself sufficient evidence of his not being, at Syracuse, the right man in the right place.

That nevertheless, after his return to Athens, he allowed himself to be induced to pay another visit to Syracuse, is fully excusable on the ground that he was pressed to do so by Dion as well as by Dionysius; nor is it right to charge him with excessive devotion to Dion's interests, since by seemingly neglecting them to even the smallest extent, he would have incurred the blame of pandering to a tyrant for pecuniary or other advantages. On the other hand he acted also wisely by not making common cause with those intending to dispossess Dionysius of his power, since this would have shown a petty vindictiveness unworthy of a philosopher of his stamp and standing. His advice to Dion's friends in 352—to settle the affairs of Sicily with the aid of volunteers from the best governed states of Greece, and, having settled them, not to place the vanquished party in a worse position than the victors—was sound enough as far as it went, and was shortly afterwards carried into effect by Timoleon; but without a first-rate statesman and general like him it was not easy to do so, and Plato's suggestion to bestow as much power as possible on old men, savours of a narrowness of views also met with in the Laws. The idea, too, of associating Dion's little son with Hipparinus and Dionysius as joint kings

of Syracuse looks as impracticable as it must have been well meant.

On his return from his first journey to Italy and Sicily, at the very time when Antalcidas the Spartan restored peace in Greece through the intervention of the Persian king, Plato would appear to have opened at once his philosophical school in the gardens and gymnasium of the Academy, where he had bought a small property. Many young men studied under him, among them Aristotle, the founder of the school which was to eclipse Plato's for many a century, and to exercise a still greater influence than his on the history of human thought. He had enemies too, even among those who had been, together with him, followers of Socrates. One of them was Antisthenes the Cynic, who is said to have written a most virulent libel against him. Aristippus too disagreed to such an extent with his views as rather to show his joy at his discomfiture at the court of Syracuse, than to sympathise with an old fellow-student. Of the fragments of comic poetry referring to him, the most interesting is that in which he and his scholars are introduced studying nature, and more especially meditating on that of a pumpkin. Was it a round vegetable, a tree or a fodder-plant? This interesting question so captivated their minds as to render them altogether indifferent about the insulting conduct of a bystander, the young men remaining quiet, and Plato exhorting them to continue their research. This passage is of some importance, inasmuch as it shows, what would not be inferred from the greater part of Plato's dialogues, that the study of nature, in a fashion, formed part of the programme of the Academy.

The study of nature was to have its day, and that too very soon. For the present, however, other matters engaged the attention of the public at large. The retreat of the Ten Thousand, the campaign under Agesilaus in Asia, the ambitious plan of Iason of Pherae, who was ready for an expedition against Persia very much on the same lines as that afterwards undertaken by

Alexander the Great, the lengthy and by no means successful war which the Persian forces had to carry on against a petty prince like Euagoras of Cyprus, the actual or prospective revolts of local rulers within the Persian Empire and, last but not least, the fact that Sparta was using, for the oppression of Greece, the power of the Persian king, her old enemy, inspired Isocrates with the idea of a conquest of the king's dominions by a Grecian league under the joint leadership of Sparta and Athens; and his Panegyricus must have contributed not a little to the growth of a feeling that Greece was called to extend her power over the continent of Asia. On the other hand monarchical rule, as it existed among the Persians, became better known and less unpopular in Greece by Xenophon's works, and Plato was not in principle opposed to it. There is a report that, shortly before Plato's departure from Athens to follow Dion's call, he was requested to draw up a plan for the government of the "great city" founded with a view to the unification of Arcadia, but that he declined to do so, as his idea about equalising property was not approved of by the Arcadians and their advisers. So there was no want of political life and political thought in Greece, and Plato, like Isocrates, was one of the leaders of public opinion, and was, in fact, held as such in so high an estimation that his appearance at the Olympic games was considered quite an event. He was not to succeed in the political work he undertook in Sicily, and if Timoleon was, to some extent, inspired in performing his noble task by Platonic traditions he found at Syracuse, Plato himself was not to witness this triumph of his ideas, since he died at Athens, about eighty years of age, in 347. But he left not only his mark on the age he lived in, the influence of his ideas being destined to revive at many a memorable epoch of the history of the world. Of this essay, however, not these revivals are the subject, but the work he did in and for his own time.

## § VII. PLATO AND SOCRATES.

VERY few of Plato's dialogues contain historical data from which it is possible to arrive at any conclusion as to the time when they were written. One of them is his Laws, which on various grounds is to be considered one of Plato's latest works, and where one passage—that of book VII p. 806 about the danger of allowing women to be so trained as to become a danger rather than a defence when a hostile army has entered the country—might, but need not, be taken as a reference to what happened at Sparta when, in 370—69, Laconica was invaded by Epaminondas at the head of a Theban force. Of much greater importance is the reference, in the conversation by which his Theaetetus is prefaced, to the Corinthian war, which began in 394 and continued for several years. This reference does not prove that the dialogue was written during, or shortly after, the war, but simply that it is posterior to it; and although the Theaetetus is the first of a series of three dialogues, it is by no means certain that they were written one after another within a short time. The Sophist however, the second of the series, must have closely followed the first, since, as will be shown afterwards, there is an intimate connection between them. In the Sophist two other dialogues are announced, the Politicus and the Philosopher. The latter, however, is not found among Plato's works, and was never written by him, since he gives the substance of what it would have had to contain in another dialogue. As to the Politicus, its connection with the Sophist is not such as to render it evident, or even probable, that it was written immediately after it.

One other date, similar to that in the Theaetetus, is found in several dialogues, whereas it is wanting in others. The Phaedo and Crito, the Euthyphron and Gorgias contain direct evidence that they were written after the trial and death of Socrates; in many dialogues other than indirect evidence of this is wanting. But now the question arises

whether a single one of Plato's dialogues can have been written when Socrates was alive. Can it be taken for granted that Plato, during his teacher's life, wrote dialogues in which the latter was introduced as taking part in the discussion?

The only passage in ancient classics where Plato is represented as having done so is one in the lives of philosophers by Diogenes Laertius, who, without quoting his authority, refers to a statement by Socrates, after having read Plato's Lysis, that he was made to say things he never did say. This story is on a par with what is stated by Athenaeus (XI p. 505) about both Gorgias' and Phaedo's denying the accuracy of the Platonic dialogues named after them; and such stories, even if they are as well attested as the remark by Aristippus quoted, in a former chapter, from Aristotle, are by no means reliable, the fact that Plato was reputed to have made Socrates the mouth-piece of his own opinions being the origin of them. In his Lysis Plato displays all the truly poetical talent which renders the *mise-en-scène* of his dialogues so very charming. Nowhere a more vivid description of Athenian school-life is given. The petulance shown by Ctesippus in his remarks on poor Hippothales, who being quite enraptured with young Lysis takes a most inappropriate course in trying to ingratiate himself with the object of his love; the awkward position in which Hippothales himself is placed; the friendship between Lysis and Menexenus, which does not prevent the former from slyly inducing Socrates to administer to his friend a gentle correction for his argumentative propensities; are sketched in a most lively and amusing manner. Now it is a fact that poetical gifts are developed much sooner than philosophical powers, so that the descriptive power displayed by Plato in this dialogue need not be taken as evidence of its being the production of a matured mind; and it is likewise a fact that Socrates, in the first part of his conversation with Lysis, indulges much more in irony than is usual with

him in other Platonic dialogues, that in referring to a Greek word with a double meaning he makes use of gross sophistry, and that the dialogue does not lead to any definite result. All of this might be given as containing reasons for singling out the dialogue as bearing, more than any other, the character of a juvenile composition, written during the period of Plato's philosophical training under his teacher's care. But the irony is not out of place; the sophistry is equalled by that met with in the Protagoras; and not only dialogues like the Charmides and Laches, both of them of the same description as Lysis, not only the Protagoras, but even the Theaetetus end in utter doubt about the real nature of the subject discussed. Again, Ctesippus is also one of the chief personages of Plato's Euthydemus; and as there he is represented as catching hold, by instinct, of the sorry method of quasi-argumentation used by Euthydemus and his brother, whereas in the Lysis he is mentioned as being up to the mark in it, it is safer to assume that the Euthydemus is a slightly earlier production of Plato's pen than the Lysis, than to believe that the latter dialogue was written at a time when Socrates might have read it. In fact, the Lysis is one of those dialogues where that peculiar method of dealing with young men is exemplified which is described in the Theaetetus, and named "mental obstetrics". Before referring to this method, which is characteristic of Plato's Socrates, a few observations are necessary about certain dialogues which, like the Apology, must have been written shortly after, and in connection with, the death of Socrates.

In one of them Crito, an old friend of Socrates, belonging to the same ward and assisted by him both in his son's training and by advice in other matters, is introduced calling, before daybreak, at the gaol where the philosopher awaits his fate, beseeching him to take advantage of the means offered him for his escape to a neighbouring state. In the beginning of the dialogue Socrates, who had just awoke from a sound sleep, tells his friend about a dream he had had, from which

he inferred that he would not die until the third day after, and which is remarkable as evidence that, for the Greeks of those days, Homer's words partake of something like the same sacred character which Scripture language has for a Christian public. Crito points out to Socrates how he can, having made his escape in the manner provided for, fulfil in another country his duties towards his family and his friends, the latter of whom would be disgraced in the eyes of the public if, by their negligence, they allowed him to die in prison. Socrates, in reply, argues that, according to a principle adopted long ago by himself and his friends, public opinion, if wrong, is to be disregarded; that, as a citizen of Athens, he is bound to obey the laws under whose protection he has been born and educated; that in no foreign state he will meet with the approval and respect of the public when, by escaping from gaol, he disobeys his country's law, which he has always professed to be deeply attached to; and that even in the nether regions he would not find peace, when declining to undergo the penalty imposed on him by law. The arguments used in the dialogue are as sound as those of Xenophon's Socrates, and free from a sophistry which, in a dialogue like this, would be altogether out of place; but if nothing else of Plato's works had reached us than his Crito and other dialogues of that description, Plato would not rank above Xenophon, except, perhaps, for his impressive quotation from the Iliad.

That a dialogue of this description must have been written at a time when the circumstances connected with the fate of Socrates were still fresh in the memory of the Athenian public, is hardly a matter of doubt, and the same can be said of the dialogue called after Euthyphron. The charge brought against Socrates was chiefly one of impiety. Euthyphron was known, at Athens, for having made a special study of man's duty towards the gods, and in a dialogue of much higher importance than the one called after him, the Cratylus, he is ironically represented as having, during a conversation with

Socrates, inspired the latter with an intuitive knowledge, both sudden and astounding, of matters divine. In the dialogue now referred to he asks Socrates a question which leads to a conversation about the charge of corrupting youth by introducing novel deities which had been brought against Socrates; and in the course of it he is found to have brought himself a criminal charge, of homicide, against his own father, by whose negligence a man in his service, himself put in irons for having killed a slave, had perished. His father, he added, considered the charge brought against him by his own son to be an offence against the laws by which human society was governed; but he, Euthyphron, having studied divine law, knew better. In the discussion which ensues it is first found that Euthyphron believes in those traditions about the gods which represent them as indulging in hostilities among themselves, whereas Socrates is as unwilling to share this belief as to approve of Euthyphron's conduct towards his father; but soon the meaning of the Greek word ὅσιον, which according to Euthyphron was the correct expression for the nature of this conduct, becomes the main subject for discussion.* Socrates wants a definition of the word. Euthyphron first tries "dear to," or rather "according to the will of, the gods"; then, when Socrates by a well-directed argument has shown that, although whatever is ὅσιον must be at the same time in accordance with the will of the gods, the latter expression does not give the real idea which the word is to convey, but implies a concomitant quality, Euthyphron admits that the term ὅσιον is to be applied to that part of justice which more particularly refers to men's duty towards the gods. Being

* The adjective ὅσιος can hardly be said to have an English equivalent. When, as often happened, ἱερά and ὅσια are mentioned together, the former word refers to things belonging or consecrated to the gods, whereas by ὅσια those are meant in regard to which men have duties to perform towards the gods, although, in themselves, they are human rather than divine. "Allowed or enjoined by the law which regulates the relations between gods and men" is, perhaps the fittest expression, not to translate, but to give the sense of the Greek word.

questioned, however, about the nature of this duty, Euthyphron is ultimately found to revert to his first definition, and thus to argue in a circle. The outcome, hinted at rather than fully stated, is that Euthyphron, the man boasting of his religious knowledge and never for one moment made to doubt his own superiority in this matter to his interlocutor, is unable either to give a proper explanation of his ideas on the subject, or to justify a proceeding in regard to his father which is at variance with the sentiments of thinking and well-disposed men like Socrates.

Plato's object in writing his Euthyphron cannot have been any other than to give additional evidence of his teacher's piety by contrasting his views on religious matters with those of a man well-known, and sometimes ridiculed, for his study of the relations between gods and men; and it will not do to assume that he can have attempted to gain this object at a time when the charge against Socrates and its effects must have been well-nigh forgotten by the public at large. The dialogue is, in more than one respect, superior to his Crito, and it throws some light on the teachings of the man in whose defence it was written. Although heartily joining in the worship of the gods of his country, and thankful for their revealing their will by replies of the oracle or in other ways, the poetical figments about the gods which, in the Clouds, are used by corrupters of youth for excusing immorality, but which, it must be added, had more to do with the real character of popular religion in Greece than was seen by the philosophers of the day, were in his opinion utterly inconsistent with that goodness in the highest sense of the word which was, to him, a necessary quality of divine beings. That such was his view might be, if nothing of Plato's works had survived, inferred from Xenophon's; but from the latter the distinction he appears, from this early production of Plato's mind, to have made between qualities in the abstract and those observed in matters concrete, would be hardly known or even guessed, and still less does Xenophon's

Socrates, however nicely he may cure young Glaucon of his dabbling in politics, display that expertness in logical argument which is characteristic of Euthyphron's interlocutor. But the subject of the dialogue is a special and restricted one, and the sound and close reasoning of Plato's Socrates in it does not prevent sophistry from making its appearance in such works of Plato's as refer to greater things.

Such reasoning, in fact, was not quite in keeping with those processes of mental obstetrics which formed the leading feature of Socrates' dealings with young men. Having been introduced by his friend Theodorus, a well-known geometrical scholar from Cyrene, to young Theaetetus, he informs the latter that, being a midwife's son, he has inherited a liking, and some of the qualifications required, for the practice of obstetrics. As midwives, when engaged in their professional work, had already passed the age when they could hope to become mothers once more, so he was well aware that, at his time of life, no new ideas would spring from his head; but he soon noticed when a youth had conceived such an idea, and was an expert both in discovering whether or not it was worthy of being brought to light, and in assisting the one who had conceived it to give birth to it. Plato's Socrates is constantly represented, and representing himself, as being in love with the finest specimens of the rising generation, and in Plato's Banquet he speaks of love as striving after "giving birth in what is beautiful." This subject will be reverted to in a later part of this essay; but the passage from the Theaetetus contains nothing else than a milder expression of the same sentiment, and in more than one dialogue of Plato's, when Socrates speaks of his falling or being in love with a youth, he is seen at once to apply the method he has borrowed from his mother. In doing so he proceeds, of course, by means of questions and answers, instead of indulging in lengthy arguments of his own.

Now the sophists of those days generally professed to be skilled both in the dialectic method followed by Socrates and

in holding forth about a given subject, whereas Socrates admitted his incompetence to avail himself of the latter proceeding. This difference is specially referred to in Plato's Protagoras, one of the finest and most entertaining and, at the same time, earliest dialogues of his. Earliest because in one respect it is similar to his Apology, his Crito and his Euthyphron, in another to his Lysis and other such dialogues. To the latter because no definite conclusion is arrived at about the subject discussed; to the former because its object is to paint Socrates in his true colours. Protagoras taught a philosophy of his own, repeatedly referred to by Plato; in the dialogue named after him this philosophy is not even touched upon. But as with Euthyphron the pious so Socrates is contrasted with Protagoras the sophist, and that too in such a manner as to make it clearly appear that even in matters which he does not profess to be master of, he is superior to a man who was admired all over Greece for his wisdom.

Protagoras of Abdera was one of those sophists who visited the various towns of Greece, offering to teach, for money, those branches of knowledge which in his days were considered to form part of higher education. He had written a much-read book, called "Truth"; his philosophical tenets will be referred to together with those of other schools. How high a reputation he enjoyed is seen from the introduction to the dialogue named after him. Before dawn Socrates is awoke by his young friend Hippocrates, whose excuse for calling so early is that Protagoras has arrived in town. He is staying with Callias, the wealthy son of Hipponicus, whose house is always open to sophists. Would not Socrates provide an introduction? Socrates points out that it is too early, but entertains his visitor, who is anxious to become the sophist's scholar, by a conversation about the object he has in view. If he wanted to become a medical man, he would apprentice himself to some famous physician. Does he want Protagoras to train him for the profession of a sophist?

Hippocrates does not like the question, and Socrates admits at once that his purpose may be different. But would it be safe to commit the training of his mind to a stranger, of whose profession he hardly has a proper idea? Ultimately they go, having agreed that they would first ask for information about the training which Protagoras would impart to his new scholar.

In the hall of the house of Callias they find Protagoras walking about with his host and a number of admirers, who try to catch the wise words falling from his lips. Then there are Prodicus of Ceos, well known from the story borrowed by Xenophon's Socrates and for his distinctions between the meanings of apparently synonymous words, and Hippias of Elis, who professed to be at home in every art and every branch of science, and who certainly, from what he is made to say in another of Plato's dialogues, must have been an adept in the art of making money. Socrates introduces Hippocrates as an intending scholar of Protagoras, who is ready to give the information required in the presence of his fellow-sophists. What he teaches is how to manage one's own affairs and those of the state. To a doubt uttered by Socrates whether this can be taught, seeing that the greatest statesmen of the age, whose children have been properly trained in various arts of life, have failed to impart to them that real virtue of man to which they themselves owe their greatness, he replied by means of a quasi-mythical story like that by Prodicus, followed by a demonstration that virtue—for this is, though by no means an equivalent, still the most natural translation of the Greek word ἀρετή,—is really taught to all children, and that, if sons of men of note do not equal their fathers, this is not because they have had a defective training, but because, as a training in every art will make one something of an artist but need not make him a good artist, they are behind others in natural ability. If those who, after having enjoyed a good Greek education, turn out scoundrels were placed among savages, the contrast between

them and their surroundings would be such as to make them appear superior beings.

Protagoras had, in his speech, not only referred to virtue but also to justice and modesty, and Socrates asks whether these qualities form parts of what is called virtue, and, if so, whether they are different from one another, and whether it is possible to be possessed of one of them and not of the other. The reply is in the affirmative, but now Socrates points out the weak points of it, not without making use of a certain amount of sophistry, especially when, from the use of the word ἀφροσύνη as the opposite of both σωφροσύνη—both modesty and continence may be used as English equivalents, but the real meaning will have to be given on a later occasion,—and σοφία, wisdom, he infers that these, although generally given as two distinct cardinal virtues out of four, must be the same. Ultimately Protagoras, instead of replying briefly to the questions of his adversary, comes to the front with a somewhat longer statement, evidently with a view to put a stop to the discussion. Socrates, however, is not satisfied with this, since Protagoras, though professing to be well-versed in dialectic, declines to go on replying; and the issue would have been an abrupt and rather unpleasant parting between the two, had not some of those present interposed, among them Prodicus and Hippias, both of whom are made to deliver speeches in their own peculiar styles.

By mutual agreement another subject is now entered upon. A knowledge of the poetical works of Grecian genius was considered, in those days, a most valuable result of a first-rate education, and Protagoras, who is now to question Socrates, reminds him of a poem by Simonides, which he is found to be acquainted with. How is it, asks Protagoras, that, after the poem has opened with a statement that it is difficult to be a really good man, both sound of body and mind and blameless, in the next stanza Pittacus is taken to task for stating that it is difficult to be good in the full sense of

the word?* Socrates is somewhat taken aback by this question, being by no means sure that Protagoras is wrong, and so he calls Prodicus, as the poet's countryman, to his assistance; but what Prodicus puts in is of such a nature that Socrates has to screen him by calling it a joke. His own explanation of the poem is very ingenious, too ingenious, indeed, to be correct. When he points out, from expressions used by Simonides and Pittacus, that the former speaks of a momentary rising of man to real goodness, whereas the latter must have referred to its continued existence in man; when he denies that the poet can have spoken of a man who willingly does wrong, since no one does so; he touches upon philosophical questions of the day which Simonides cannot possibly have known or thought of. He meets, however, with approval on the part of those present, and thus is found

* There are some questionable points about the text of the poem, but there can be hardly any doubt that it has been preserved by Plato in its entirety, and that it is a scolion or convivial song divided into three stanzas. As to its meaning, Protagoras is, of course, correct in adverting to the mutually contradictory statements in the first and second stanzas; but this difficulty is easily solved when it is observed that in the first one, after the opening statement, the poet points out what he has to be contented with in the absence of really good men, and then adds, in the second, that he cannot even agree with what Pittacus says, "'t is difficult to be good," since real goodness is reserved to the gods, whereas man's conduct is so dependent on circumstances as to render it impossible for him to be blameless and fully up to the mark, only the favour of the gods enabling him to follow the right path with some degree of consistency, so that anyone not wilfully committing a disgraceful act must be welcome to those who know that even the gods do not fight against what must happen. The whole poem is characteristic of the age in which the poet lived, when the gods of Xenophanes and other philosophers were hardly known to the public, and when the belief in the popular deities went hand in hand with a deep feeling of man's dependence on their power, but when no such moral ideas, inculcated either by religious or philosophical agencies, were prevailing among the people as to enable them to make light of that weakness and misery of man which not only limited his existence to a very brief period, but even, during life, rendered him dependent on influences over which he had no control.

to beat Protagoras on a field where he himself has admitted not to be his equal. This is evidently one of Plato's main objects in writing his dialogue.

Another victory, however, is in store for Socrates. Callias and his friends are anxious to have the discussion re-opened which, a few moments before, was interrupted by the reluctance shown by Protagoras to go on with it; and the latter, who then stated that between the various virtues referred to there was a radical difference, now admits that some of them—wisdom, justice, etc.—are closely connected with one another; but, says he, with valour the case is different, for many men of undoubted bravery are found to be unjust and unwise. Socrates then questions him in such a manner as gradually, and without giving any offence, to circumvent him; and ultimately he is compelled, much against his wish but to the visible joy of Prodicus and Hippias, to admit that valour is knowledge and therefore akin to wisdom, and cowardice ignorance. Socrates, at the end of the discussion, points out that Protagoras and he himself have unwittingly changed sides, his contention being at first that virtue could not be taught, whereas it could be taught when founded on knowledge; but at the same time he admits that the subject requires a fuller investigation.

Now this latter part of the Protagoras is not only marked by a sophistry on the part of the winning party which, though slightly less apparent than that of the former passage of arms between the two antagonists, cannot fail to strike any reader of the present day, but also by two peculiarities worth referring to. The one is that one of the main points argued by Socrates is that pleasure, or enjoyment, is good in itself, only its consequences making it expedient, at times, to forego it. This contention is totally at variance with the whole tenor of Plato's philosophy as known from such later dialogues of his as the Gorgias and the Philebus. Again, not only does the question what knowledge really is remain unsolved in the dialogue on it, the Theaetetus, to be reserved

probably for that dialogue which was to follow the Politicus but never appeared; but in the Laches, which cannot be much younger than the Protagoras, the theory that bravery is knowledge is brought forward by Nicias, but treated by Socrates as an exploded one. The most likely explanation of this difference between the Protagoras and other dialogues of a slightly later time is that the former is a production of Plato's genius at a time when, to his mind, the great questions of life were still unsolved, but when, thankful to Socrates for what he owed him, he thought more of representing him as being head and shoulders above his contemporaries, than of attempting to find the correct answer to the then much-discussed question whether or not virtue can be taught.

Those who are averse to sophistry, even when indulged in by Socrates and Plato, will feel less offended by it when taking the fact into account that, among the Athenians of their days, higher education was in its infancy. From the sophist who set up as a professor of the military art, and who simply because he was the first to do so, found pupils at Athens, a knowledge of logic could hardly by expected, especially at a time when even such elementary principles of grammar as are now taught in schools, and are of no small assistance for regulating one's power of thought, had for the most part not been laid down by anybody. The effect of this is seen from a dialogue in which the professor of tactics is one of the chief personages, but which is named after his brother Euthydemus. Its object is not altogether unlike that of the Protagoras, but Protagoras himself is represented by Plato as a man who, although not proof against sophistry, at all events gives utterance to sensible thought, not unworthy of one professing to give instruction in matters of the highest importance, whereas Euthydemus and his brother, as we find them in Plato's dialogue, are stared at by men of our days as priding themselves on uttering the most stupid trash imaginable. Still the Eristical school

of which they were precursors—the school which delighted in logical puzzles,—remained in existence till long after Plato's death.

Euthydemus is introduced to readers of the dialogue by Socrates, who has seen him and his brother Dionysodorus at a gymnasium, accompanied by a few pupils but evidently anxious to get some more. It happens that Clinias, the youthful son of a near relative of Alcibiades, enters the gymnasium, followed by a number of admirers, one of whom is Plato's friend Ctesippus. Like Protagoras the brothers profess to teach virtue in the Athenian sense of the word, in other words whatever is required to hold one's own and duly to take part in public affairs. When Socrates introduces Clinias to them as a young man with many friends, who would like nothing better than to see him induced by them to cultivate his mind, they are ready at once to show what they can do. From the very first, however, they are found to make it their object to put such questions to him as he cannot answer in one way or another without their proving that he is wrong; and so they go on, alternately taking him in hand and bewildering him, until Socrates interferes by telling Clinias that the two only play with him, as an introductory ceremony for their initiating him in their wisdom, and by himself questioning him in such a manner that he may see the use of learning, and that the brothers may become aware of what is expected from them.

On resuming their task, they begin by asking the friends of Clinias whether they really want him to become a wise man; and when they reply that they do, their second question is whether they want him to perish, since they want him no longer to be what he is. This question, which was in accordance with the views held by the Ionic school at Athens, * greatly irritates Ctesippus, who charges the brothers with telling a falsehood when they insinuate that he

* Plat. Theaet. 166 B.

wants Clinias to die. "Is it," asks Euthydemus in reply, "possible to tell a falsehood? Can anything be said which is not?" Now this question was not a puzzle to embarrass youngsters, but it was connected with those attempts at formulating ideas about ontology which were in those days made in quarters influenced by Protagoras and other sophists. Their tenets, as shortly afterwards appeared from a new encounter between Ctesippus and the brothers, led them to deny the possibility of contradicting a statement, on the ground that only one account of each thing could be given. Ctesippus is puzzled; Socrates asks whether, if it is impossible to utter a falsehood, it is likewise impossible to hold a false opinion and to take a false step; and being answered in the affirmative, his next question, which he puts with some reluctance, is what business the brothers have to teach young men how to keep the right path, when there is no wrong one to take. The end is that Socrates, being loth to see a quarrel arise, resumes his conversation with Clinias on the necessity of obtaining knowledge so as to ensure happiness.

The question between them is what branch of knowledge they have to select in order to attain their object; and after discussing a good many of them, Socrates is at his wits' end, and Euthydemus is asked to come to the rescue. And now comes the most portentous part of the debate. Euthydemus begins by stating that both he and Socrates are in possession of the knowledge required; for, asks he, are there not things you know, are you not therefore a man of knowledge, and is there anything a man of knowledge does not know? Socrates attempts to qualify his replies by reservations, but the brothers do not allow him to do so; and by constantly putting new questions as results from replies given, they arrive at wonderful conclusions. They come off second best when Ctesippus, who, sharp-witted as he is, has soon learnt to repay them in their own coin, asks them questions both ridiculous and insulting,

without, however, succeeding in silencing them. Ultimately Socrates is first asked, by the brothers, what kind of artisans it behoves to paint, and then whether he wants the painter to be painted; and again, having replied to a question that the owner of livestock is entitled to sell or kill them, he is asked whether he has a tutelar god, and whether, as gods are live beings, he has a right to treat him too in this manner. * This last question is loudly cheered, and Socrates has to admit his defeat, adding, however, that men of his stamp would prefer a defeat to a victory in such an argument.

As in the Protagoras so in the Euthydemus Socrates is contrasted with sophists, and however inferior Euthydemus may appear to be, he is, in the Cratylus, named with Protagoras as the holder of definite and well-known philosophical views. But the dialogue ends with a conversation between Socrates and Crito which would appear to indicate that it was written with an ulterior object. Crito had been told, by a man in good repute for wisdom at Athens, that among the philosophers of the day, Euthydemus and his brother were the cleverest, but their talk was not worth listening to, and neither should philosophy be studied, nor should Socrates allow himself to be questioned by such people. This man was not a public speaker, but his occupation was to write speeches for others. On this class of men, who had already been contemptuously referred to in the conversation between Socrates and Clinias, the former now passes a most disparaging judgment, stating that they held a middle place between politicians and philosophers, but were inferior to both, and hated philosophers, especially such as Euthydemus, as they considered them to stand in their light. This can, of course, have no other meaning than that their

* Of course this reads better in Greek than in English, the word ζῷα, here translated by livestock, being used for all animated beings. The painter too is not found in the Greek text, but a literal translation of the words used will not do.

arguments, whether political or forensic, were no better than those used by Euthydemus and appropriated at once by Ctesippus. It is just possible that Plato, in this passage, refers to enemies of Socrates, but it is more likely that his remarks originate with an ill-feeling existing between himself and the followers of the profession of which, at that time, Lysias was the leader, a tendency to disparage them being also met with in his Phaedrus. This point, however, is not connected with the subject dealt with in this chapter, and will be reserved for a subsequent one.

A third sophist contrasted with Socrates by Plato is Hippias, the one present at the debate between Socrates and Protagoras in the house of Callias. He is, however, a less interesting personage than either Protagoras or Euthydemus. Than Protagoras because, as represented by Plato, he is simply a wind-bag; than Euthydemus because he does not represent, like the two brothers, a type existing in ancient Greece and hardly, if at all, known in our days, but one which even now is often met with, although it is rather a rare occurrence at the present time that such individuals find, as in Plato's days, a public ready to admire them. One might be tempted to think Plato's Hippias a caricature, but seeing that he was a contemporary of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, it would be rash to assume this. He is a great man in his way, frequently charged by the state he belongs to with what is now called diplomatic business, and, whether engaged in this or not, always ready to make money by his wonderful talents; but when, in the longer dialogue of the two called after him, he is asked by Socrates what is beauty, in other words that which causes things to be beautiful,* his reply is to the effect that a handsome girl is a beauty; and when Socrates tries to reason with

* In Greek "beauty" has the substantive *κάλλος* as its equivalent. What is here translated by "beauty" is the expression *τὸ καλόν*, which in French would be more accurately rendered by "le beau" and in consequence of this the reply of Hippias as given here in English is not

him, he either readily agrees with any statement he is asked to endorse, without feeling in the least that his interlocutor is twisting him round his finger, or indignantly denies the truth of a proposition in which one of the lower things of life is mentioned. All the time his attitude shows a stolid confidence in his own ability and broad views, while Socrates, after many an attempt or quasi-attempt at finding a proper definition of beauty, ultimately arrives at one which does not look very satisfactory, and which Plato may or may not have thought the correct one, but for which nowhere in his works a better one is substituted, and which, judging by a passage in his Phaedrus, he may have acquiesced in. According to it, that which is called beautiful is the pleasure enjoyed through the organs of sight and hearing; and the reason why this pleasure, though the organs through which it is conveyed are not the same, is one and at the same time different from all other pleasures, is that it is not fraught with evil consequences. As to the smaller dialogue likewise called Hippias, it simply contains an argument between Socrates and Hippias, consequent on an address by the latter about a subject connected with Homer. The argument is, at the end, stated by Socrates to be at variance with his real sentiments, and hardly any light is thrown by it on Plato's philosophy.

Of the dialogues in which Socrates is represented as exercising his own peculiar art of mental obstetrics, the Lysis and Charmides would appear to belong to an earlier period of Plato's career than the Theaetetus. They have much in common, so much that it will not do to assign them to different times of Plato's life. So have the Charmides and the Laches, in the latter of which, however, the chief personages are not youths but men holding high positions in life. In the Charmides one of the four cardinal virtues is the subject for discussion, in the Laches another. In neither,

quite as it should be, though sufficiently so as to show the mistake he makes.

as has been stated already, is a satisfactory conclusion arrived at; nor is this the case in the Theaetetus itself, where knowledge * is the subject, whereas with the Sophist the period begins when Plato has got the better of his doubts. So there is good reason to put down the Lysis, Charmides and Laches among the earlier productions of Plato's mind.

In the Lysis the poor fellow who is in love with the hero of the dialogue has been bothering his friends with poems celebrating the greatness of the noble family to which the object of his love belongs; and Socrates asks him whether he does not see that, by taking this course, he simply promotes in the youth he is anxious to befriend, the growth of a pride and fastidiousness which are sure to defeat the object he has in view. The dialogue then ensuing between Socrates and Lysis is intended for a lesson to the disconsolate lover. Your parents are fond of you, says Socrates, but does your father allow you to use his race horses or even his span of mules? Is your mother prepared to have the wool she works with ransacked by you? Of course Lysis replies that he is not allowed to do anything of the kind, but when his parents want somebody to read to them, he is at liberty to do so, and why? Because this is a matter of which he knows

* *Σοφία* or *φρόνησις*, wisdom or intelligence,—for the terms are used somewhat promiscuously by Plato,—is to the Greek mind one of the four virtues; *ἐπιστήμη*, knowledge, is hardly so, though in the opening part of the Theaetetus it is identified with wisdom, but in Plato's mind the difference between virtues and branches of knowledge, or arts, was much less clearly defined than one would think. To men of our time it will seem strange when, in the Gorgias, Plato opposes the art of cookery, that of adorning the body, and that of sophistry, as counterfeit arts, to medicine, gymnastics and the art of legislation respectively, but a fourth counterfeit art, rhetoric, to justice. So there is a closer relation between Theaetetus on knowledge and the two dialogues on *σωφροσύνη* and bravery than would appear at first sight, and it is, of course, natural that the two virtues which ranked lower than wisdom, should be taken in hand before knowledge.

everything. Then follows a rather strange string of questions about the Persian king, who would trust Lysis, in matters of cookery, medicine, &c., better than his own son if the former was possessed of more knowledge about them, and ultimately Lysis is told that only those who know how to make themselves useful can count upon gaining the friendship of others. "That's the way to talk to youngsters," would Socrates have added, had it not been for the sight of the despondent lover, who was hiding himself behind others so as to catch a glimpse of Lysis without being seen by him.

Lysis having been joined by his young friend Menexenus, Socrates tells them that his great object in life is to get friends; but to whom is the term applicable? Is it to those who are fond of others, or to those who are dear to them? Here it is that the Greek adjective equivalent to the substantive "friend," being used both in an active and a passive sense, leads Socrates to indulge in a bit of sophistry not quite as bad as the worst specimens given by Euthydemus, but still showing the temptation to make use of sophistry which existed in Plato's days. As the argument does not lead to satisfactory results, it is abandoned, and an attempt follows to make "birds of one feather flock together" the foundation of friendship. But can there be friendship among the wicked, and are the good in want of one another? Rather than those who are of similar dispositions those of contrary ones might be apt to become friends, since what the one is wanting in is met with in the other. It will be said, however, that hostile and friendly are opposites, and can there be friendship between them? Would it not be better to start from the supposition that the causes which lead to friendship are neither found in the wicked nor in the good, but that those who are neither good nor bad strive after the friendship of what is good, for the purpose of getting rid of evil? Still, neither is there always to be a purpose, nor is the desire for friendship dependent on the existence of evil. The

desire is evidence of a want, and as this want can only be supplied by what is in close relation with the one who feels it, the friendship resulting from it must be mutual. Lysis does not like this conclusion; his lover is beside himself with joy. But is not, asks Socrates, this relation very much akin to the similarity which, as it has been agreed upon, cannot be the cause of friendship, and does not, for this reason, the whole argument fall to the ground? This question has been barely put when the slaves employed as pedagogues order their youthful charges to go home, and so the discussion comes to an untimely end.

Charmides, in the dialogue called by his name, is introduced to Socrates, who has just come home from a campaign, by his cousin Critias. A mere lad when Socrates left for the front, he had grown up to be a youth of splendid appearance, and as he had complained the day before of a headache for which Socrates, according to Critias, has brought a remedy from a Thracian doctor, the two enter at once into conversation. The remedy was not to be used without an incantation, and the object of the incantation was to purify the patient's mind. But Charmides, said Critias, was as distinguished by his pure and well-directed mind as by his corporal beauty. If so, says Socrates, the incantation is unnecessary; but would Charmides himself, though well known as sprung from a race where the best possible traditions had always prevailed, venture upon affirming that he really was possessed of the virtue he was credited with by his cousin? And so it happens that the nature of the virtue itself—σωφροσύνη—is first investigated.

To give the proper meaning of the word is, in our days, by no means difficult. Its derivation shows it to denote that disposition of mind which saves those possessed of it from going wrong, and this is why it allows of various translations—self-control, continence, modesty,—not one of which expresses its full sense. But the Greeks in Plato's times were no etymologists, and so the question put to Charmides

about the meaning of the word was not easily answered by him. His first reply—that the virtue referred to consisted in behaving quietly and properly, in gait and conversation—was promptly met by instances given by Socrates that quietness and slowness were by no means desirable qualities, whether displayed in corporal or in mental operations. Again, that modesty which is akin to bashfulness and whose name was in good repute in Greece on account of its being used to denote the reverence due to gods and men, was given by Charmides as a likely definition, but with no better success. Does not Homer say, asks Socrates, that bashfulness will not do for those who have wants to be provided for?

Now Charmides comes to the front with a third definition, which, says he, he had heard from somebody else. The virtue under discussion consisted in minding one's own business. Socrates at once guesses that the "somebody else" is Critias, who denies, however, the soft impeachment. But the question now put by Socrates to Charmides, whether the effect of his definition was that nobody is to do anything for anybody else, causes Critias to come to the rescue and undertake the defence of the definition. His argument is, at first, rather confused, and the only remarkable feature of it is that, having quoted a line of Hesiod equivalent to "labour is no disgrace", he, the thorough aristocrat, is made by Plato to name in one breath the shoemaker, the fishmonger and the prostitute as engaged in work to which the poet's remark could on no account apply. What the discussion further brings to light is that Critias considers the well-known inscription on the gate of the temple of Delphi—know yourself,—to be nothing else than an injunction to cultivate the virtue which Charmides has a right to lay claim to. If so, says Socrates, it is evident that we have here to do with a branch of knowledge; and what is either the effect or the subject of this knowledge? And now Critias enters upon an argument about a branch of knowledge which has no other subject than knowledge itself.

Socrates then first contends that, judging by the analogy of other functions of body and mind, there cannot be a branch of knowledge which has no other subject to deal with than other branches of knowledge and itself; then, when Critias himself appears to be altogether at sea, he vouchsafes to admit the possibility, but questions the reality, of the new branch of knowledge, on account of its leading to no result; again, he admits a possible result, viz. that, by its influence on the minds of those in possession of it, it may lead to the establishment of a condition of affairs in which every function known in human society would be assigned to those having a knowledge of it. But would, even if this came to pass, a real advantage be gained? Would happiness be secured if all things were done with the aid of knowledge? Say a man was in possession of all knowledge imaginable; what would be the knowledge required to make him happy? That of good and evil, replies Critias. If that is the case, resumes Socrates, it is not the virtue praised as being the knowledge of knowledge but simply the knowledge of good and evil which is required, a knowledge which does not embrace other branches, and which is essentially different from the one recommended. So, after all, the investigation into the nature of the virtue for which Charmides has been praised, has led to no other result than that Charmides himself is left in doubt what that virtue is.

The meaning of the inscription on the temple gate is in itself sufficiently clear. "Know yourself" is simply an advice given to the visitors of the temple not to strive after that which is beyond their individual powers; and this lesson is of exactly the same nature as those given by the other two inscriptions recorded: "do not go too far in anything," and "when you stand security, you will rue it." This, however, is denied by Critias, who while rightly stating that the idea expressed by "know yourself" might as well be given by an injunction to practise the virtue under discussion, considers the other inscriptions to have been added by men who did

not understand the real meaning of the principal one. But what is meant by this knowledge of knowledge which, according to Critias, is alluded to in the inscription? Is it a mere man of straw, set up by Plato simply to demolish it, or is there a doctrine behind it actually preached at Athens? The former supposition is hardly tenable, the idea advocated by Critias being too novel and not sufficiently plausible to be a mere figment of Plato's imagination. The latter is to some extent favoured by the closing part of the dialogue, where Critias, by strongly advising Charmides to take Socrates as his guide, seems to admit that he himself had been induced to take the wrong path.

Who then was the man whose ideas were opposed by Plato in his Charmides? Who else than the only one, besides Plato himself, who after having benefited by what he learnt from Socrates, founded a philosophical school which was for ever to make its mark on the history of the world. Epicurus, who under the influence of the tendencies of his days drifted into the shallows of natural science, may have given his name to it, still it is Aristippus whom Horace rightly describes as having, by his doctrine, enabled him to say: "mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor." As the father of strict individualism—an individualism which would have rested on its true foundations had he lived under the influence of ideas which the Greeks wondered at on being informed of the belief of a whole nation in them, but which Christianity has spread all over the world,—he made it a point, as stated in Xenophon's Reminiscences, not to belong to any state whatever, so as neither to be bound by the duties incumbent on those meddling with public affairs, nor dependent on ruling classes; and is this not the very thing recommended by Critias as the essence of the first and highest virtue of youth? But to be able to mind one's own business, knowledge of self was required in a higher sense than that of the Delphic inscription. It was to be the knowledge of whatever is required for holding one's own; and this, as it implies acquaintance

with the motives by which the world is ruled, may have been defined by him in terms somewhat similar to those which Critias uses in describing that peculiar kind of knowledge which, in his opinion, constituted one of the highest virtues of man.

Bravery, valour, courage,—all three are proper renderings of the Greek word used for another of the four virtues,—is the subject of Plato's Laches. Two old men, sons of famous statesmen but themselves little known, since their education has been neglected, are anxious to give their sons a better training, and for this reason they invite two of the best generals of the time, Nicias and Laches, to accompany them to a performance by a man who has made a study of the handling of arms, and is prepared to give lessons in it. When he has done they ask the generals whether it is advisable to have their sons trained by him. Socrates happens to be present on the occasion, and the generals ask why he is not consulted about the education of the youngsters. It is then found that not only is Socrates often mentioned by the latter when taking their meals with their parents, but that his father was a friend to the old men, who now willingly associate him with their other advisers. But then Nicias is found to consider a training by the drill-master very useful, whereas Laches, who has seen the man cut a very sorry figure in battle, shows the utmost contempt for him and his art. Socrates is unwilling to decide between these two opinions, but advises the old men to go on consulting the generals, for they are in a position to hold sound views on education, and what is of greater importance than to have one's sons properly educated? The fathers are at once ready to follow this advice, but Nicias says that he is too well acquainted with Socrates not to know what he means by it. Both he and Laches will have to undergo a regular examination by Socrates; but, adds he, I do not care, for I am accustomed to it. Laches is not, but he has no objection to be taken in hand by Socrates, whose sterling qualities he has learnt

to appreciate on the battle-field. So the training of the lads towards virtue, in the Greek sense of the word, is to be discussed; but first of all comes the question what virtue is, and Socrates is of opinion that, instead of taking the whole, they had better begin with valour as a part of it.

Laches, being questioned by Socrates, gives a definition of valour akin to that of beauty by Hippias, but sounding a good deal better in the mouth of a military man than in that of a sophist. Valour, he says, is to remain in the ranks and fight. Socrates points out that heavy armed infantry may show their valour by remaining in the ranks, but that with Scythian cavalry and others it is a different case; and when Laches comes to the front with a definition in better form—that valour is persistence—he is asked whether persistence in error is a virtue. Not even, argues Socrates, is persistence coupled with wisdom always held to be bravery; men who venture into danger without being acquainted with means to encounter it, are often praised for their courage. Laches having failed to solve the problem, Nicias is appealed to, and he tells his companion in arms that he knows nothing about the matter, since valour is nothing else than wisdom and knowledge: the knowledge of what is dangerous and what is not. Are wild boars and lions not brave, asks Socrates, and where have they studied valour? On the whole, Nicias gets off worse than Laches, though by no means in his own opinion; and the end is that no conclusion is arrived at about the nature of valour, but that Socrates is recommended by both of the generals as best able to take charge of the young men.

There are other dialogues of Plato's which are of even greater importance for those anxious to study his relations with, and opinion of, Socrates than most of those mentioned in the present chapter. In this statement, however, is not included his Theages, where Socrates is introduced giving to the father of a young man who wants to be his scholar, an idea of that mysterious voice which warned him often against what he and others were about to do, and which is mentioned

in other dialogues too as making itself heard, whereas it was silent when he had to suffer death, showing that, for him, death was no evil. In the Theages such repetitions and reminiscences of passages from other dialogues are met with, that it is difficult to believe in its being genuine. Nor are the Rivals referred to, a short and well-written dialogue in which a young Athenian is cured of wrong ideas about philosophy as having as its object to know something of everything; for it is of little importance for the knowledge of Plato's views, and like the Theages contains a goodly amount of matter found elsewhere in Platonic dialogues. But then there are the Banquet and the Phaedo, both evidently written as much with a view to give an idea of Socrates, as for the purpose of solving philosophical problems. Still, as both of them are intimately connected with important points of Plato's doctrine, it is preferable to discuss them at a later stage.

## § VIII. PLATO AND THE OLDER SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY.

Both the Ionic school of philosophy and that of Elea were known and not devoid of influence at Athens in days either remembered by Plato or shortly before his time. Of the Ionic school the branch of which Heraclitus of Ephesus was the head, would appear to have been most popular, although Anaxagoras too was not unknown to the Athenian public. Parmenides, the head of the Eleatic school, was said to have visited Athens when Socrates was quite a young man, and two Athenian generals of note, both mentioned by Thucydides, are named in one of Plato's dialogues as having studied under Zeno, successor to Parmenides. Plato himself is reported to have been initiated in the doctrine of Heraclitus by Cratylus, and in the dialogue named after the latter the tenets of the school he belonged to are frequently alluded to.

The followers of Heraclitus are called by Plato the ῥέοντες —one might translate "the men of the currents,"—since

in their opinion nature was subject to currents of never ceasing change. Nobody, said Heraclitus, can enter the same river twice, the water he first waded through having been carried to the sea. The Eleatic school held contrary views, since to them the immutability of what is, as far as the fact of its being is concerned, was unquestionable. Of the sophists whom Socrates had to deal with, Protagoras is named by Plato among those holding views similar to those of Heraclitus: His peculiar doctrine, laid down in his book on "Truth," was that man was the measure of everything, and he made it subservient to a subjectivism, if the word be allowed, pushed to its utmost limits; but although in the Theaetetus, where it is refuted, a mathematician of note is introduced as being rather partial to it, it is alluded to already, in the Cratylus as hardly such as to meet with approval. In the same dialogue the doctrine of Euthydemus is given in the words that "for everybody everything existed (or everybody had everything) equally together and always," from which it is inferred that virtue and vice were always common to all. This is all that is known about it, but from the dialogue called after him, it is seen that he too made use of scraps borrowed from the Ionic school.

In Plato's Cratylus the doctrines of Heraclitus, in his Parmenides those of the Eleatic school, are mentioned in terms clearly showing that he had studied them. Both dialogues are older than the Theaetetus. The Cratylus because it contains references to the tenets of the Ionic school which would be altogether out of place after the wholesale condemnation of those tenets in the dialogue on knowledge. The Parmenides because it cannot have been written after the Sophist, in which Plato gives his own ontology taking a nameless Eleatic philosopher as his mouthpiece, and because both in the Theaetetus (p. 183 E) and in the Sophist (p. 217 C) there are allusions to the meeting between Socrates and Parmenides of which the dialogue called after the latter is represented as containing the record.

The Cratylus, though its ulterior object is to demonstrate the fallacy of the doctrine of Heraclitus, has language as its ostensible subject. This subject is introduced by Hermogenes, who wants Socrates to decide between his view of it and that of Cratylus. In his opinion names have been given to things simply in consequence of an agreement, there being no reason why, another agreement being substituted for it, a man should not be called a horse and a horse a man. Cratylus, on the other hand, contends that things get their names in accordance with their natures, and that, for this reason, Hermogenes cannot be his friend's name. This was simply a joke. Hermes was the god of luck, and Hermogenes, though his name would show him to have been generated by Hermes, was as regards his financial affairs about the unluckiest man of Athens. Socrates is found to agree with Cratylus. He believes, and so does Hermogenes, that it is possible to give a wrong account of a thing, and as verbal accounts have nouns as their constituent parts, there is no reason to believe that the latter cannot also be wrong. Those holding the views of Protagoras and Euthydemus might think differently, but whoever disagreed with them had to admit that everything was to be done according to its own nature, and to speak was to do a thing. As in weaving, a shuttle is an instrument made of wood by a carpenter, who can make it of different kinds of wood, but whose work is only then as it should be when it has the qualities required in it by the weaver, so, in speaking, a name or noun—the Greeks had but one word to express both notions,—is an instrument of which letters and syllables are the materials, made by the lawgiver but judged, as to its fitness for the purpose it has to serve, by those versed in dialectic. Now the question is how to judge whether a name is, or is not, as it should be. When Socrates is informed by Homer that to a river or a bird one name is given by the gods and another by men, he takes it for granted that the name given by the gods is the more suitable one, but

how is he to find the reason of the difference? When, however, Hector's son was, according to Homer, called by one name by his parents and by another by the Trojan public, there might be reasons to prefer the latter, and indeed, what better name than Astyanax, the ruler of the town, could be given to the son of the man by whose valour the town was saved from destruction? And so, led on by questions put by Hermogenes, Socrates enters upon a series of etymological attempts, explaining the names of gods, objects of nature and moral ideas, which takes up about half of the dialogue, and which makes him display a readiness and ingenuity which he himself ascribes to the influence of conversation he had lately had with Euthyphron, the great authority on matters divine.

These etymological fancies should, of course, not be judged by any other standard than that of Plato's own days, and when they are wrong or even ridiculous, this cannot, in itself, be taken as a reason why Plato himself should have viewed them in this light. But there are some which it is hardly possible for any one to take seriously. Ἑστία means in Greek, the hearth; that the goddess Hestia is nothing else than an impersonation of the family hearth is so clearly seen from whatever is recorded about her worship, that every Greek must have felt it. Still her name is stated by Socrates to be a distorted form of *ἐσία*, which, says he, was an old word equivalent to *οὐσία*, the verbal noun derived from *εἶναι*, to be.* And on the whole, remarks are constantly made both by Socrates himself and by Hermogenes which can be taken as evidence that the whole of this part of the dialogue is nothing else than a continuous irony, so that it is the height of folly to take certain statements met with in it, such as that about star-worship being the oldest form of religion in

*The passage in p. 401 *καὶ ὅτι γε αὖ ἡμεῖς τό τῆς οὐσίας μετέχον Ἑστίαν φαμέν*, is unintelligible, but it is easily corrected when for *Ἑστίαν* is substituted *ὅ ἐστι*, which words are also used for "that which is" in p. 423 E. See also Parm. p. 134 A.

Greece, as seriously meant. But while engaged in explaining names, Socrates is suddenly made to discover that he has hit upon "a swarm of wisdom", viz. that the true key to them is the doctrine of Heraclitus and his school, the groundwork of them being evidently the eternal motion produced by the currents.

But, says Hermogenes when Socrates has reached the end of his discourse, why not explain those very words denoting currents and motion from which all the others are derived? There must be, is the reply, certain primary words, which are not capable of any such explanation as can be applied to those derived from them. This statement, however, is followed by an attempt at explaining them which is, for linguistical scholars, the great and conspicuous merit of the dialogue, as a first and most ingenious attempt at investigating the origin of language. We must begin, says Socrates, with the letters of the alphabet as the component parts of words, and it would appear that these letters were, in forming words, used according to a regular system by those who have made language that which it is. The letter ρ was taken by them to express motion; the ι to denote that thinness which enables one element of matter quickly to penetrate into, and make its way through, another. Sibilants are naturally fit to express flatulence and fermentation; δ and τ, as to pronounce them the tongue is pressed against the front edge of the palate, are to be used in words expressing binding and halting. To give the idea of smoothness λ is the proper letter; combined with γ it joins that of stickiness to it. A couple of vowels follow, and so the ground is laid for a theory of language.

Cratylus, who till then had been a patient listener, now expresses his unqualified approval of whatever Socrates has said; and well he might, all the derivations suggested being in accordance with the tenets of the school of which he was an adherent. But when Socrates starts the question whether or not a lawgiver can bestow unsuitable names on things, Cratylus, holding as he does the ontological view of his school that things that are cannot be false, as this would imply

that they are not, no longer agrees with his friend. Being reminded that he himself had denied the propriety of the name given to Hermogenes, he replies that he had denied its being his name; and although, by comparing names to pictures, Socrates tries to get an admission from him that, as an image in paint can be incorrect, so a name can be, and points out that, if he takes a different standard for pictures to that for names, he must necessarily drift into the opinion given by Hermogenes that names are given to things by agreement, he sticks to his point.

It is then that Socrates asks him whether he admits the correctness of the derivations given and of the remarks about the nature of various letters of the alphabet, and whether there are not actually words, instances of which are given, in which those letters are not used in accordance with the principles they represent. There would, replies Cratylus, not be that uniformity observed in the derivation of words, if they owed their origin to anything else than true knowledge. How, says Socrates, if this uniformity is doubtful? How if other derivations, quite as good as those given in favour of the doctrine of motion and currents, can be put forward by the partisans of immovability and immutability? He had, in his etymological attempts, represented knowledge, ἐπιστήμη, as the faithful following, by the mind, of things moved on by currents, but had admitted that, this being the case, the ε should be taken off, probably because πιστήμη reminded him of πιστός, faithful. Why not, says he now, keep the ε, and explain the word as expressing the act of making the mind take its stand on things as they are? Having added several other derivations of a similar kind, he asks whether, even if they should be fewer in number than those given in the course of his conversation with Hermogenes, the evidence supplied by them should be less depended upon. But then, when all things are on the move, is the mental perception (γνῶσις) of them to be immovable, or is it subject to the same motion and change? Is, if the latter proposition is

agreed to, the contention tenable that all names must be and remain the right ones? There are those, adds Socrates, who believe in immutable ideas of beauty and the like, and while they are consistent in putting their faith in mental perception, the followers of a school which, by considering all things to be subject to continued motion and change, does not even allow them to be mentally perceived and known, are not. There the dialogue ends, Cratylus admitting that the view of matters referred to by Socrates is worthy of consideration, but for the present not abandoning the tenets which, till then, he has professed to hold.

The Platonic *ideas*, in that sense of the word in which it is used as denoting a leading feature of Platonic philosophy, are mentioned in the concluding part of the Cratylus as they are in the Euthyphron, where that which is in itself ὅσιον and imparts this quality to things and acts, is opposed to things and acts in which this quality is manifested. So they are in the earlier part of the dialogue, but not as referring to abstract qualities expressed by adjectives used substantively in the neuter gender, but as to things existing and in common use, the carpenter who makes a new shuttle being stated not to make it after the model of one which has just been broken, but after the idea of a shuttle which is before his mind, and which he is to reproduce in wood. They are referred to much more pointedly and fully in Plato's Parmenides, which may be, but need not be, slightly older than the Cratylus, but certainly, like the latter, belongs to the period when Plato was still seeking for truth in existing systems of philosophy.

Parmenides, whose name is always mentioned in Plato's dialogues in terms of the highest respect, was the chief, and can be called the founder, of the Eleatic school of philosophy, although Xenophanes and it would appear even earlier thinkers were named as his predecessors. The principles of his doctrine were given in a poem, of which remnants are in existence equalled, in grandeur of thought and language, only

by Rome's great didactic poet. Instead of, like the men of the Ionic school, attempting to find the principle in which things have their origin either in primary elements, in natural or mental forces, or in both, he took the abstract idea of being, οὐσία, as the true subject for philosophy, and the one principle of the existence of things; and while denying that there could be anything which was not, he insisted on the oneness of that which was.

The dialogue called after Parmenides begins with a reference to the philosopher's visit to Athens, when he was on the wrong side of sixty, and was accompanied by his much younger friend Zeno. Socrates was then a youth, and a record of a conversation between him and the philosophers had been, according to Plato, preserved by an Athenian who had studied under Zeno. This record is stated to be reproduced in the dialogue. A treatise by Zeno had been read, and had been attentively listened to by Socrates, who observed however that it made on him the impression as if in reality it contained nothing else than what Parmenides had already stated in a different form. Parmenides had urged the oneness of things existing; Zeno attempted to prove, which came to the same, that their plurality was impossible, since it would imply that things were, at the same time, similar and dissimilar to one another. Zeno, to some extent, admits the truth of this observation. He had written his treatise to show that, if the doctrine of Parmenides might lead to very strange results, that of his opponents brought still worse ones; but it was a work of his youth, and had been published without his consent. But, says Socrates, is there not an abstract idea of similarity and one of dissimilarity, and cannot existing things partake of both at the same time? Unity and plurality exist together in things which are seen, such as man, but the great question is whether between the ideas themselves there can be a communication enabling them to mix and again to separate, and it would be a splendid thing if this question were solved.

This was rather bold language for a youngster, but instead of resenting it the philosophers exchanged nods and smiles of approval. Parmenides compliments Socrates on his early predilection for philosophical research, especially after hearing that he owes his thoughts about similarity and dissimilarity to himself; and then he refers to the ideas of justice and of beauty, of man and the elements of nature, even of things like hair and mud. Socrates has his doubts about the great objects met with in nature, and would be afraid of falling into absurdities if he thought of ideas of vile things; but this utterance of his is ascribed by Parmenides to his youth and his want of philosophical study. Other questions by Parmenides follow, first of all whether, when things share in the quality involved in an idea, they take to themselves the whole or part of it; and Socrates becomes aware that by answering this question in either way he gets into difficulty, which becomes even worse when it is pointed out to him that the method by which the human mind is made to perceive the existence of the ideas he has referred to, presents this danger that they do not get a definite shape but have a tendency to be multiplied *ad infinitum*. Cannot, asks Socrates the ideas simply exist in the minds of men? The ideas, replies Parmenides, must refer to something, and that something cannot be a thought. Then Socrates tries to represent the ideas as self-existent models, after which things are formed and to which they are similar. A thing cannot be similar to an idea, says Parmenides, adding, as another reason why this conception of definite ideas gives trouble, that it is very difficult to refute those who deny the possibility of their being known by the human mind. They cannot, says he, have their seats in the mind when existing by themselves. Again, the mutual relations between ideas are not the same as those between things. Slave and master are both men; slavery and authority are ideas. Would Socrates admit that the latter cannot be understood by men? If so, if they belonged to an order of things only knowable by the gods,

would it not follow that the gods did not know the order of things existing among men? This could not be thought of, and it would be most unfortunate if, the possibility for the human mind to obtain a knowledge of the ideas being denied, a period were put to all philosophical research.

What could be done to get the better of these difficulties? Parmenides recommends certain gymnastics of the mind, which were vulgarly designated by a term of contempt (ἀδολεσχία), as if they were mere talk; but this very term is used, on more than one occasion, by Plato in a more favourable sense, just as in our days debating clubs are at one time praised as excellent schools for future legislators, at another referred to as tending to develop talking powers which render those provided with them altogether unbearable. But not every man was fit to give an idea of those gymnastics, and Parmenides himself had to take charge of the task, one of the company—then quite a young man, in his old age one of the Thirty—undertaking to reply to his questions.

Then follows a long series of arguments on the question what would be the effect of either the existence or the non-existence of *one*—the number one taken in the abstract. If *one* exists it will not be many; not being many it will not have parts; not having parts it will not have a form and will not be anywhere, since if it were in anything, it would have to be in contact with that in which it would be, and this would be impossible unless it had parts, &c. &c. Ultimately, by going on with the argument, it is found that *one* can have no existence (οὐσία), and this, of course, will not do, the whole argument having started from the supposition that *one* did exist. So the question is asked again, with this difference that a stress is laid, this time, not on *one* but on *is*. Now, of course, *one* has an existence, but then it must have parts too, its existence being one and itself another, and each of these parts having again an existence of its own, the number of parts becomes unlimited. So there is no doubt that *one* is many, and that oneness is the attribute of every

part of *one*, the whole containing these parts being limited through the fact of its containing them, whereas the number of parts is infinite. Whatever, in fact, has been stated in the first argument is reversed in the second, but in the second something is found which does not occur in the first, viz. that one conclusion arrived at is immediately followed by its opposite—for instance that *one* must be something else than *not one*, and again that it cannot be something else,—and that such mutually contrary conclusions are then given together as results of the argument. Another instance is the simultaneous existence of similarity and dissimilarity between what is *one* and what is not, of course not with reference to such qualities as they may have, but to their being; and when their equality and inequality are taken in hand, the question of ideas is touched upon, the argument being that bigness and smallness, taken by themselves, exist in regard to one another but cannot be in any other being, since, if this were the case, they would lose the characteristics by which they are what they are. This argument has to prove the equality between *one* and other things, their inequality being proved by another. So this second argument, a very long one, goes on, leaving nothing uncontroverted of what had been stated in the first, but giving no results which are not at once followed by contrary ones; and now a third takes the question in hand what is to become of *one* when all these different conclusions have been arrived at, and when it is found on one hand to partake, on the other not to partake, of existence. Here we find mentioned both that process of mixing and separating which Socrates had touched upon in his remarks on Zeno, and a necessity, when changes take place in regard to *one*, of those changes being sudden and taking no time whatever, since their taking even the smallest amount of time would necessitate a state of affairs intermediate between the mutually opposite ones of which the one makes room for the other, and altogether impossible.

The things that are not *one* are then considered, it being admitted that they partake in some way of oneness, and argued that they are also like *one* in combining such opposite qualities as limit and infinity, similarity and dissimilarity, &c. This having been made evident, a counter-argument is entered upon, somewhat similar to the second argument on the existence of *one*, the contention being that the other things cannot partake of oneness, and that, on the whole, nothing of the former argument can be correct.

A new argument has as its subject the question what would happen if *one* did not exist. As it would be impossible to mention the non-existence of *one* unless *one* were something known and distinct from other things, it is argued that *one* not being is much in the same position as *one* being, since it must necessarily, to some extent, partake of existence, inasmuch as *one* not being must *be* in the position of not being, just as *one* being *is not* in that position. But there must be a change from being to not being and *vice versa*; and while on one hand a change involves motion, there is, on the other hand, no possibility of *one* not being moving in anything that *is*. So *one* not being would seem to share with *one* being the happy faculty of at the same time moving and standing still, were it not for another counter-argument. When *one* is not, says this argument, it is subject to an absence of existence, and so it cannot partake either of existence or of anything connected with it.

One other argument is gone through, on the question how it will be with other things if *one* is not. What would be things other than *one* if *one* were not? They might be other than something by being different among themselves, but none of them would be one, consisting as they would of multitudes, each of them innumerable in this sense of the word that, the existence of *one* being necessary for that of number, it would be impossible to count them. It would even be difficult to get a conception of any of them, unless they offered an appearance of oneness. Then comes the

counter-argument, by which it is denied that, one *not* being, other things can even appear to be one; and the dialogue ends in a brief recapitulation of the arguments, to the effect that if *one* is not, there can in reality be nothing, and that, whether *one* is or is not, itself and other things, with regard to themselves and one another, all of them in every respect are and are not, and appear and do not appear.

More than two thirds of the dialogue is taken up by these arguments, of which only a meagre outline has been given here, and which forcibly remind their readers of those "arid paths of thought" which are said to be the philosophers' favourite walks. Now the question arises why they constitute the main part of a dialogue which begins with one of the most interesting discussions met with in any part of Plato's works. Surely Plato's intention cannot have been to give an idea of the doctrines and proceedings of the Eleatic school, the ἀδολεσχία referred to by Parmenides not being at all limited to it, and a definite statement being made in the Theaetetus that it is unsafe to meddle with thoughts of such depth. Parmenides, as has been stated, recommends arguments like those he sets forth as mental gymnastics; but can Plato have given them simply as a specimen of what could be done in this line? This is anything but likely, and at all events, the object of these gymnastics cannot have been the one for which Mephistopheles recommends "*collegium logicum*"—that of so fettering the mind as to prevent its wandering about along new paths,—for they favour scepticism rather than dogmatism; and although the main conclusion arrived at, that about the necessity of the existence of *one*, is contrary to those views of the school of Heraclitus which are refuted in the Theaetetus, it is anything but likely that Plato, had he intended to take his stand on it against his opponents, would have argued the point in such a manner. What appears to be the most rational explanation will be reserved for the end of this chapter, when the Theaetetus and Sophist will have been considered.

The Theaetetus has not, as its subject, the views of Heraclitus and Protagoras, but it touches upon them and does away with them in the course of a discussion on the matter. After an introductory conversation between a Megarian philosopher and his friend, from which it appears that at the time of the Corinthian war Theaetetus was a man of note, and that an interesting dialogue between him and Socrates had been held, a slave is made to read the dialogue, in which Theaetetus is mentioned by Theodorus the mathematician to Socrates as a most promising youth. Socrates, of course, is both happy to make his acquaintance and ready to put his rising talent to the test, asking him questions about the knowledge he is bent on acquiring, and at the same time stating that he himself should like nothing better than to get an idea what knowledge really was. Theaetetus replies in the usual way, naming various branches of knowledge, but he is the more easily made to understand the real meaning of the question as he is no stranger to mathematical definitions. Still he is afraid to give an answer, and now it is that those "mental obstetrics" are mentioned by Socrates which have been referred to in the preceding chapter, and are most excellently exemplified in the dialogue now under consideration.

By these means Theaetetus is induced to reply to the question, and his reply is that, as far as he can see, knowledge is the same as perception. This comes, says Socrates, to the same as what is taught by Protagoras when in his book he speaks of man as the measure of all things. He then points out that this doctrine is closely related to that of Heraclitus and others about the eternal motion of things and their uninterrupted course of generation and change. Still, although there is much to be said in favour of this doctrine, there are difficulties in it, and especially because it does not take such relations between things into account as are solely dependent on mathematical calculations. In fact, there are those among the followers of Heraclitus who

deny the existence of whatever cannot be seen or felt, whereas others take perception and that which is perceived as intermediate between the organs of perception and the things by which perception is provoked. When the whiteness of a thing strikes the eye, the latter is made, by its power of sight, to see, and it sees not whiteness but the white colour generated by whiteness in the thing which acts on the eye. So the sensations connected with perception and the forces causing them are always momentarily generated, and this is the gist both of the doctrine of motion and change and of the subjectivism advocated by Protagoras. Socrates suffering from illness is dissimilar to Socrates in good health, and when the wine which tastes sweet to him when he is well has a bitter taste for him when he is ill, both he himself and the wine are identical to what they were before, but the intermediates—his perception of wine and the taste which wine has for him,—have changed. But when to this doctrine that of Theaetetus, about the identity of perception and knowledge, is added, Socrates asks why man should be the measure of things, and not just as well a baboon or a tadpole. Why does Protagoras boast of his wisdom, when everything is to everybody that which it is made to be by momentary sensation?

Theodorus, who had been on most friendly terms with Protagoras, and who had taken part in the conversation, considers this remark to be too bad, and as he prefers not to have anything to do with the discussion, Socrates resumes the subject by further questioning Theaetetus, and making him agree that, knowledge being the same as perception, it must cease together with it; that a thing is known to the one who remembers it; and that, accordingly, any one knowing a thing by memory but no longer perceiving it, would be, if knowledge and perception were the same, in the impossible position of at the same time knowing and not knowing it. But then Socrates himself remarks that it is easy to triumph over an adversary who is absent and

defenceless; and as Theodorus again declines to take charge of his friend's defence, Socrates does so in a spirited speech, in which Protagoras is introduced as telling him that he fancies having gained a victory by putting misleading questions to a mere lad, but that he has simply misrepresented him. Man *is* the measure of things, but this does not prevent one man from being wiser than another. Wine has a bitter taste, and *is* bitter, for a man who is ill, but when the patient has been cured by a medical man, he recovers his taste for wine; and so the sophist cures the minds of men whose opinions, although true, are on account of mental deficiencies of their holders bad and pernicious for them. So the sophist is a benefactor to mankind, and discussions tending to lower philosophy in the eyes of man cannot do anything but harm. Theodorus compliments Socrates on his defence of his friend, but being reminded by him that Protagoras, as he had caused him to come to the front, had complained about his discussing great questions with a lad, he is compelled to take himself the further defence of Protagoras in hand.

Now follows a debate carried on leisurely and touching on various topics, one of which—a most interesting one, since it refers to the relative position of philosophers and men of forensic business at Athens—will have to be reserved for the next chapter. As to the views held by Protagoras, the question is put whether men are not generally of opinion that they are acquainted with certain matters and unacquainted with other ones, and whether, for this reason, they do not in many cases prefer the opinions of others to their own. Is this not evidence of their disagreeing with a doctrine which denies that there are false as well as true opinions, and is the view of the one man holding this doctrine to be maintained against the opinions of the large number of those who, being admitted by him to see the truth, differ from him? Even if there were something in the contention that, when a state has laid down, by law, certain principles of

justice, they are to be considered, by the citizens, to be true, would any one maintain that the measures taken by states to promote their own advantage, must be truly advantageous to them? Does not such legislation provide for the future, and does Protagoras mean to say that even in regard to the future man is the measure of all things? Theodorus admits the soundness of the arguments levelled at his friend's view, and so the only question still remaining is that of the doctrine of Heraclitus, which, after a most unfavourable judgment passed by Theodorus on contemporaneous followers of the Ephesian philosopher, is contrasted by Socrates with that of Parmenides, men of lower standing being placed in rather a difficult position between the two. His own reason for not siding with Heraclitus is that the theory of the eternal motion of all things renders even perception impossible, when nothing for one moment remains as it is, and is incompatible with the idea of knowledge. So it is discarded, not without a slight reference to that necessity of the existence of *one* which is insisted on in the concluding sentence of the Parmenides; but though asked by Theaetetus also to go through the doctrine of the Eleatic school, Socrates prefers to resume at once the debate on the question what knowledge is.

Theaetetus, when asked whether, perception and knowledge being held by him to be the same, he considers the perceptions obtained by seeing and hearing to be those of the eyes and ears, or only got through their instrumentality, admits that eyes and ears must be simply organs through which the mind perceives, and that there are things which the mind perceives without these organs, such as similarity and dissimilarity, and also existence (*οὐσία*) and non-existence. As the latter class cannot be perceived without study and reasoning, it must be taken for granted that knowledge is not a mere matter of such perception as comes by itself to everybody, but is connected with the action of the mind; and that action is seen in opinion. There are, however,

thinks Theaetetus, false as well as true opinions, and opinion in accordance with truth is now given by him as a new definition of knowledge. But now the old question of the Euthydemus—whether or not there can be false opinions,—is raised once more, and that too by Socrates himself, whose argument on the subject comes to this that everybody has things which he knows and things which he does not know, that false opinions can only be formed by taking these things for one another, and that this is not possible in any imaginable manner. After some discussion the idea is also discarded that a false opinion might be formed simply by imagining, for to imagine a thing which is not would be to imagine nothing.

After various attempts at solving the difficulty, Socrates comes to the front with the idea that there might be in the mind something like a wax tablet, where whatever is perceived by its possessor is impressed more or less clearly and deeply, according to the quality of the wax. Would it not be natural for these impressions gradually to vanish, and to become so obliterated that one could be easily taken for another? Socrates then points out which mistakes cannot be made when his idea is correct, and which can; but after a lengthy explanation of the whole matter, much admired by Theaetetus, he himself upsets everything by observing that the impressions made in the wax must be the effects of perception of one kind or the other, and that mistakes are frequently made in matters solely pertaining to mental action, such as numbers.

For the wax tablet an aviary is substituted. To be possessed of knowledge is one thing, to have it at hand another. Say that the various things known by anyone are quartered in a mental aviary, where they have to be caught by the owner before he can make use of them. Could not then the wrong one be caught, a ringdove instead of a turtle dove? But would any knowledge caught be, to the owner, a cause of mistakes? Why not, asks Theaetetus,

put ignorance of things in the same cage with knowledge? How can, retorts Socrates, judging by what we have already agreed upon, any one mistake what he does not know for what he knows? So the aviary shares the tablet's fate.

The best plan, then says Socrates, is to leave alone, for the present, the question of false opinions, and to try once more our hands at a definition of knowledge. That given by Theaetetus cannot be the correct one, for it often happens that a body of men, say an Athenian court-of-law, is brought to hold a correct opinion on a matter without really knowing it. Admitting this, Theaetetus is of opinion that his definition can stand, provided it be added that, for a true opinion to be the same as knowledge, it is required that its holder should be able to give an account (λόγος) of it. The remaining part of the dialogue is devoted to the question what is meant by such an account, and of what and how it can be given. The first elements of things are held to be such that no account can be given of them. If so, can it be called an account of compound things when their elements are properly stated? The letters of the alphabet are the elements of syllables and words. Surely a man who correctly spells the name Theaetetus has a true opinion about it, but if the same man were found to write Theodorus with a τ instead of a θ, would any one consider him as being possessed of real knowledge of the former name? This not being the case, it is surmised that the account to be given of a thing might consist in pointing out that by which it is distinguished from all other things, and that knowledge of the thing might be possessed by those able to give such an account. Unfortunately the distinguishing point cannot be given without a knowledge of it, and a definition of knowledge referring to it would suffer from the grave defect of containing, as one of its component parts, the thing which is to be defined.

So the first pregnancy of Theaetetus ends in a miscarriage,

but he should, says Socrates, find a consolation in the fact that, if a second one should take place, he would have an experience of the obstetrical treatment he will have to undergo which must prove of the highest value to him.

According to an arrangement mentioned at the end of the dialogue, Socrates, Theodorus and their young friends meet again the next day, Theodorus being accompanied by a philosopher from Elea, introduced by him to Socrates as a man of moderate views and free from the pugnacity often met with in philosophical partisans. Having received the stranger most cordially, Socrates asks him whether or not, at Elea, a difference is made between a sophist, a politician and a philosopher, and having been answered in the affirmative, he requests him to give an idea of what each of the three is. Although this is, in the stranger's opinion, rather a difficult task, he agrees to undertake it, with Theaetetus as his interlocutor, the argument being carried on somewhat in the same manner as that of the Parmenides, but Theaetetus replying more freely and with more independence of thought than the young man taking the same part in the older dialogue. They begin with the personage the new dialogue is named after: the Sophist.

The sophist is admitted to practise an art of his own, and as an instance of the method how to arrive at a proper idea of this art, the stranger takes that of an angler. All arts are divided into two classes, those whose object it is to make something and those serving for the purpose of obtaining a thing existing. To the latter belongs, on one hand, any art connected with buying, exchanging or hiring, on the other that of obtaining a thing by force or other such means. Hunting, in the widest sense of the word, forms part of this one, a branch of it being the chase of living beings, which may again be divided according as these beings are found on land or in the liquid elements, air and water. Fishing, which is hunting in water, can be carried on either by nets or by such instruments as either harpoons or hooks and

angling-rods, and to do it in the latter manner is the art practised by the angler.

How can, by the same method, the sophist's art be traced? Like the angler's, it forms part of that of hunting, the game being the animal called man, which can be caught by force, as the slave-dealer does, but also by promising and persuading, either in public or in private life, and in the latter either by bestowing or by receiving gifts, the lover giving, the parasite, who by flattering vain and wealthy men gets his dinner, receiving. But besides the parasite there is the man-hunter who gains his object by being paid for teaching virtue, and what is his name? The sophist.

But is the sophist nothing else? Is his art not one of those connected with selling? Does he not, either like the travelling merchant or like the keeper of a stall at the market—in our days Plato would say the shopkeeper,—sell his ware, which he calls learning, and does not, accordingly, his art form part of both trades? Again, with the art of hunting was associated, when the angler's art was traced, that of obtaining something by force in another manner, such as that of winning either a race or a fighting match of any kind, and fighting could be either corporal or mental. Mental fighting took place either in courts-of-law or in private life; when in the latter, it was found in various transactions which are not named, and in fact, brokerage, as a trade, would appear to have no name in Greek. But in private life also various subjects of general import gave rise to discussions, such as justice and injustice, and sophist was the name of the man who took part in them for money.

Still another class of arts is mentioned, that to which both sifting and shuttling belong. Part of this art refers to separating what is good from what is bad, and to this part belong cleaning and cleansing in any form, however unseemly; for it matters little, says the man from Elea, whether great or small, high or low arts are taken as examples, it being questionable whether, as such, the art of a general is not, on

account of the fuss made about it, less useful than that of catching fleas. * As the body so the mind can be cleaned, by curing it either of illness or of such defects as take away its beauty. To the mind's illness the name of vice, to its defects that of ignorance is given; and as bodily disease is cured by the medical art, absence of symmetry and agility by gymnastics, so there is a cure for mental disease in chastisement, for mental defects in teaching. The worst mental defect is that ignorance which is not aware of its own existence, and while there is an old fashioned way of curing it by reproof, cure by reasoning is generally and rightly preferred. Is now the sophist entitled to the honour of being considered to possess the art of curing the mind of its worst defect? The stranger doubts it, but gives him the benefit of the doubt.

However manifold the sophist's acts may be, one name is given to the man practising them; and is this not a reason to doubt whether he and his work have been properly and fully brought to light? The Eleatic philosopher thinks it is, and reminds Theaetetus of one of the attributes of the sophist: his readily discussing subjects of great importance. How can he discuss subjects without knowing them, and is it possible for man to know everything? How if a man pretended to be able to make anything found in the universe, natural objects and even gods included? He would do so in play, replies Theaetetus, in order to deceive and amuse little children; and the two agree to put down the sophist, for his pretending to know all things, as a kind of juggler. As such he is one of those who practise imitation, and the act of imitation is twofold, according as the artist attempts to reproduce things as they are or as they must appear to be, it being impossible for a sculptor, who has to execute a colossal group, to keep its true proportions, since only by the use of false ones can his work make the proper impression. But in trying to make out to which class of imitative artists the sophist belongs, a formidable question has to be

* Here, again, the translation had to be slightly incorrect.

touched upon. It is that which Socrates in the Theaetetus had to leave unanswered: that of the false opinions, or whether there is, or can be, anything which *is* not.

Here one of the most remarkable demonstrations follows that are met with in Plato's works: that of his ontology as far as he can be said to have one. Parmenides, says his scholar, warns us against stating that things are which are not, and can there be anything which is not? Can such a thing even be mentioned, or can anything which is be attributed to it? Still this is constantly done. Number is bestowed upon it when mention is made either of what is not or of things that are not, and no one can mention it without, by his very words, contradicting himself. The sophist, when inquiry is made into his indulging in fancies contrary to truth, will protect himself by ignoring that which is not, and denying its existence. Can there be a false image? will he ask. Can he not, when charged with deceit, deny his guilt on the ground that false opinions and the like are not and cannot be? The man from Elea, however, does not give in, and simply requests his hearers not to charge him either with ill-using his father when investigating the truth of the doctrine of Parmenides, or with contradicting what, till then, he had himself said about the matter.

He then refers to the various doctrines about what is. Some philosophers spoke of three things as being, others of two, the Eleatic of one. All of these, however, lost sight of the fact that the public did not understand them, and they actually caused the question of what is to become as difficult as that of which is not. Two opposites, like heat and cold, might be stated to be what is, but as heat and cold could never be made the same, the being containing both had to be something different from what they were. Those who stated one to be what is, would find it a difficult thing to account for two names being given to the same thing, and when Parmenides described *one* as a sphere whose

they might be asked how *one* could have a centre and circumference without having parts, each of which would be again one. Similar difficulties were met with in the views of those who did not believe in the oneness of what was. Some of them did not consider anything to be in existence which they could not bodily lay hold of; others spoke of ideas perceived by the mind, but showing their existence in the various things in course of generation. But did the former deny the existence of a soul, as principle of life, in each living body, and the presence of justice, understanding, etc., in the mind? Not at all, and it was evident that they would have to admit that by being was meant any power of acting or being acted upon. The men of the ideas were of opinion that this power was met with in beings in process of generation, whereas it was not in the ideas; but they admitted that ideas could be known, and what was known was in a passive state. Besides, did they believe that in the ideas there was neither life nor power of thought? This could not be, and the result of the discussion was that the existing theories about being could not be maintained.

There remained, however, a greater difficulty. According to the definition of being which had been arrived at, motion and rest (στάσις) were included in it; and were they not in the same way opposite to one another as heat and cold? Accordingly being was something different, neither moving nor standing still, and how could this be? But, says the man of Elea, now we have reached a stage where being and not being offer the same difficulties, and perhaps we shall be able to get rid of all of them. When anything, say a man, was spoken of, numberless qualities were named in connection with him; and although, when a good man was mentioned, poorly gifted fellows, both young and old, might think themselves very wise when disapproving of the expression,—for good was good and man was man,—the question might surely be asked whether there could not be a similar junction, not between moving

of them and being. What could be said against this, when it was found that those who either considered all things to move or the one thing existing to stand still, all spoke of their being? So did every one who spoke at all about these matters, and it was evident that, while some things could not go together, other things could. It was the same with the letters of the alphabet, some of which could be joined together and others not, while the vowels caused all of them to be used in continuous sentences. How to effect this was the work of the man skilled in letters; in regard to things generally it was, perhaps, the philosopher who had the knowledge required for it, but for the present not he but the sophist had to be looked for. And now, as all three—motion, rest and being,—are the same as themselves and other than the other two, the question is whether "the same" and "other" are not two new factors which have to be taken into consideration. They are certainly not the same with motion and rest, for motion and rest cannot be the same, and if motion were the other it would be rest; nor can they be the same with being, which is joined to both rest and motion. But motion is the same with itself, and so it is, at the same time, the same and not the same. It is also, with being, in a relation of another to another, although it certainly *is*. And so motion is found in one sense to be and in another not to be, and not to be is not the opposite of, but simply other than, to be, just as what is not big need not be small. Besides, what is called not beautiful is something which *is* not beautiful; but it is, for all that, in existence, and being *not* beautiful it *is not* at the same time. All this is effected by the proper use of that which is called "the other", and so the great point about being and not being is gained, the man who has done so not claiming, however, to have made a new and grand discovery, which was sure to hold its ground, but simply to have solved a difficulty in a manner which he and others might be contented with.

The only point still to be argued is whether the sophist,

while not objecting to the result arrived at, might not contend that what is not has no place in opinions and statements. This, however, according to the man from Elea, is no matter of importance. A statement is made by means of nouns and verbs, neither of which can form one solely with the aid of other words of their own kind, whereas a noun and verb joined together do so. When to the noun "Theaetetus" is joined the verb "is sitting," the two words contain a true statement; but how when one says, "Theaetetus is flying?" Evidently the statement is false, and since—as had already been observed in the Theaetetus,—an opinion is nothing else than a statement not spoken but made by the mind in conversation with itself, there must be false opinions too.

Now the imitative art is once more taken in hand, to the effect that there is a twofold division of it, one by which the work of the gods is distinguished from that of man, and the other separating images from mere conceits of fancy. To the latter class belong visions in dreams, the gods causing both them and such images as are seen in water and mirrors. Images made by men aim at being correct; in the products of their fancy untruth must be found, and there it is where the sophist is caught, who, whether knowing justice or anything of the kind or not knowing it, still tries to give an idea of it. Some do so imagining, foolish as they are, that they are right; the one who knows what he is about, and shows his talents not to the public as an orator but to those studying under his direction, is the real live sophist.

The Sophist, especially when its close relation to the Theaetetus is duly attended to, will be found to mark an important epoch in Plato's philosophical career. In none of his older dialogues is a conclusion of any great importance arrived at. In the Theaetetus the doctrines of Protagoras and Heraclitus are refuted in such a manner as to render it unnecessary for Plato to revert to them; but the Eleatic doctrine is left alone, and Socrates is not prepared, after all, to face the question of being and not being. This is reserved for the

stranger from Elea, who begins by declaring that he will not be bound by the doctrines of his own school, and who ends by admitting that his solution of the difficulty may not be such as to carry conviction to all minds, but that he is prepared to take his stand on it. Among the doctrines he opposes is that of a school which limits being in the strictest sense of the word to the ideas, whereas the condition of things seen is that of a continued process of generation. The belief in ideas, however, which is met with, as has been stated before, in several of Plato's older dialogues, is also held by the poor-minded men who deny that "good" and "man" can be combined. By the latter, as would appear from passages in Aristotle and other writers, Antisthenes the Cynic and his followers must be meant; the school limiting "being" to the ideas is held, by modern scholars of high authority, to be that of Megara. Both Euclides, the founder of this school, and Antisthenes were friends to, and learnt much from, Socrates, and the beginning of the Parmenides leaves no doubt that Socrates, although in Xenophon's Reminiscences not a word is said about ideas in the Platonic sense of the word, must have discussed the ideas with those of his friends whose brains fitted them for philosophical speculations. But ideas can be discussed without direct reference to ontology, until questions connected with the latter come so conspicuously to the front that they cannot be ignored; and the Theaetetus may be taken as evidence in favour of the opinion that Socrates did not see his way clear to enter into such questions.

In the Sophist Plato substitutes for Socrates, as his own mouthpiece, the stranger from Elea, thus giving to understand that he enters the field armed with thoughts novel and his own. When we find the stranger, towards the end of the dialogue, going rather out of his way to refer to the direct action of the gods in regard to the phenomena of nature, and to praise Theaetetus for rather believing in such action than in a power exercised, independent of thought, by nature

itself, there is reason to think that Plato, taking a new path struck out by himself, considered it safe to give utterance to something calculated to remove from himself all such suspicions of disbelief in divine power as had led to his teacher's trial and death. It was not as a follower of the Eleatic school that Plato thus made a new start, but in doing so he may have been influenced, to some extent, by recent study of its tenets; and if now the question is raised again what must have been the meaning of the arguments met with in the Parmenides, it can with good reason be surmised that Plato, having resolved to go into so abstruse a subject as ontology, may have been anxious to give beforehand an idea of the difficulties surrounding it, of the method followed by his predecessors in treating it, and at the same time of the strange and hardly avoidable vagaries in store for those who did not, like himself, enter into it with a firm determination not to be carried away by their own argumentative powers, but to allow plain and practical common sense to get the mastery over abstract thought.

## § IX. PLATO AND THE ATHENIANS.

ATHENIAN democracy did not agree with Plato, whose nature was thoroughly aristocratic. When, however, he describes it in his Republic, he does not, like the writer of the treatise on the Athenian Republic standing in Xenophon's name, point out that much may be said against the policy followed under democratic government, but that it certainly attained its object by benefiting the lower classes; but he rather finds fault with the unlimited liberty prevailing under democracy: a liberty which does away with all consistency of legislation, so that in a democratic state all political systems may be found side by side; and which tends to an utter neglect to obey the laws or to submit to judicial decisions, to a total subversion of all political and social relations, so that the

magistrate is afraid of those he has to govern, the father of his son, and the teacher of his pupils, and to a want of subordination extending not only to females and slaves but, says Socrates, whose remark is assented to by his interlocutor, even to domestic animals. Some of these remarks savour of gross exaggeration, and Plato himself admits, in his Politicus, that democracy, although worth little when seen at its best, is when seen at its worst an evil of less magnitude than either oligarchy or monarchy in a similar condition. Some will be thought to be rather to the point, especially when certain particulars of life in the United States of America are remembered; but this is a matter which need not be dwelt upon.

When Athenian democracy as painted by Plato is compared with the sketch of it in that funeral oration by Pericles in which the genius of Thucydides is revealed in full, it will at once be noticed that Pericles speaks in praise of democracy because under it the people of Athens are holding their own without submitting to such hardships as the citizens of Sparta; because they enjoy the beauties of life without going to much expense, and the advantages of study without losing their fitness for active life; and especially because, while attending to the interests of the state, they do not neglect their own business, but display their energies in their attempts to escape the evils of poverty. Now this picture might be true and that by Plato, to some extent, also; but in reality the disagreement between Pericles and Plato is much more deeply rooted than would appear from a comparison between their two sketches of Athenian democracy. Plato—and in this respect the Socrates of Xenophon's Oeconomicus is somewhat like him,—has a contempt for the lower arts of life, and would like to leave them in his ideal republic to foreigners; nor does he like those pursuits in public life which were habitual at Athens. Look at the contrast he draws, in his Theaetetus, between the life of a philosopher and that of a man devoting himself

to public business! The philosopher spends his days in leisurely discussing one important question after another; the man at work in courts-of-law and in political affairs is so little master of his time that he can never be fully acquainted with what he is about. Still the contrast between him, as the practical man acquainted with the way to success, and the philosopher when compelled to take part in anything connected with public life, is entirely in favour of the former; but where is the practical man when he has to give his opinion about anything above the common things of life? Could the public then judge between him and the philosopher,—which is generally not the case,—it would be seen that the latter is much more his superior in such matters, than he is inferior to him in dealing with things of everyday life.

There is a certain amount of truth in this, and at all events it must be admitted that Plato's point of view is one which a philosopher of his days might be easily induced to take. But Plato also shows a particular dislike to the men who make a study of rhetoric, so as to be successful in public life, and still more to those devoting their talents to writing speeches for others, an art practised by not a few men of considerable renown. To understand how it was that this art flourished to an extent at Athens which must be surprising to the public of our own times, it should be remembered that, while there were no doubt both born orators and men who by studying and practising rhetoric had acquired a talent for arguing in public *, and although the Athenians were generally up to the mark in speaking their own language, education had not reached that stage in which men of or-

* A born orator, though perhaps not of the highest order, must have been Cleon, who boasts, in Aristophanes' Knights, of his handling any subject which comes fresh before him, and of his bullying the Athenian generals just after a hearty meal and a bottle of strong wine. In the same comedy Phaeax, who by another poet was called a master in talking and no speaker at all, is praised by young Athens for his cleverness in using all the fineries of the rhetorical art.

dinary ability are, as a rule, in a position to go through an argument of some length, and that, for this reason, they preferred speeches written by men accustomed to handle the pen, to arguments brought forward by themselves. Those speeches written by Lysias which have reached our time are remarkable for the ease with which he identifies himself with the parties for whom he writes. Still this very Lysias is sharply attacked in Plato's Phaedrus for doing work of no value whatever, and it has been pointed out already that also in the Euthydemus a bitter feeling towards men of his profession is shown by Plato.

The Phaedrus was evidently written at a time when Plato had overcome the uncertainty which prevailed in his mind until his Sophist showed his triumph over it; but it must be older than either his Gorgias * or his Banquet, for he could not have written, as he did in it, about rhetoric and its professors after the onslaught he made on them in the former dialogue, nor could he have made Socrates, after the debate on love in which he takes part in the Banquet, deliver that splendid speech on the subject which excels both in poetical grandeur and in intuitive perception of truth whatever else has secured to Plato his place among truly great men. The poetical side of Plato's genius is, on the whole, nowhere more clearly brought to light than in the Phaedrus, and germs are found in it which were in course of time to shoot up and produce fruits; whether good or not quite desirable ones will be seen in what is to follow. In going over it here only those parts of it will be touched upon which refer to the relations between Plato and men like Lysias, and these form, in fact, the main subject of the dialogue.

* The remark attributed by Athenaeus (XI p. 505) to Gorgias on reading the dialogue called after him, is no reason for assigning an earlier date to the latter, than the one given here; for not only might Gorgias, who reached extreme old age, have read it even if it had been written, say in 380 B.C., but he may have charged Plato with writing in a satirical style for other reasons; and such stories, on the whole, as stated in chapter VII of this essay, do not generally deserve credence.

Phaedrus, a great admirer of eloquence of any kind, is taking a walk just outside the walls of Athens when he is met by Socrates, who finds him full of a rhetorical exercise by his friend Lysias, and evidently anxious to get a companion for a walk along, or rather in the bed of, the Ilissus, in order to give an account of the speech and, in fact, to practise its reproduction. Socrates, however, knows his man too well to be caught by him, and having discovered that he has a copy of the speech with him, he induces him to read it while sitting under a lofty plane tree, evidently a place, or object, of worship. The speech contains an argument, addressed to a handsome youth, that he had better gratify the desires of one who is not in love with him than those of one who is. Socrates does not like the speech. Its words may be well chosen, its sentences properly rounded, but it lacks unity and method, and is full of repetitions. Having hinted that the subject might be treated in a better way, he is compelled, in a friendly manner, by Phaedrus to try and do so himself, and he certainly handles the subject better than Lysias, who had only given one reason after another in favour of his contention, whereas Socrates, who ascribes his unexpected fluency to inspiration by the nymphs frequenting the place, begins by stating what love is, and from this statement derives his argument why a lover should be shunned by the object of his love. While, however, Phaedrus, who considers his speech to be incomplete, is discussing this point with him, he suddenly becomes aware that it was wrong, on his part, to speak against love, and the warning voice he has in his bosom tells him not to leave the place until after a recantation of what he has said. Then follows his great speech about love which has been referred to above.

The superiority of this speech to that of Lysias is admitted by Phaedrus, who at the same time adverts to the fact that Lysias was called a speech-writer by way of reproach, and that the great men at Athens were, on this account, unwil-

ling to write speeches. Does not, replies Socrates, every man who moves a resolution in the senate or the popular assembly head it by his name, and what are such resolutions, what are laws like Solon's otherwise than written speeches? The whole question comes to this: whether or not Lysias and those following his profession write as they ought to do. This question then becomes the subject for discussion between the two, Socrates being of opinion that even the tree-crickets above their heads, who had got their present shape because, being men, they had so admired the Muses and their pursuits as to perish from neglecting to take food, would have a low opinion of them if at noon they preferred a doze to a debate.

The statement by Socrates, that an orator should know the truth concerning the subject he is to speak about, is answered by a reference to the opinion of those who consider this to be unnecessary, since all that is required is to convince the public. Socrates first ridicules this opinion by giving instances of what it might lead to, but afterwards, taking his stand on the opinion mentioned by Phaedrus, he points out that even those who are anxious to deceive the public, ought to have such knowledge of the subject they have in hand as to enable them to see how they can best substitute what is incorrect for what is correct. It certainly was not sound rhetoric when Lysias, taking for his subject a matter like love, on which there existed a great variety of opinion, did not give his own opinion about its nature; and the same might be said about his beginning his speech with a reference to words not given, and about an arrangement of his arguments which might be compared to an old epitaph of four lines, each of which might take any place among the four without altering the meaning of the whole. The main requisite in rhetoric was the power of both getting such a grasp of the subject as to bring all its parts under one head, and giving the natural division of the whole into parts; and of this power evidence had been given in the two speeches about love which he, Socrates, had delivered; but what was done by

the professors of rhetoric, many of whom are now enumerated? They simply gave rules for the arrangement of speeches, under which an introduction had to come first, then a narrative based on evidence and followed by a demonstration of its probability, and so on; and these rules gradually became more complex when new professors tried their hands at them. But were those who knew all about these rules worthy of the name of orators? As little as a man acquainted with the effects of various remedies, but unacquainted with the organism of the human body, would be a medical man, or as one able to write long and short arguments in verse, could claim to be called a tragic poet.

Socrates now reminds Phaedrus of the friendship between Pericles and Anaxagoras, adding that no man can become a first-rate orator without having been trained in philosophical argument and studied the nature of the universe as well as that of the human mind. And would the knowledge of the rules of rhetoric be of any avail, without that of the minds of those who have to be influenced by oratory? Not before knowing the various dispositions of men as well as the arguments fit for each of them, not before joining to this knowledge the gift of hitting at once upon the peculiarities of the public which is to be addressed, does any man deserve the name of orator, and can he succeed even in giving such misrepresentations of facts as are deemed necessary, in certain cases, by those practising forensic oratory.

The question of the nature of rhetoric having been settled between Socrates and his friend, that of writing speeches still remains; and here an Egyptian story is quoted by Socrates about the invention of writing as calculated to interfere with exercising the memory and to substitute reference to external authorities for genuine knowledge. What information is supplied by these authorities and by any written works when consulted? Can they answer any question or remove any doubt? No, they are mute, but the living word is not. Men of real worth act like agriculturists, who on certain

occasions may encourage the sudden growth of plants by artificial means, but who, for real success, count on the power of nature. They may indulge in writing books, so as to be reminded in their old age of the results of former studies, but their teaching will be by means of dialectic. Even poetry is now made light of by Socrates, and not only are, in some measure, the attacks in Plato's Republic on the noblest poetry of Greece announced beforehand in the concluding part of the Phaedrus, but light is spread by it on the position taken up by Plato, under the influence of the evils of old age, in regard to his own writings.

It is difficult, after a careful review of what is stated in the Phaedrus, not to come to the conclusion that Plato, when writing it, was actuated as much by private feelings against men influencing his fellow-citizens in a direction different to the one he had taken, as by the results of his philosophical speculations. He goes against Lysias on account of a speech which, if really written by him,—and this is, after all, the safest and most probable supposition,—is so different from his other speeches that it can hardly be considered otherwise than as a production of his pen at a time when he had not reached by far the full development of his oratorical power. Plato goes also against the rules of rhetoric framed by various men of note, and while rightly pointing out that they are by no means sufficient to make any one an orator in the true sense of the word, he forgets that, at all events, they tend to prevent the mistakes he charges Lysias with; and he contrasts their teachings with those of an ideal school of rhetoric which it would be hardly possible to start in reality. He is quite right in stating that much more can be learnt from the living word of a man up to the mark than from anything written; but when, towards the close of the dialogue, he wants not only Lysias but also Solon and even Homer to be informed that their works as preserved in writing are worth little compared to what a live philosopher may do, and only excepts Isocrates from the general con-

demnation befalling those who do not follow exactly the same groove as he himself, his self-conceit would appear to have got the better of that wise lesson inculcated at Delphi—know yourself,—which is quoted by Socrates in the beginning of the dialogue. Isocrates, whom Socrates praises as a young man of great promise, but who, when the Phaedrus was written, had already a long career behind him, held views more congenial to Plato's than most of his contemporaries, but he saw the interests of Athens and Greece in quite a different light. This will be seen from the Gorgias, a dialogue in which Plato does not give way to such sentiments as would appear to have animated him when writing his Phaedrus, but comes to the front with ideas which, while originating in the deepest convictions of his own mind, were altogether at variance with those of the Athenian people and its leaders.

Gorgias, the famous professor of rhetoric from Sicily, together with his favourite scholar Polus, is staying at the house of Callicles, an Athenian unknown to history but evidently belonging to the highest classes of society and deeply engaged in politics, when Socrates and his friend Chaerephon call on him. Professing, like Protagoras, to answer questions as well as to hold forth on any subject, he is asked by Socrates for information about the nature of the art he professes. Having named rhetoric, he further states that speaking (λόγοι) is its subject. But, asks Socrates, speaking about what matters? Certainly not about the means, for sick people, to be restored to health, for such things belong to the medical art. About such, is the reply, as do not require anything else than speaking. So it is with arithmetic, says Socrates, but surely this is not what you teach. My art, replies Gorgias, refers to the highest interests of mankind. All right, says Socrates, but in the old song health is called the best thing for man; then comes beauty and then wealth acquired without fraud. Will not the medical man, the teacher of gymnastics and the financier all claim for their own arts the privilege you claim for yours?

My art, says Gorgias, is that of teaching persuasion, and the man possessed of the means to influence, by persuasion, public assemblies is master over medical men, professors of gymnastics and financiers.

Socrates now admits that, to some extent, he understands what Gorgias means by rhetoric, but in the interest of the debate he puts a further question. When arithmetic is taught, is not the teacher bent on persuading his pupils of the truth of what he tells them? His persuasive powers are applied to the teaching of numbers; to what matters does the persuasion pertain referred to by Gorgias? To what happens, is the reply, in courts-of-law and similar assemblies, and to matters of justice and injustice. I thought so, says Socrates, but is there not a difference between knowing and believing? One can believe what is false, but knowledge refers to truth alone. Has the persuasive power imparted by rhetoric knowledge or belief as its object? Gorgias admits that the latter is the case, and now Socrates observes that when a popular assembly has to come to a decision on technical matters,—on the appointment of surgeons, on shipbuilding or on military questions,—experts are its natural advisers. Will students of rhetoric only act as experts in matters of justice and injustice, or are they also to advise on the other matters mentioned? You are aware, says Gorgias, that Athens owes her docks and her walls to the advice of men like Themistocles and Pericles, and that on such men also appointments mainly depend. The man at home in the art of persuasion is superior to any professional expert; my own brother the physician has often to call for my assistance when a sick man is to be induced to submit to a treatment of his disease which will cause him pain. But, of course, as little as a trained boxer is justified when striking down his own father, is a public orator right when using his persuasive power otherwise than in the interest of justice; and when any orator makes a wrong use of this power, not the art of rhetoric but the man who uses it wrongly is to be blamed.

Having detected an inconsistency in what Gorgias has said about rhetoric, Socrates expresses a fear lest the debate might take a disagreeable turn if he went on putting questions; but all those present are in favour of continuing the debate, and now Socrates asks whether the skilled rhetorician will give better advice on matters technical than those versed in the arts these matters belong to. Again, will an orator giving advice on matters pertaining to justice and injustice be able to do so in the proper manner, unless he is at home in these matters? Gorgias is brought to admit that it is an orator's business to know justice and practise it; and why then, asks Socrates, should it be hinted that rhetoric, requiring justice in its students, might be used for doing injustice? This was the inconsistency he had complained of.

It is now that Polus, who had already shown both his anxiousness to join in the debate and his incompetence to do so, comes to the point. It is just like Socrates, says he, first to get from Gorgias an admission about justice which he could not well forego to make, and then to make use of it against him. Why, says Socrates, it is a fortunate thing for old men to have younger ones to correct them, and I shall gladly reply to Polus, provided he is not too prolix. At Athens there is full liberty of speech, but there is also liberty not to listen but to leave, and of that liberty I shall avail myself unless the debate is carried on by means of short questions and answers. A question by Polus, what his idea is of the rhetorical art, he answers by stating that, in his opinion, it is no art at all but a practice followed for the purpose of procuring enjoyment, like refined cookery (ὀψοποιία.) Such cookery and rhetoric formed part of a whole which, in the old professor's presence, he did not like to name. I do not object, says Gorgias, and now Socrates explains his view by stating that, as there were two arts having the preservation of the body as their object, medicine and gymnastics, and one, politics, performing a similar function about the mind, one of its parts, the art of legislation,

corresponding with gymnastics, the other, justice, with medicine, so there was a spurious practice—flattery one might call it,—whose four parts corresponded with the arts just mentioned: refined cookery with medicine, adornment of the body with gymnastics, sophistry with legislation, and rhetoric with justice.

A debate ensues in which Polus extols the power of men skilled in rhetoric since, like tyrants, they can kill and plunder and banish any one they like, whereas Socrates contends that they may kill and plunder people but that, for all that, they cannot do what they wish. What every one wishes for is what is good for him, and when one takes medicine or embarks for a distant port, it is not for the purpose of swallowing nasty drugs or having the trouble of a sea voyage, but in the one case for health's sake, in the other for making money. When tyrants or orators caused people to be killed or plundered, it was for the sake of the good results they expected from it, and how if these results were bad? Polus cannot deny that there is much in this, but asks Socrates whether he himself would not like the power he speaks so lightly of. By no means, replies Socrates. To kill a man justly is not an enviable thing; to kill him unjustly is worse than to be killed, and to be killed justly is worse than to be killed unjustly. Any one can commit murder or arson, but he will be punished for it, and killing and the like can only then bring good results to the man who does it when he does it with justice; for those practising justice are happy, those indulging in injustice unhappy.

This is to Polus a novel doctrine. Why, there is Archelaus, the illegitimate son of king Perdiccas of Macedonia by a slave of his brother Alcetas. After his father's death he first entraps his uncle, whose slave he would have been had he preferred justice to injustice, by feigning friendship and subserviency, and then murders him and his son. Having assumed the regency for the time of his little step-brother's minority, he has the poor child drowned in a well, and now he is the ruler of all the Macedonians.

Surely however unhappy the man may be in the eyes of Socrates, not one Athenian would not like to be Archelaus rather than any other Macedonian. All this makes a fine speech, replies Socrates, and there *are* not a few Athenians who are sure to agree with you; but I do not, and you have not refuted my arguments. You think Archelaus happy though unjust; I consider an unjust man to be unhappy, and more unhappy when he remains unpunished than when he suffers punishment. About this point a lengthy discussion is carried on, and Polus, who first tries to ridicule his opponent's contention, is soon made to agree that to do injustice is more disgraceful than to suffer it; then that the reverse of disgraceful (τὸ καλόν) is so because it is either useful or agreeable, so that what is disgraceful must be either harmful or disagreeable; again that what is harmful is worse than what is disagreeable, and that, if to commit injustice is more disgraceful than to suffer it, this cannot be on account of its being more disagreeable; and so he has admitted that to do injustice is worse as well as more disgraceful than to suffer it. Having gained this advantage, Socrates follows it up by making Polus agree that to be punished for injustice is wholesome, that wickedness of the mind is a worse evil than either ill-health or poverty, that it can be cured only by chastisement, and that he has been wrong in calling Archelaus happy. The result of the debate is that rhetoric is not worth anything, unless used altogether for serving the ends of justice.

Polus was evidently no match for Socrates, but now Callicles asks Chaerephon whether Socrates really means what he says, or whether he has been joking. If serious, does not his doctrine upset the whole existing views and arrangements of life? Socrates replies that he would not be able to explain his views to Callicles, were it not for the fact of their being both in the same position; for he himself was in love with philosophy and young Alcibiades, Callicles with the Athenian people (δῆμος) and with Demus the hand-

some son of Pyrilampes, and both of them knew the difficulty of going against the wishes of the objects of their love. What he stated was the view of things taken by philosophy; Callicles had heard what he had said, and would either have to prove that philosophy was wrong, or to be, during the whole of his life, in disharmony with himself.

Callicles proves equal to the occasion. Polus, says he, has suffered the same fate as Gorgias, having been compelled by Socrates to make an admission which in reality he had reason to object to as it was not in accordance with nature, but which he was prompted to make by fear of going against the dominant opinion (νόμος). To commit injustice might be thought worse than to suffer it, but naturally it was not, for what could be more degrading than to be trampled upon like a slave? But the masses, being weak, had laid down the law for the strong, calling it a disgrace to be possessed of privilege and power above the rest, as if such power were injustice. Did not nature clearly show, in the animal kingdom and in man too, that the better and stronger ones should be better off than those weak and worth little? The tendency was to enslave the men of real worth from their early youth, like lions' whelps, by incantations about equal rights and the like; but it came to naught when some one made of better stuff put his foot down and, making away with all these fine laws at once, from the slave he was to them came to be a master. Then prevailed what was nature's law, the law of the strongest celebrated by Pindar; and Socrates would see this, would he but leave philosophy for something greater. Philosophy was a nice thing for youngsters, but by sticking to it men lost all chance of getting practical knowledge of things as they were. Having once gone too far in studying it, they obeyed, of course, human nature by remaining faithful to the pursuit in which they excelled; but it was with philosophy as with language. There was something slavish in a young child speaking quite correctly, but a grown-up person using expressions fit for children

was laughed at; and so a young man was thought promising when showing a predilection for philosophy, whereas, having grown older, and being, through continuous application to it, out of touch with the world, he would, however highly gifted, be considered worthless. Was it worthy of a man like Socrates to be so utterly defenceless in a town like Athens, as to become an easy prey for anyone who wanted to ruin him? He, Callicles, would strongly advise him to act like other men of his worth, instead of weakening himself by useless studies.

It is a great boon for me, says now Socrates, to meet a man like Callicles, up to the mark and not afraid to speak his mind, especially as I know, from a conversation he held in my presence with some of his intimate friends, that he says nothing but what he really means. Can I induce such a man to admit that I take the right view of life, I am sure of having found the truth. And now he puts questions to him, savouring, it must be admitted, of cavil. Are the better men the same as the stronger ones, and are not the masses strongest? If so, the rule laid down by them that to commit injustice is worse than to suffer it, is not only the law prevailing by common opinion but also that of nature. Callicles replies that he has not meant to say that bodies of men, being, on account of their number, physically strongest, are the best; but who, asks Socrates, *are* the best? Are they the most intelligent ones? Is a medical man, on account of his understanding the nature of food, entitled to a larger share of it than others? Callicles is annoyed at this, and says that he means the most intelligent in matters political, when likewise provided with the courage they require. Born rulers should be better off than those ruled by them. But are not rulers first to rule themselves? asks Socrates. Those worshippers of self-control, replies Callicles, are simply fools. The law of nature is that those enabled by their wits and courage to rule the roost should not control their desires but allow them to grow and then satisfy them.

For this utterance Callicles is praised by Socrates as giving expression to a sentiment which others share but are afraid to utter; and well might he praise him for thus shifting his ground and smoothing the path for his opponent. Is, asks Socrates, a well regulated life or one of unbounded desires and joys to be preferred? If the latter, if, as Callicles says, a happy life is one of desires constantly satisfied and constantly renewed, what kind of desires are meant? Also the desire to scratch your head when suffering from itch, or even a more disreputable one?* Callicles, although disgusted with such questions, replies in the affirmative, and now Socrates enters upon a somewhat more serious argument, to the effect that what is good and makes life happy and what is pleasurable (ἡδύ) cannot be the same. Between good and evil there is constant opposition, and the appearance of the one makes the other disappear. But to be thirsty is disagreeable, to drink when thirsty pleasurable; and yet, when one has drunk both thirst and the pleasure of drinking vanish together. Again, Callicles had admitted that knowledge and courage are good, as well as pleasure; but is there no enjoyment of pleasure for fools and cowards? Callicles, in replying to Socrates, agrees with whatever he says, but suddenly asks whether he himself or anybody is thought to make no difference between more and less reputable enjoyments. So the ground on which the debate is carried on, is changed once more.

When enjoyments are good, says Socrates, they are useful; when bad harmful. So it is with sufferings (λῦπαι). Are not those useful to be sought for in preference to those which are not? This having been agreed to, Socrates reverts to what he had said about the arts for curing body and soul, and the practices having no other object than enjoyment, which correspond with them, as well as to the question which

* This point is also touched upon in a later dialogue on enjoyment, the Philebus, where the whole question is treated more rationally and philosophically than in the Gorgias. See chapt. XII of this essay.

of the two modes of life, that of the philosopher and that recommended by Callicles, is to be preferred. For judging the nature of enjoyments an art is required, and there are many means of procuring enjoyment without considering whether or not it is useful, including even those theatrical exhibitions which are the pride of the tragic poets. When the tragic muse addresses the public merely for enjoyment's sake, is this not the case with rhetoric too? There are, says Callicles, public speakers who care for the good of the people, and others who do not; but he cannot name any man living who belongs to the former class. But then, in times not long gone, there were Themistocles and Cimon and Pericles. What have they done, asks Socrates, except gratifying the desires of the people? No builder will build a house in a disorderly manner; has any of those men done anything towards substituting order for disorder in the minds of the citizens? Does not order in the mind consist of self-control and justice, and is it not required, in those called upon to promote the welfare of the people, to inculcate those virtues even by chastisement? The debate having reached this stage Callicles declines to go on with it, and Socrates carries it further by himself, demonstrating the excellence of self-control as bringing justice and courage in its train, and securing a happy life. Callicles might taunt him with being unarmed against injury, but he preferred suffering injury to inflicting it, and his ideas on this subject had never been refuted.

A new element is introduced when Socrates asks whether there is not a certain power or art required, both for not suffering and not committing an injustice, especially as nobody is held to do the latter willingly. Callicles agrees to this, and also to the proposition that not to be injured one should either be the ruler of a state or an associate to the ruling power. So in a state ruled by a tyrant, says Socrates, the safest course is to make common cause with him, for this will be a protection against injustice; but how about committing injustice? Will a tyrant's associate not be induced

to imitate him, and will this not lead to grave results? It's always better to do so than to be killed by one not afraid of imitating the tyrant, says Callicles; but, says Socrates in reply, is life of such worth? Many a life is saved on board ship by its master or, when a town is besieged, by the engineer; but masters of vessels and engineers are not much made of. For some people it is better to die than to live; and what is preferable, to undergo the fate of all men or to be compelled, as often happens with those taking part in politics at Athens, to conform to the doings and wishes of the people? You are entering upon a political career. When a builder or a medical man wants employment in the service of the state, he gives evidence that he is skilled in his art and has done good work. Can you, when taking political affairs in hand, show one single Athenian who has become a better man through you? You cannot, nor could your so-called great men, Themistocles and Pericles. The latter is charged with having spoiled the people, by his payments for services rendered to the state; and even if this is denied, is not the fact that, towards the end of his career, he narrowly escaped being put to death for alleged peculation, sufficient to show that he had not made the people better? Have not Cimon, Themistocles, Miltiades met with a similar treatment on the part of the Athenian people?

What those men have done for Athens, replies Callicles, will not be equalled by any man of the present time. I admit, says Socrates, that they were able servants to the people, helping them to what they desired, as a good cook does; but when a man's health is spoiled by over-feeding, and when he is told to be more abstemious, he is apt to feel annoyed. Will not the people, having become ill-conditioned by the management of former servants, avenge this on the heads of later ones? When these complain of injustice and ingratitude, they have no better reason for it than sophists, who, pretending to teach virtue, are laughed at for their complaints of being cheated by those they have taught. Very few men attempt to improve

the morals of the people; do you, Callicles, invite me to be one of them or to act the part of a servant? Callicles once more points out the danger involved in declining to take the latter part, and Socrates does not deny its existence; for, says he, if a medical man were charged, before a court of children, by a confectioner with having cut and burnt them and given them nasty stuff to drink, whereas his accuser had always provided them with nice things, what could he say to escape punishment? But one suffering death for doing his duty would know that he descended with clean hands to the nether world. And now Socrates winds up with a description of the judges of that world, and of the fate both of those punished for their crimes and those departing for the isles of the happy.

There is a surpassing grandeur in the moral sentiments given utterance to, in the Gorgias, by Socrates which is unequalled in Greek literature of the best ages; and fully to understand its character it should be remembered that the position Plato takes up is directly at variance with the ideas prevailing at Athens in those days. But while fully appreciating it, while venerating Socrates and Plato as the apostles of a new morality, akin to that of an era when Greek sentiments would have to yield to those of quite a different origin, no one will subscribe to the judgment passed, in the Gorgias, on men who, like Themistocles and Pericles, had made Athens what she was in the brightest days of her existence. The injustice shown to them by taunting them with the treatment they received from the Athenian people is so flagrant and betrays such an utter lack of insight into the history of mankind, that it need not be dwelt upon. But there is another point which should not be lost sight of. Socrates, when mentioning self-control as the first requisite in a ruler, is met not only by a sneering remark on those practising it, but also by such a statement on the part of his opponent about enjoyment being the object of life as enables him to enter upon an argument which is sure to end in victory. Callicles, however, had in his first speech referred to something

altogether different; in fact, to a characteristic feature of Grecian thought which Plato himself displays very markedly: hatred and contempt for whatever is low and degrading, and that keen sentiment of the superiority of one man to another which is so easily lost at times when levelling tendencies prevail. Such tendencies, in spite of the existence of slavery at Athens, could not be foreign to her democracy. "Don't rear a lion in the state," says a personage of comedy about Alcibiades, and there we find the democratic tendency. But what follows? "When one *has* been reared,* be subservient to his propensities." Plato may have thought of these lines when introducing Callicles as comparing, with certain incantations used for taming lions, the means employed to deaden the aspirations of high-souled youths; and with the feeling that superiority of mind is required in men called to rule the state, corresponds, not the doctrine enounced by Callicles of desires ever renewed and satisfied, but that which he gives by his reference, in his first speech, to the Greek verb πλεονεκτεῖν—to have, or grasp at, more—: that of the natural right of superior men to have a better share in the goods of this world than the common herd. This is lost sight of in the dialogue. Socrates prophecies, not only to Callicles of whom no one knows anything, but also to Alcibiades that he may at some future time be made to suffer, by the Athenian people, for continuing the traditional policy of Pericles and his predecessors, and when the dialogue was written the fulfilment of this prophecy was a matter of ancient history. But Alcibiades, though indulging in a luxury which he made, to some extent, subservient to his political aspirations, was certainly not the man to spend his life, and see the object of it, in enjoyments like those extolled by Callicles as constituting happiness. To excel all others in power, by means

* The translation given here of Aristophanes' Frogs vs. 1432 is not quite that of the old reading, ἐκτρέφῃ, for ἐκτραφῇ gives a better sense. In the main, however, there is no great difference between the meaning of the two readings.

of the forward policy he fought for at Athens, was his life's dream, and in him the man is seen whom Plato must have had before his mind's eye when writing that splendid description of the young hero who, having burst, by the natural superiority of his genius, the fetters in which he was enchained, is found to trample upon the instruments used by those enslaving him.

Alcibiades gives his own name to two Platonic dialogues. The second Alcibiades is a brief one, containing rather an interesting amplification of what Socrates is made to say and practise in Xenophon's Reminiscences: that men, when praying to the gods, ought simply to ask for what is good, since, when asking for gold or anything like it, they do not know whether they will profit or suffer injury by it. This, however, is all, and although Plato is known for committing historical mistakes, the one met with in this dialogue, where Archelaus king of Macedonia, who ascended the throne after Alcibiades was banished from Athens, is represented as having been murdered at the time when Alcibiades was still under the guardianship of Pericles, is rather too bad even for him. Accordingly it is not strange that the authenticity of the dialogue is doubted, and so is that of the first Alcibiades. Nor is this matter for surprise. Not that the dialogue lacks a Platonic character. It is written in Plato's usual style; it contains arguments generally used by him; it is not a mere repetition of what is found elsewhere, since it contains information, false or true, which is decidedly new. But it makes the impression of being an inferior production, readable and not altogether uninteresting but, compared to other Platonic dialogues, altogether below the mark.

To find an explanation of this does not appear to be impossible. It does not allow of doubt that an inferiority of poems or other writings of really first rate men is often the consequence of their having been written under compulsion. When there is a poet laureate in whose days a movement is set on foot which leaves him perfectly cold but which must be cele-

brated in verse, what will he do with it? When in 421 the peace of Nicias was made between Athens and Sparta, it was quite necessary for Aristophanes, who in his former plays had strongly condemned the war, to celebrate the blessings of peace; but the Peace he brought on the stage is a very poor production indeed. Now it is quite possible that Plato, at some time or other, may have been compelled, by pressure on the part of his friends, to write something against his will.

Take his Menexenus. The man it is named after was a follower of Socrates, at whose death he was present, a relative of Plato's friend Ctesippus, slightly younger than he, and evidently a member of the same family which Demosthenes the orator belonged to. The contents of the dialogue, however, are altogether different from those of any other. Socrates is represented as holding a conversation with Menexenus about a public funeral which took place several years after his death, and he recites, as a specimen of a funeral oration as it ought to be, one he has heard from Aspasia, known for her friendship with Pericles, but hardly mentioned after the latter's death, upwards of thirty years before. This funeral oration, which is greatly inferior to that by Pericles as reported by Thucydides, was annually read, in Cicero's time, to the Athenian public on the day when the public funeral of citizens killed in war had to take place; and both this fact and the mention of Menexenus and his father Demophon in the dialogue may be taken as evidence of its being genuine, in spite of the strange fact that Socrates is made to discuss, with a woman belonging to a former generation, an event posterior to his own death. But how if some such criticism on Lysias as found in the Phaedrus prompted Plato's friends to demand from him a public speech? There would be nothing strange in this, and it would be quite natural on his part wilfully to introduce impossibilities in the preface of a speech he had to write under pressure. *

*For the purpose of this essay only two points in this rhetorical exercise of Plato's deserve special notice. The one is that the author,

If this view is correct,—and although there is no actual evidence of its correctness, it certainly offers a solution of the question how the Menexenus can have come into existence,—there is no reason whatever not to consider the first Alcibiades as likewise a dialogue which Plato must have written under something like compulsion. Alcibiades and Socrates are often mentioned in Plato's works as joined together by a kind of friendship better known in ancient Greece than in our days, and as in the Banquet Alcibiades is represented as anxious for the closest intimacy with his friend on account of the wonderful charm of his conversation, so at any time the relations between the two may have become a subject of particular interest to Plato's associates. Now if this has prompted them to insist on his giving an idea how it was that the brilliant young man, hunted after, as Xenophon says, by the most distinguished ladies of Athens, came to be on such intimate terms with a personage outwardly so unseemly as Socrates, there is nothing more natural than his failure to perform the task imposed on him in a really effective manner, and so the inferiority of his Alcibiades to his other dialogues is explained at once. That inferiority, however, does not prevent its being of some importance for the discussion of the relations between Plato and his fellow-citizens.

The dialogue begins with a remark by Socrates that Alcibiades will perhaps wonder how it is that, having attracted many men of high standing as his admirers, and afterwards repulsed them by haughtiness, he saw him, Socrates, though till then silently admiring rather than courting him, remain the only one still trying to get into his good graces. Alci-

who has of course to speak in favourable terms of the Athenian government, actually represents it as virtually aristocratic, the feeling that all the Athenian citizens belong to the same race being the reason for not excluding any one from having a share in it. The other is the sharp distinction he makes, like Isocrates in his Panegyricus, between Greeks and barbarians as natural enemies, going so far in this respect as to taunt the other Greeks with being a mixed race since the days of Cadmus, Danaus and Pelopis. After all, Plato *was* a chip of the old block.

biades replies that he himself had thought of questioning him about the matter. Socrates explains his conduct by stating that he was aware that Alcibiades was striving after something higher than the position he occupied. In fact, being about to enter political life, he thought himself able to prove at once equal or even superior to Pericles, his guardian, and would not be satisfied until he became master of Greece, and then passed into Asia to establish his power there too. Now he, Socrates, knew that this could not be effected without his aid; and whereas till then the inward voice which warned him against doing what he was about to do, had prevented his addressing him on the subject, he now felt at liberty to do so. Alcibiades thinks this strange, but does not object to a conversation in the usual Socratic style, and is then questioned about the political career he intends to enter upon.

It cannot be denied that this first part of the dialogue is promising, but how is the promise kept? Alcibiades is shown, like Glauco in Xenophon's Reminiscences, that he does not know what is required for the object he aims at, with this difference however that Glauco is to be dissuaded from going into politics before he is fit for them, whereas Alcibiades is assumed to be the right man for the career he has chosen, provided he is made fully to understand what he has to do. In matters of peace and war the question of justice and injustice is principally to be attended to, and how has Alcibiades obtained the knowledge required for deciding it? It may be from the people, says Alcibiades, just as I have learnt to speak Greek from them. The people of Athens replies Socrates, know their own language, but the fact that wars are constantly carried on to decide questions of justice or injustice, shows in itself how little the question of justice is understood by the public at large. The Athenians, says Alcibiades, generally make war not thinking of justice but of their own advantage; but Socrates questions him in such a manner as to make him agree that only what is just can

be advantageous. It was evident, says Socrates, that Alcibiades laboured under a defect which was too common among his countrymen, ignorance; and how could he hope ever to get the better either of the Spartan kings or of the king of Persia, being inferior to them in birth, in careful training of body and mind, in wealth, in fact in nearly everything? His only chance lay in a superiority in knowledge and other high qualities which he might obtain over them.

Alcibiades admits that Socrates is right, but how is he to make up for his deficiencies? Socrates now enters, by means of questioning his friend, upon an argument to the effect that to be a ruler of men it is necessary to bring about a friendly understanding among them, founded on self-control, in describing which he goes on somewhat the same lines as those which, in the Charmides, are condemned when taken by Critias; but with him to do one's own business and to know oneself consist in cultivation of the mind, as being in reality the essential part of man. Being the only one in love with his young friend's mind, Socrates will assist him in this, but he is afraid lest the charms of the Athenian people will lead him astray, whereas his real duty as leader of the people is first to become himself as excellent as he can be, and then to secure the happiness of his fellow-citizens by imparting to them the justice and continence he himself is possessed of. For this purpose the state is as little to be provided for with tyrannical power as any individual, as such power is degrading, virtue alone being worthy of those really free.

These last words contain the gist of the advice given by Plato's Socrates to Alcibiades, an advice which, of course, had it been given by the real Socrates, could not have been followed. Pericles, charged in the Gorgias with having corrupted the morals of the Athenian people by his payments for services rendered to the state, had introduced those payments for no other reason than that, without them, it was impossible to maintain that democratic rule and to render

acceptable that plan of defence in case of a general war, which were the only means to secure the power of Athens over her subject states. But in the Alcibiades that power itself is condemned, although it was the natural result of the policy which Athens, after Salamis and Plataeae, had to follow in behalf of the general interest of Greece, jeopardised as it was by those very barbarians in whom Plato himself saw the natural enemies of the nation he belonged to, and safeguarded by Aristides, the only Athenian statesman whom Plato, in his Gorgias, sees fit to praise, by means of a policy on which that of Pericles was virtually based. Pericles succeeded in making it felt at Athens that the common interest of the state was the same as the interest of every Athenian citizen. For this very reason he maintained his authority for a long period of years, not always free either from envy or unfounded suspicion, but still triumphing over both by the good sense of the people he governed. How could he have brought about such a condition of affairs without that very tyranny of Athens over her subject states which Plato, in his Alcibiades, finds fault with? Was Alcibiades to ignore the fact that a policy like that inaugurated by his great predecessors could not be altered without danger to the state? Was he, for the sake of principles of justice and continence of which Plato himself had hardly a clear idea when he wrote his Charmides, to break with the noble tradition handed over to him by Pericles, and to exchange the post of a statesman for that of a moralist? Was he, instead of the bread so plentifully supplied to the Athenian people by Pericles, to give them what might be called a philosopher's stone, were it not for the peculiar meaning of this expression? The weak points of so magnificent a monument of Plato's genius as his Gorgias,—an entire misunderstanding of the position and duties of Athenian statesmen in the days of Athenian greatness, and a preference for abstract principle as opposed to the practical realities of life,—are not fully understood unless the lessons conveyed by Socrates to Alcibiades in the dialogue

named after the latter are taken into account, and this is why its inferiority to other dialogues does not prevent its being of the highest interest for the study of Plato's views and Plato's shortcomings.

## § X. PLATONIC LOVE.

NOTHING has been said, in the sketch of Plato's life forming part of this essay, about such features of his private life as, in the cases of some historical personages, must be touched upon,—for who could write about Henry IV of France or Charles II of England without referring to love matters?—but which, in the case of many historical characters, are for this reason rather to be passed over in silence, that no information of real value for judging the person concerned can be given about them. Plato, according to a report mentioned by a lexicographer of the Byzantine period, was known to be a model of chastity, and this causes modern writers, naturally partial to the virtues honoured in Christendom, to fly at once to the conclusion that this information must have been derived from trustworthy sources, although the tendency of the last days of Hellenism to make something like a heathen saint of Plato is not denied by them. It would be equally uncritical to take it for granted, on the strength of the evidence given by the title of a lost pamphlet by Antisthenes, that Plato was the reverse of a saint; but why should he not have been like other Athenians of his time or, in fact, like philosophers of all times, whose personal habits and foibles nobody thinks of inquiring into, unless there is some particular reason for doing so? * But love in the abstract

* What is stated in Plato's seventh letter (p. 326 C) about the impression made on him by the mode of life he witnessed, and had to conform to, when visiting Sicily for the first time, is exactly that which, in our days, would be expected from anybody not strictly keeping to the morals of Christian faith, but averse to licentiousness. As to the idea that

cannot be left unnoticed in a sketch of Plato's works, and this must have been seen already from many an observation in the preceding chapters of this essay.

It is generally known that life in ancient Greece was characterised by aberrations in sexual love which it is unpleasant to refer to, but which cannot be ignored in this sketch. Nothing is heard of them in Homer * and Hesiod; very little in mythological tradition. Not until the time of the seven wise men and the contemporaneous lyric poets do they make their appearance in Greek literature, and it is a strange fact that the most sublime erotic poems existing—the only two complete ones by Sappho which have reached us,—are connected with them. A fragment by Solon has been preserved, evidently not written at all in a licentious spirit, but openly referring to desires which in our times no one would even covertly allude to. Something similar, occurring in a fragment of a lost tragedy by Aeschylus, offers this peculiarity that connections like those referred to are spoken of in terms which Admetus might have used in regard to a love pure and chaste, like that of his wife who was to die for him. Pindar, in an ode sung on a public occasion, gives expression to a sentiment of horror at the thought that one of the gods should have tasted of the body of Pelops; but what does he substitute for the popular tradition on the subject? A story of his own invention that Pelops was abducted by Poseidon for a purpose clearly indicated, whose very mention will shock any reader not fully acquainted with Greek sentiments.

Plato's poem about Archeanassa of Colophon cannot be genuine—for how could a man like him be in love with a rather elderly lady of the *demi-monde?*—all that can be said about those suggesting it is that they should read Ovid's Ars Amatoria, where they will find the opinion of an expert in such matters.

* Ganymedes is mentioned in the Iliad (XX, 232 sqq.) as having been carried off by the gods to serve Zeus as cup-bearer, and to live, on account of his beauty, with the immortals; but from the very words used it is evident that the poet cannot have had before his mind a tradition like that referred to by Pindar, Ol. I 44.

These references could not be avoided because, without them, it is hardly possible to understand what, by Plato, is said about love.

It has been stated already that in Plato's Phaedrus, when Socrates, in order to show the deficiencies of a speech by Lysias on love, has delivered another speech on the same subject, demonstrating that for a young man with many admirers of his beauty it is better to gratify the wishes of one who does not love him than of one who does, he is prevented by the divine voice within him from leaving the place without a recantation like that by Stesichorus when anxious to recover the favour of Helen, who on account of his referring to her in disparaging terms in one of his poems, had deprived him of his eye-sight. In his former speech Socrates had, in addressing an imaginary youth, contrasted a man in love with one who was not, as one driven by madness with one fully able to control his actions and feelings. Now he denies that the madness of love must be an evil. Is it not the madness sent by Apollo which enables the Pythia to prophecy and thus to bestow the greatest benefits on mankind? Is there not the madness which, by the agency of Dionysus, lays hold of those who, by purifying and mystic rites, cure the evils resulting from pollution by crime, and making themselves felt during many a generation of men? Then there is that which, under the influence of the Muses, inspires the poets. In fact, the latter madness, or enthusiasm as it would now rather be called, is also mentioned in Plato's brief dialogue called Ion, after a famous Homeric rhapsodist who, in conversation with Socrates, admits that he does his work under an influence acting strongly on his body and mind, and explained, by his interlocutor, from Homer's divine inspiration which is communicated to him; and although he is unwilling, at first, that this should be called madness in any way, he is afterwards reconciled to the idea.

Now what, says Socrates, is the nature of erotic madness?

It cannot be understood without knowing the nature of the human soul. Every soul is immortal, for moving itself by its own action it cannot have become, but must always have been, what it is, nor can it perish. Its form—for to go beyond this would require too long a digression,—is like a horse-chariot with charioteer, feathered all over; but in divine souls everything is perfect, whereas in human souls the one horse is manageable and willing to obey the driver, the other restive and difficult to manage. When feathered, the soul is always on the move in the wide world, joining what is soulless; having lost its feathers it falls down on earth and enters a body. This Platonic psychology, more of which is found in the Republic and the Timaeus, simply comes to this: that the intellect, here represented by the charioteer, has to rule the soul, whereas by the manageable horse that spirit (θυμός) is meant which shows itself in courage, indignation and the like, the unmanageable one acting the part of those desires whose gratification is stated in the Gorgias to be essential to what Callicles calls happiness.

By its feathers the soul is lifted to higher regions, where the gods are dwelling, and where the sight of what is good, beautiful and wise contributes to the growth of the feathers. But then there is the sight enjoyed by the gods when they ascend to the outer surface of the world, being followed, each of them, by the human souls under their guidance. Blissful sights are seen there of that which really is, without change or form; but while the gods take the places they are entitled to, the human souls remain behind in utter confusion, especially as in each of them the restive horse will not obey the charioteer, who for this reason at most sees part, frequently nothing, of what he longs for. Whatever soul has seen something is allowed to remain in the higher regions until, after a thousand years, the happy vision again takes place; those who have been less fortunate have to undergo the fate of being enclosed in a human body, since bodies of

dumb animals are not entered until the end of the human life allotted to each soul. It takes ten thousand years before the souls enter again the place from which they have fallen, only those who have led lives of true philosophers or genuine lovers three times in succession having the privilege of returning to it after the third period of a thousand years each. For at the end of its life on earth the soul is consigned either to punishment or to an abode of comparative happiness, in order to choose a new life at the end of each period.

Souls enclosed in human bodies must, at a former period of their existence, have had a glance at those ideas—for here we have the true Platonic ideas,—which they have seen in the regions above heaven, and the remembrance of them enables them to aspire to a happier fate. Here it is that the erotic madness makes itself felt. To remember what is justice, self-control and the like as seen in the regions above heaven is for various reasons no easy matter, and they are not clearly perceived in human beings; but with beauty it is different, as it is not the mind but the noblest organ of perception in the body, sight, that discovers it, whereas wisdom is not seen. The beauty seen is not, of course, viewed by all in its true light, as an efflux of that ideal beauty which few remember, and there are those who, when seeing it, think only of sensual enjoyment. Those, however, whose minds *do* remember the heavenly sights are first struck with fear, then full of a veneration which, if they were not afraid of doing so, would make them offer sacrifices to the impersonation of beauty they see as to a god; and by seeing the object of their love they feel the forebodings of the growth of their feathers, and long to enjoy his sight as alleviating the sensations caused by growth. When, again, the lover does not see his love, the growth of his soul's feathers is stopped, causing pain and longings under whose influence he is acting as if maddened, until he is restored to happiness by a renewal of the sight he longs for, forgetting

everything for the bliss which then falls to his lot. Not all are similarly affected or attracted by such beauty as they see. It depends on what god they are followers of. Those of Ares show wild passions, which may lead to violence and crime; those of Zeus are captured by the beauty of those in whom they see future philosophers and rulers of men; those of Hera by a kingly bearing. All of them, however, are equally anxious to attain their object, that of winning the one they love.

When trying for this, they experience the effects of the various elements which constitute their souls. The one horse belonging to it is a splendid high-spirited animal, prone to whatever is right; the other wild and only to be restrained by force. When the perception of beauty has entered the charioteer's eye, the good horse readily obeys him; the other wildly rushes forward so as to reach the beloved object and to prepare the way for sensual enjoyment, until a new influx of beauty into the charioteer's eye gives him sufficient strength, with the aid of the tame horse, to get the better of the wild one. As soon, however, as the ennobling sight has vanished the wild horse clamours for its rights, and ultimately forces the driver to comply with its wish; but having approached his love the true instinct of the charioteer once more gains the victory, and by harsh treatment the wild horse submits and thenceforth keeps quiet. Still, when the love has become mutual and closer intimacy ensues, the wild horse gets another chance, and then it is possible for it to attain its object under the influence of drink or other excitement. In that case the two remain friends and lead together a life deemed happy, nor does, when they keep within bounds, misery await them after death; but only those who do not yield to their senses and lead till the end a life untainted by the sensual element of love, are destined to return, after three consecutive lives of the same description, to the abodes of the gods.

This short speech by Plato's Socrates—it is barely half

as long as the series of arguments to be waded through in the Parmenides,—contains such a wealth of ideas as is not found in any other Platonic dialogue. In fact, not writing, as he must have done in the Alcibiades, under compulsion from without, but driven on by that very enthusiasm which poets are inspired with by the Muses, Plato pours out all at once the highest thoughts growing and developing in his mind, which had to be worked out, not always to their advantage, in his later works. His psychology cannot be discussed until a later part of this essay; the vision of the ideas in the regions above heaven must also, for the present, be left alone. Nor will it do to enter, in connection with so splendid a monument of Grecian thought, upon an argument on the strictly moral questions which it opens to those partial to the discussion of such matters; for they too can be more appropriately touched upon when the works of Plato's old age are being considered. But love and beauty are nowhere spoken of in a spirit so thoroughly Grecian and, at the same time, so closely grasping that image of truth which it is given to man to behold during his life on earth, as in the speech by which Platonic love has become a term generally used, and as generally misunderstood, all over the world.

The conclusion arrived at by Plato in his Hippias—that beauty is the cause of enjoyment through the organs of sight and hearing, since the pleasure given by them is least harmful and may be even called useful,—is rather a poor one; but it must have originated in a sentiment correct in itself, though neither properly expressed nor sufficiently clear to Plato's own mind. It certainly had not been altogether discarded by Plato when he wrote his Phaedrus, and it takes quite a different shape when—what was not done by Plato since he did not again take up the subject,—instead of the harmlessness and usefulness which, according to the Hippias, pleasurable sensations through the eyes and ears have in common, the fact is attended to that the enjoy-

ment afforded by those two organs is less directly connected than that by other senses with those functions which keep in existence both individual man as living on earth and human society, and, therefore, with that change and interchange of matter which in German is called *Stoffwechsel*, but, on the other hand, very nearly with the pleasures derived from the independent action of the mind. That Plato, though not acquainted with the investigations which have led to the idea underlying the word just mentioned, must have felt this superiority of hearing and seeing to other senses, is seen from the story, quoted already from the Phaedrus, about the men who, when the Muses had been generated, were so charmed by what they heard from them that they neglected to take food, and were changed into tree-crickets. And now, in the speech by Socrates, enjoyment through sight takes the place of that through hearing. What he calls wisdom and intellect * can only be seen by the mind's eye acting independently from the body, and this has, on earth, nothing but remembrance to look at; beauty is discerned by the visual organs of the body, and most clearly and intensely when seen in man. But to see beauty in man wakened, as matters stood in Greece, desires of a lower as well as of a higher order, the former tending to the satisfaction of physical wants, and having naturally, when found in man, woman as their object; in which case they are altogether necessary, if not for the individual at all events for the preservation of the human race, whereas they appear in quite another light when the ideas on love, current in ancient Greece, are prevailing.

What Plato has seen, either by intuition or through personal experience, is that love, while exciting the desires referred to in those touched by it, at the same time, in those blest with a sense of real beauty, represses those

* The Greek word φρόνησις admits of, and sometimes requires together, both translations.

desires and so secures the triumph of the higher over the lower element in man. The sight of beauty is, in Plato's eyes, ennobling, and so it is, in spite of the fashion of our days to look for both heroism and true culture of mind in those ready and accustomed to plunge into the lowest depths, and frequent the vilest haunts, of humanity. But the worship of beauty as seen in love, though considered by Plato not less ennobling than philosophy itself, does not, in his eyes, attain its glorious end—the restoration of the human soul to the highest regions of existence—unless untainted by intermixture with the effects of those lower desires which make themselves felt in love, and whose gratification as it was met with in ancient Greece, although not viewed there with the same abhorrence as everywhere in our own days, still to minds of a higher order lowered those indulging in them.

The aberrations in love which cannot be ignored by students of Plato's works may be met with even in our days, but they can no longer, as they were in Greece and also by Virgil in his Alexis, in any way be idealised; and so Platonic love, in the true sense of the word, has become impossible. But for all that the Phaedrus is by no means an antiquated production. In love, as it is now understood, the action of the higher instincts of man in repressing the lower ones is not less seen than in the picture drawn by Plato; only as a lover worshipping his idol of beauty as if it were a god would have been ridiculed in Greece, so would, and justly too, in our days the realisation of Plato's idea of love. And still, does not Schiller, after idealising the beautiful days of first love, sorrowfully exclaim: *mit dem Gürtel, mit dem Schleier, reisst der schöne Wahn entzwei?* Not only is illusion lost, a loss which is really not worth sorrowing for, but that idealism of love also vanishes which causes the same poet's "Ritter Toggenburg" to pass his life in watching, from his poor hut, the window of the nunnery where the object of his love had her cell, and which, in Dante's Paradise, is seen

to be closely connected with the idea of the "blessed vision" glorified by the poet. Those alone who feel that man's idealism cannot be done full justice to when confined to earthly life will, in our days, understand the full bearings of Plato's ideas on love as given in his Phaedrus.

The real subject of the Phaedrus is not love, which has got in by way of episode, but, as has been stated in a former chapter, rhetoric. The case is different with the Banquet, a dialogue of a peculiar character, since neither Socrates nor any other philosopher acts the leading part in it, the other personages being merely accessories, but a number of speakers follow one another in succession, each holding forth in the praise of love in his own way, until, Socrates having spoken, an opportunity offers to have him eulogised by Alcibiades in such glowing terms and with reference to such virtues, known to the public or recondite, that it would seem as if the praise of Socrates were the main object of the dialogue. A Banquet was also written by Xenophon, and there are those in whose opinion Plato, when writing his, was anxious to have a fling at Xenophon's. This opinion, however, rests on very slender grounds, nothing being found in Plato's Banquet which is not perfectly clear without any such supposition. It is much more likely that Xenophon wrote *his* Banquet, not indeed with a view to go against Plato, but because Plato's production reminded him that, having written so much about Socrates, he should also give a sketch of his convivial habits and talents; and in that sketch there are certainly allusions made to statements by Plato's personages which clearly show that he must have been acquainted with, and not altogether have approved of, the arguments used by them. *

* In Xenophon's Banquet (VIII 32 sqq.) Pausanias, one of Plato's personages, is taken to task for arguments which, in Plato's Banquet, are partly used by him and partly by Phaedrus. Such mistakes are hardly excusable when committed by writers in our days, but Xenophon may have derived all his knowledge of Plato's Banquet from hearing it read once or twice, and in that case nothing is more natural than that he

Having elucidated the question of love in so masterly a manner as by the grand speech of the Phaedrus, it may well be asked how Plato came to revert to the subject and write his Banquet. The most likely explanation of this is that he must have been found fault with, by his friends and by public opinion at Athens, for giving expression, in his Phaedrus, to ideas about love which were not only at variance with those current among the public, but even hardly understood except, perhaps, by a very few. It must be admitted that by his Banquet he both humoured the public by having various opinions on love ventilated, made Socrates deliver a speech, not as his own but as rendering the thoughts of a prophetess, which contained views both novel and in keeping with the tenor of his philosophy, and, through the final address by Alcibiades, brought practical evidence of the correctness of the views advanced by Socrates in the Phaedrus. Without the Phaedrus the *raison d'être* of the Banquet would not be fully understood; without the Banquet Plato might be charged with holding a one-sided opinion on so important a subject as love. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that a comparison of the speech held by Socrates in the Banquet with that of the Phaedrus, too clearly shows that Plato, as in some other respects, so especially in regard to love was rather halting between two opinions than sure of his own mind.

Plato's Banquet begins with a narrative by Apollodorus, a scholar and fervent admirer of Socrates, but more distinguished for the deep affection he bore to his teacher, than

should not remember everything rightly. The chronological question connected with the matter, and made much of by Athenaeus (V c. 56), will be hardly thought worthy of attention by those who are aware of the rather shaky notions of chronology prevailing in Plato's days. Reasons for considering Xenophon's Banquet as having been written in consequence of the publication of Plato's are that its character is different from that of his other works on Socrates, which peculiarity might be accounted for by its having been written for a particular purpose, and that it certainly tends to give another, and in its way not less correct, idea of the opinion held by the real Socrates about love than Plato's Banquet.

for brightness of intellect. He had been acquainted with one Aristodemus—probably the same who, according to Xenophon, was taken to task by Socrates for not believing in the existence, and neglecting the worship, of the gods,—and from him he had obtained information about what happened at a banquet given by Agathon, the famous tragic poet, on the occasion of his gaining his first victory in one of the usual contests in the theatre. Being asked by a friend to give an account of it, he tells him that his informant, having met Socrates on his way to the dinner given by the poet, was induced to accompany him, but had to enter the dining hall alone, Socrates having, as was usual with him, remained behind to meditate on some subject or other which had just entered his mind. Not until the middle of the dinner did Socrates make his appearance, and Agathon invited him to take his seat, or, as the Greeks would say, lie down beside him.

When dinner was over, and the hymn in honour of Apollo had been sung, without which no pious Greek would indulge in potations, it appeared that, as at a similar party on the day before there had been a great deal of drinking, even the steadiest worshippers of Bacchus were not anxious for a renewal of their feats in that line; and so a plan was agreed upon to prefer a quiet gathering to another drinking bout. Eryximachus, a well-known physician, who shared the unfavourable opinion of certain colleagues of his in our days about getting tipsy, then came to the front with a new idea. His friend Phaedrus—the one of the dialogue,—had often complained to him that, while gods and heroes were praised by poets and sophists, yea, even a eulogy of salt existed, love had never as yet been duly honoured in the same way. Why should not all those present, in succession according as they were seated, hold forth in praise of love? This plan was heartily approved of, and Phaedrus, who was asked to speak first, made a speech in honour of love as a deity, which slightly reminds those who now read it of that delivered

by Socrates on the banks of the Ilissus, referring as it does to the divine inspiration of lovers, but in which he also dwells on the veneration in which love is to be held as being, according to poetical tradition, one of the oldest gods, as well as on the salutary effects of love on the minds, seen in Alcestis who was ready to die for her husband whereas his aged parents declined to do so, and in Achilles who preferred hastening his own death to leaving his friend's death unavenged. Was there not, between a lover and his beloved one, a mutual respect which prevented their committing anything disgraceful in each other's presence, and would not, for this reason, an army made up of loving couples be invincible?

Not all the speeches, of course, are reported, and so Phaedrus is followed by Pausanias, Agathon's reputed lover, who, in a lengthy speech, first makes a distinction between love of a higher and love of a lower class, the one sprung from the heavenly Aphrodite, born without either father or mother, the other from the daughter of Zeus and Dione, worshipped as the people's goddess. To love is in itself neither good nor bad; all depends on the manner in which it is done; and now it will strike readers of our own time to hear from Pausanias that love under the guidance of the heavenly Aphrodite has nothing to do with females, but tends to educate those who practise it in the proper manner. The love which Pausanias is in favour of, is held to be perfectly correct in those parts of Greece where intellectual power and education are hardly met with; it is condemned in those where tyrannical power prevails, for tyrants are afraid of the spirit of liberty engendered by love. At Athens a more sensible opinion is prevalent, for while it is thought quite right to be in love, and even to indulge in all the extravagant practices common to lovers, the beloved one is blamed when reciprocating the love he is the object of, unless it is evident that the lover's influence on him tends to educate and improve him, since in this case the connection

between the two is clearly effected by the son of the heavenly goddess.

Aristophanes, the comic poet, was to follow, but it would seem that the length of his predecessor's speech had procured him a violent hiccough, and Eryximachus, after prescribing a remedy for it, consents to speak before him, taking quite another view of the matter than the other speakers. With him love is that principle in nature which reconciles contending elements, and which medical as well as other professional men have to take into account when trying to bring about the harmony which cannot be dispensed with, either in matters of health or in music and similar arts. Here, too, the difference between the heavenly and the people's Aphrodite is attended to, the latter's son being the cause, both in nature and in human society, of all kinds of evils.

With this learned speech, as well as with the pedantic and at the same time intensely cynical arguments of Pausanias, the remarks on love made by Aristophanes form an agreeable contrast; and here it is to be observed that Plato very cleverly makes him use arguments reminding the reader of what is met with in his comedies. Men are not aware, he says, what a true benefactor they find in love, and this is simply because they are unacquainted with the history of their own race. In olden times men had one head with two faces, four arms and four legs, which enabled them, by tumbling about, to move with great swiftness. Instead of two sexes there were then three—males, females and those half males and half females. Their strength and daring were such that the gods became afraid of them, but it would not do to exterminate them like the giants, for who would then offer sacrifices? So Zeus cut them asunder, instructing Apollo to heal the wounds caused by the operation, and to take other measures for the preservation of the race. Man, as now existing on earth, is always in search of his other half, and while the male halves of the androgyne sex are anxious for the love of women, the men sprung from males

prefer their own sex, nor should they be blamed for this, seeing that they are the men who afterwards act conspicuous parts in political affairs.* Their mutual love is simply caused by their feeling that together they are one being, nor will they be parted in the nether world. But there is always a danger lest, when the worship of the gods is neglected, a further division of the human individual will ensue, and men will be obliged to jump about on one leg and be like images in basso relievo; and for this reason piety towards the gods is never to be lost sight of.

Two speeches were still to follow, one by Agathon and one by his neighbour Socrates, who gives expression to his fear lest, so wise and eloquent a man as his host having spoken, nothing will be left for himself to say. Agathon then gives a eulogy of Love as the most beautiful and youthful of gods, highly applauded by those present for the choice words he has used, but containing nothing else than sophistical and rhetorical trash of such a nature that Socrates, before entering upon his own speech, expresses his surprise at his own mistake; for he had thought that love was to be praised according to truth, and of the truth about love he fancied he knew something, but now he saw that it did not matter whether truth or falsehood was resorted to, provided any amount of praise was heaped upon the fancied god. He then, in a brief exchange of questions and answers with Agathon, soon compels the latter to admit that he is now found to understand nothing of what he has been

* Here we are reminded of such passages in Aristophanes as that in the Knights, where Cleon boasts of having put a stop to disreputable practices by bringing to grief a citizen indulging in them,—evidently a person of the same description as Timarchus, who was brought into court by Æschines,—and when the sausage-vendor replies that this was simply done out of fear of having such people become competitors in the political arena. The reference to the fear of the gods lest they should lose the enjoyment given them by sacrifices, reminds one of the Birds; the advice not to indulge in shortcomings in regard to the gods, of the final part of the Clouds.

talking about, especially as he had praised Love for his beauty, whereas his very nature showed him to be hunting after, and therefore in want of, beauty.

Socrates now comes to the front, not with a speech which he gives as his own, but with what he remembers having heard from Diotima, a prophetess from Mantinea, who had visited Athens at the request of the authorities to assist in devising means to avert a pestilence then threatening but, through her agency, prevented from breaking out till ten years after. Socrates, being anxious to profit by her wisdom, had frequent intercourse with her, and on one occasion he had referred, as all the speakers at the banquet had done, to love as one of the greatest gods, endowed with surpassing beauty. Love, replied Diotima, is neither a god nor beautiful, and you know this yourself. He cannot be beautiful because he is desirous and in want of beauty, and a god can never be in want either of beauty or anything else. But as a man who does not deserve the name of wise need not for this reason be ignorant or foolish, since he may hold correct views without being able to give proper reasons for holding them, so there are beings who are neither gods nor mortals but between the two: the demons.* They are those who, between gods and men, mediate and administer everything, and one of the greatest of them is Love.

In answer to the question who Love's parents were, Diotima gave a story about Wealth, or rather Means,† and

* *Δαίμονες* is used by Homer in many a passage as equivalent to gods (*θεοί*), and never in the sense given to the word in later times; but when the gods are mentioned by their usual name, they are thought of by the poet as known and worshipped, whereas *δαίμων* is often used of the invisible powers ruling the world. Hesiod speaks of *δαίμονες* as the men of the golden age, still watching the doings of mankind, and this agrees pretty well with what is stated by Diotima. To use the word "demon" in English as it is used here, is somewhat awkward, on account of its being generally applied to evil spirits, but it is not easy to find another.

† *Πόρος*, the god's name, does not mean actual wealth (*πλοῦτος*), but the means or faculty of providing it.

Poverty, the former, a son of the goddess Metis (wisdom or, rather, inventive genius), having at a feast in honour of the birth of Aphrodite too freely imbibed nectar, so as to lie down in the garden of Zeus, where Poverty, anxious to become a mother by him, joined him, afterwards to give birth to Love. So Love was by no means the beautiful and delicate being of Agathon's speech, but hardy and careworn, bold and inventive, immortal through his father, mortal through his mother, never in absolute want but allowing whatever he has got to run at once though his hands, perishing by loss and reviving by success. Gods are no philosophers, for they are possessed of what philosophers strive after; Love is one and is like one, since he is always in pursuit of what is wanting to him. The error committed by Socrates was natural and common to many, who, taking that which is loved for Love himself, endow him with the highest beauty. But what is sought for by Love? Happiness, in other words the possession of what is good; and when love is understood to mean the pursuit of a more definite object, the reason is that, like the word "poet"—originally whoever makes something, now used in a limited sense,—it has come to designate a pursuit quite different from that after wealth, strength of body, wisdom and other things worth having.

What is this pursuit? Not that, said Diotima, of one's other half, as some people say, for in search of happiness and what is good men would willingly cut off their hands and feet if required, but that of giving birth in (or joined to) what is beautiful. All human beings are pregnant, in body or in mind, and at a certain time of life anxious to give birth to what they are pregnant with, but only in what is beautiful, for it cannot be done in what is the reverse and wanting in harmony. So beauty is the presiding genius of birth, and those pregnant—we should rather say "anxious to generate," but Plato makes no distinction between the two,—are for this reason always fascinated by beauty. But it is not beauty itself that is striven after; the object aimed at is giving birth in it and so ensuring immortality.

This last point was elucidated by Diotima in a further conversation, when she pointed out how anxious animals as well as men are to perpetuate their own existence in and through their offspring. This was the effect of a longing for immortality to which satisfaction is sought for in generation, not only in the usual sense of the word, but also in regard to that which the mind gives birth to, and to that which men can do to preserve the memory of their names. Would Alcestis, says she to Socrates, would Achilles, would that Codrus of yours have willingly encountered death, had it not been for their ardent desire for immortalising themselves? And then she refers to the lasting benefits bestowed by poets and lawgivers on humanity in their eagerness for immortality: * an immortality exactly tallying with that now extolled by those who have parted with the belief in life eternal which forms part of the Christian faith, and whose right to call themselves, if they choose to do so, Diotimists after the prophetess of Mantinea, no one can, with justice, deny.

But Diotima had something else to say about love, in which Socrates might not be quite able to follow her. It is natural, and right too, said she, to fall in love with one in whom beauty is seen, and with him to give birth to thoughts; but why keep to one only, and why not try to descry the beauty of the mind as well as that of the body, the former being much more valuable? Why not educate youth to what is good in practice and to the knowledge imparted by philosophical studies, and by doing so be brought to see beauty as it is? For whoever takes this as his object in life will end by reaching the true goal which love tends to, and will see beauty, not as it is revealed in nature or in man or

* It may be that the praise bestowed here on poets and lawgivers—Homer and Solon are specially named,—has also as its object to take away unfavourable impressions which the Phaedrus had made on the Athenian public; but nobody would think of this, were there no reasons to consider the Banquet as written for a similar purpose in regard to what the Phaedrus contains about love.

anywhere else, but as it really is, pure of anything human and shining in its divine unity. This is what the path of true love leads to.

So Plato once more, but by a different road, arrives at that "blessed vision" which, in the Phaedrus, true lovers, undefiled by desires of the flesh, get access to as well as true philosophers; and that too, this time, by a combination of love and philosophy which was found in, and formed the distinctive character of, Socrates as he, and perhaps he alone, knew him. The latter's speech at the banquet met with approval, only Aristophanes wanting to have his say in reply to Diotima's remark about his own theory of love, when at once a great noise of nightly revellers was heard at the door, and Alcibiades was seen to enter rather elevated and his hair adorned with fillets, with one of which he wants to encircle Agathon's brow in honour of his victory. Having lain down on Agathon's couch he discovers that Socrates, his old lover, is next to him; and him, too, he honours in the same way, asking at the same time for an enormous cup which he empties at once, Socrates, who could stand any amount of wine, following his example. Are we to drink, now asks Eryximachus the physician, without saying a word? Will not Alcibiades join us in celebrating love? That will not do, says Alcibiades; Socrates is too jealous to allow me to praise, in his presence, anybody else; but I am quite ready to make a speech in praise of Socrates. And so he does.

Alcibiades begins his speech by comparing Socrates to one of those images of Silenus which were for sale at sculptors' shops, being in reality boxes in which, when opened, the image of a god was found. In fact, he not only looked like Marsyas the satyr, but as the latter fascinated people with the sounds of his flute, so he did with his words. Pericles was a first-rate orator, but the feeling experienced when listening to Socrates, a feeling as under the influence of witchcraft, his speeches could not rouse. Often, when taken

to task by Socrates about his dealings with the people of Athens, he, Alcibiades, had to run away closing his ears, lest he should have to sit spell-bound instead of taking his part in active life. This, however, others, too, had occasion to experience, but not every one saw the god enclosed within the satyr. He had seen the divine image, he had felt what it was worth to be loved by, and on terms of the closest intimacy with, such a man. What lovers tried to obtain from those they were in love with, he wanted to bestow on Socrates, but without being anything else for him than what a son was to his father and a younger brother to an elder one. So he had reason to complain of Socrates as having repulsed his advances; but could he forget the steadfastness and courage displayed by him at the siege of Potidaea, when he saved his life but declined, in his favour, the prize for valour? Again, at the retreat from the battle of Delium, Socrates not only showed the coolest head and gave the best advice, but he walked off with that gait of his ridiculed by Aristophanes but showing that he was not afraid in the least, and therefore being a sufficient reason even for a victorious enemy to leave him alone. Achilles had a rival in Brasidas the Spartan; to Pericles Nestor of old could be compared; but Socrates was a man of quite a novel type, laughed at for his strange and satyr-like arguments taken from things of daily life, but in reality containing treasures of wisdom and virtue altogether divine.

The guests were highly amused with the candid confession made by Alcibiades of his discomfiture in regard to Socrates, but soon the arrival of other revellers caused the most abstemious of them to leave, and when during the night Aristodemus, who had been asleep for a while, got awake, he found Socrates discussing with Agathon and Aristophanes, under the influence of the cup that cheers and sometimes inebriates, the question whether writing comedies and tragedies was not, after all, work for one and the same individual. Towards daybreak the two went to bed, whereas

Socrates, having gone to a gymnasium and washed himself, spent the day as if nothing had happened.

If it has been rightly surmised that the Banquet was written with a view to meet objections raised against the speech in the Phaedrus, Plato must be admitted to have fully attained his object. Phaedrus himself introduces the subject of love, making one observation of some importance which might have fitted Pausanias as well, that about an army of loving couples; and it is well known that about the time when the Banquet must have been written, a body of warriors, selected on this principle, was actually formed at Thebes.* The speech by Pausanias must have made on the Athenian public the same impression as on Xenophon—that in reality it was nothing else than a defence of sheer immorality. In fact, immorality in some shape or other cannot be got rid of in this world, but even those indulging in it will dislike arguments in its favour, and so Pausanias must have done good work by preparing readers of the Banquet for what was coming. Eryximachus allows them to have a glance at the speculations about love as a principle of nature which Aristophanes, in the parabasis of his Birds, did not fail to ridicule; Aristophanes himself would seem to have embodied, in his amusing story, a belief, or rather a common expression founded on something not unlike belief; Agathon represents, by his speech, the hollow rhetoric which, at that time, had many admirers, but which Socrates easily demolishes. So the minds were opened for the speech given by Socrates himself, which is the most important part of the dialogue.

That this speech is altogether different from that in the

* This cannot have happened before 378, the year when the Lacedaemonians were expelled from the citadel of Thebes. The allusion in the speech made by Aristophanes to the Spartan policy of weakening the Arcadians by keeping them asunder may, but need not, refer to what happened, shortly after the peace of Antalcidas (387), with Mantinea, for this was only one instance of the manner in which the Arcadians were dealt with, for centuries, by their southern neighbours.

Phaedrus is seen at a glance, but what does the difference come to? In the Phaedrus Socrates sketches individual men, touched by love, having to deal with tendencies mutually contrary in their own bosoms, and made by love, kept pure from vile admixture, to rise to the serene abodes of the gods. The fact that Socrates, when thus insisting on purity, was not belied by his own life, is attested by the speech of Alcibiades. But in the Banquet individualism is set aside. Immortality is nothing else than perpetuation of race and memory; love is not confined to one object but identified with an activity extending over the whole community. The love shown by Socrates to those endowed with beauty undoubtedly partook more of the latter kind than of that pictured in the Phaedrus. To him the taming of the wild horse can hardly have been the difficult task so graphically described by Plato, but it was his object to educate whoever was fit to profit by his conversation; and the idealism not less splendidly given expression to by Diotima than in the speech under the plane-tree is sure to have filled his mind. But it is Plato, not Socrates, this essay has to deal with, and Plato's idealism is now to be considered.

## § XI. PLATO'S IDEALISM.

By idealism, in this essay, is meant that tendency of the human mind which is not satisfied with what is met with in its surroundings, but strives after something higher, to be looked for in those very ideas of beauty and the like which, according to Diotima, Socrates would come to see by following the path of true love. Without such idealism, without striving after something beyond the elements of happiness named in the epitaph of Sardanapalus—eat, drink and enjoy yourself, —without feeling that, whatever spirit may prevail among the masses, no one is really worthy of the name of man unless he aims at a higher object than keeping himself alive and securing his worldly interests, there is an end, if not to

human society, at all events to that which causes mankind to have a history. But idealism is of two kinds. It either aims at individual self-development, or at improving and benefiting the community, small or large, a petty village or the human race, which the individual belongs to. The former kind of idealism requires, to have full scope, a belief in the individual's continued existence after life on earth; the latter does not, and even has a levelling tendency which is directly at variance with individual development of the higher kind. Christianity, with its universal charity and its life eternal, embraces both; but Christianity, as a religion based on revelation, is altogether different from any philosophy.

To understand Plato's idealism, his idea of future life, immortality of the soul, or however one may call it, is on one hand to be considered, and this, of course, necessitates an inquiry into his psychology; on the other hand his theories about the state and the organisation of society are to be studied. Till now, nothing has been said in this essay on either point, since the dialogues of which an account has been given only throw a side-light on the one subject, and give negative views of the other. With the question of Platonic love discussed in the preceding chapter, Plato's psychology is closely connected.

Before entering upon it, the ideas of Socrates on the subject, as far as they are known, are worth attending to. Xenophon, in his works on Socrates, has nothing about the great question of human existence. In his book on the education of Cyrus his hero, on his death-bed, gives reasons why his sons should not think that, with his death, his existence would come to an end—his soul during his life was not seen but showed its existence by its action; the wicked were threatened with punishment after death; the spirits of the deceased were objects of active veneration; the soul was active during sleep, and why should it be thought to be nowhere after death, etc.;—but for all that it might be that death put a period to the soul's life as to that of the body.

From this it is evident that Socrates in his dealings with men like Xenophon did not care to suggest definite ideas on psychological questions; but Plato knew more about his inmost thoughts, and from his dialogues it is evident that Socrates had something of a psychological theory of his own.

When, however, Plato in his Apology represents Socrates as addressing his judges after they had passed sentence of death on him, his words agree, in the main, with those of Xenophon's Cyrus. If life is extinct after death, if death is sleep without dreams and without awakening, what is the evil of it? If, on the other hand, the soul descends to the kingdom of Hades, he, Socrates, will meet with judges of quite a different kind to those at Athens, and with the souls of men who either were in life far superior to those now living on earth, or suffered injustice like himself. So a picture of life in the nether regions is given akin to that in the Frogs, and such as may have been present to the mind of many a pious worshipper of the goddesses of Eleusis. Also in Plato's Crito Socrates expresses himself in terms showing that he adheres to the popular traditions about existence after death, and even that death is for him a passage to his true home. But both in the Apology and in the Crito philosophical argument was out of the question, and popular ideas had to be reproduced; and so they were.

The Socratic ideas, together with the first ones of Plato, on the soul are mainly found in two dialogues, the Phaedo and the Meno. The two are closely connected with one another, not only by their referring, in some measure, to the same subject, but also by the fact that the Phaedo is not of less importance than the Banquet for knowing and rightly understanding Plato's Socrates, and that the Meno contains a direct allusion by the reasons why the charges were brought against Socrates which led to his condemnation and death. The Phaedo, like the Theaetetus, is prefaced by a conversation between the founder of a philosophical school owing its existence to the teachings of Socrates and a friend,

and this might be taken as an argument, though a very slender one, that it must have been written about the same time. There are, however, much more cogent reasons for assuming that both dialogues were written almost immediately after the Theaetetus.

First of all, there is every reason for believing that the Meno was written before the Phaedo, the latter referring, as to a matter frequently discussed between Socrates and his friends, to a doctrine laid down and argued and, in Plato's opinion, proved to be correct in the Meno. Again the psychological theory laid down in the Phaedo is not only also met with in the Phaedrus, but what is stated in the Phaedo about the fate of the soul after death is much more tentative and less definite than the statement in the Phaedrus, which is adhered to and, at the same time, amplified in a dialogue posterior not only to the Phaedrus itself but also to the Gorgias and the Banquet: the Republic. Now the reason for assigning to the Phaedrus a later date than to the Theaetetus and to the Sophist is not that there is such a connection between the latter two and the former as there is between the Phaedrus and the Banquet, but simply that the Phaedrus cannot have been written before the time when Plato had got the better of the doubts besetting him by hitting upon an ontology of his own; and it will be remembered that whereas, in the Theaetetus, Socrates sets aside the doctrines of Heraclitus and Protagoras, but does not meet with success in his attempts at arriving at a definite result as to the nature of knowledge, a more important victory was soon to be gained in the Sophist, but in a debate in which Socrates, as leading character, had to make room for the stranger from Elea. The meaning of this, as far as Plato's own position was concerned, has been explained at the end of the eighth chapter of this essay; but must not Plato's friends on becoming acquainted with the Sophist, must not even before them Plato himself, while his new dialogue was being prepared for, have felt deep regret at the position given to Socrates, dismissed as he was

for the present from his leadership, after having suffered, in the Theaetetus, an unquestionable defeat? Could anything be more gratifying to either Plato or his friends from his younger days than a full and brilliant rehabilitation of their great teacher? That rehabilitation might be twofold; by making him give, before the question of knowledge would be solved by the man from Elea in that third dialogue—the Philosopher,—which was to follow the Sophist and the Politicus but was never written, a solution of it not by means of an elaborate argument, for which Plato was not at that time prepared, but by a simple hint; and by showing him once more to his admirers in all the splendour of his moral greatness. The former object was attained by the Meno, the latter by the Phaedo.

Meno was a young Thessalian of high birth, who, like Xenophon, joined the expedition of Cyrus against the Persian king, but at the head of a body of men recruited in Thessaly, not as a simple volunteer, and who evidently, on the occasion of a visit to Athens, must have made friends with Plato, but was hated by Xenophon with a deadly hatred, which even the cruel fate he met with as a prisoner at the Persian court did not abate. In the dialogue named after him he raises the old question, discussed but not answered in the Protagoras: whether virtue (ἀρετή) can be taught. Socrates pays him a compliment for a predilection for philosophy which he thinks must have been fostered in him by Gorgias, then a welcome guest with the Thessalian nobility; but before replying he wants to know what virtue is. How is it possible, says Meno, to pretend ignorance of this; but when asked for an answer to the question, he commits the mistake which, in the Hippias and the Theaetetus, secures to Socrates an easy victory over his interlocutors; that of not giving a definition of the matter under discussion, but naming instances or parts of it. A definition worthy of a disciple of Gorgias —that virtue is the power of ruling over men,—is then given by Meno, but soon demolished by Socrates, who goes

out of his way to make Meno understand the nature of a definition; but a second attempt—that virtue is to rejoice in things beautiful, and to have the power to obtain them,—does not meet with better success. Socrates makes Meno admit that the pursuit of what is beautiful implies that of what is good and useful and that, although wealth may be useful, it can be no virtue to obtain it otherwise than in a just and proper manner; and then poor Meno is caught as Theaetetus is in his last attempt to define knowledge: justice, forming part of virtue, cannot be mentioned in a definition of virtue. Why, says Meno to Socrates, people are truly right in comparing you to a cramp fish (torpedo), by whose touch they are benumbed. I thought I knew what I was about, and now I feel as if I know nothing at all. If I have that power, replies Socrates, there is this peculiarity added to it that, when others are benumbed by coming into contact with me, I am likewise. What you do not know I do not know either, but I am ready to assist you in seeking for it.

It is now that Socrates, after a remark made by Meno in the style of the eristic school on the impossibility of seeking for anything one does not know, comes to the front with a doctrine which, says he, is preached by priests and reproduced in one of Pindar's poems: that the human soul is immortal, and after death and a sojourn in the kingdom of Hades returns to the abode of living men clad in a new body. This doctrine, which may have originated with Pythagoras, was evidently as much one taught by Socrates to, and discussed with, such scholars of his as he thought fit for philosophical research, as that of the ideas mentioned in the Parmenides and so many other Platonic dialogues; and Socrates convinces Meno of its truth by questioning a slave of his, who had never heard of geometry, in such a manner as to make him arrive, by his replies, at the result known by the name of Pythagoric theorem. The slave had first confidently given a wrong answer; then he had been brought, by a new question, under the benumbing influence of the

philosophical cramp fish; and ultimately he had come to see the truth, evidently without being taught anything but simply by being made to remember. Here, too, the answer is given to the question which puzzled Theaetetus. Knowledge is stated by Socrates to be a true opinion, confirmed by that remembrance of things seen in former life which is awakened by questioning.

Meno is now willing to engage with Socrates in search for truth, but he prefers taking the original question—whether virtue can be taught,—as the subject of their common inquiry, to hunting after a definition of virtue, and Socrates gives in, since the want of a definition may be supplied by a supposition. The result of all teaching is knowledge; can virtue be called knowledge? It can, is the conclusion arrived at; there can be no virtue without that intelligent action of the mind (φρόνησις) which, to the Grecian mind, was not clearly distinct from knowledge. Besides, if virtue cannot be taught, it must be owing to a direct action of nature, and if this were the case those born virtuous would be laid hold of at once, to preserve them from whatever might prevent their benefiting the state. But there is one thing not tallying with the supposition made use of. How is it that, when virtue can be taught, it is not usually either taught or learnt? Teachers of all arts are to be had, but where are teachers of virtue found?

When the two have got so far, Anytus comes near, and Socrates having introduced him to Meno as one of the leading men at Athens, at once makes him take part in the inquiry. Anytus is found not to believe in the teaching of virtue by sophists, for whom he feels nothing but contempt. Cannot any decent citizen, asks he, teach youth what is required? Socrates replies by quoting, to a much larger extent than in the Protagoras, instances of leading men—Themistocles and Aristides, Thucydides and Pericles—who had failed to impart virtue even to their own sons. Anytus—it will be remembered that he was charged with bringing his son to grief by neg-

lecting his education—breaks off the conversation by an angry warning to Socrates that, in a town like Athens, it is dangerous to speak ill of men of worth; and now it is seen why he, the most powerful of the men who brought Socrates into court, is made to take part in the dialogue.

The end of the Meno is that virtue is neither taught nor the gift of nature, and that it is not knowledge either; but is knowledge required for the guidance of men on the path of life? Is not opinion in accordance with truth sufficient for it? If there is one thing, says Socrates, I am sure of, it is that a difference exists between knowledge and correct opinion; but the effects of such opinion are the same, only it does not last without that divine inspiration which is also at work in prophecy. And so the conclusion arrived at is that virtue, being identified with opinion in accordance with truth, is bestowed on, and maintained in, man by divine agency.

The Phaedo is often called, by Greek authors, and rightly so, the dialogue about the soul, but the impression it makes on the reader is rather that of a eulogy of Socrates. Having been for many days in gaol, and daily received his friends' visits, he learns that the arrival of the sacred galley from Delos, during whose absence no execution was allowed to take place, has rendered it necessary for him to die; and when on the fatal day his friends are anxious to have a last interview with him, they are told that they cannot enter at once, since the committee of police (οἱ ἕνδεκα) are engaged in unlocking the chains in which his legs are bound. When they are allowed to enter, they find Socrates on his couch, trying to accustom his limbs to the freedom they have recovered. His wife is indulging in passionate grief; he quietly tells his old friend Crito to remove her, and then enters into conversation with his friends about the relief from pain he experiences, and about certain poems he had felt called upon to make while in prison, until a remark of his that death is not to be deprecated but not to be hastened

either, causes Simias the Theban, who is present with his friend Cebes, to question him on this last point. Why should a philosopher be not afraid of death, but still averse to put an end to his own life? The gods, replies Socrates, are watching over us, and we should not leave their service before it is time.

But then, asks Cebes, why should wise men leave cheerfully such good masters, whereas those devoid of wisdom bewail their fate when doomed to die? Should not rather the contrary take place? Socrates now proceeds to give his reasons for willingly submitting to his doom. He hopes to meet, after death, gods and men as good as those he is leaving; but besides, what else is philosophy than a continuous preparation for death? Is not death a separation of the soul from the body, and is not this the philosopher's wish? Surely a philosopher does not care for such joys of life as eating and drinking; and will he not, when released from what impeded his mind's sight, and enabled to discern that which really is, instead of being dependent on the fallacious affections of his senses, enjoy a happiness not to be had in this life? The real philosopher for this reason is anxious to get rid of his body and its desires, and his training for death consists in keeping pure from them, so as to be able to come into contact with what is pure and untainted by the evils of the body. But even of those who seemingly practise virtue, very few are really partaking of that intellect and wisdom which render man fit for a life in which the body has been laid aside, and these few are those really worthy of the name of philosophers.

Cebes, though agreeing with most of this, still observes that according to popular opinion the soul, when leaving the body, is dispersed by winds and thus perishes. What could Socrates say against this? His reply is that it is an old belief that the souls, after having left the bodies they have been joined to, revert to other bodies; and is not this belief justified by the nature of things? Do not always opposites

arise from opposites; what is smaller from what is larger, what is hot from what is cold, what is awake from what is asleep? Between waking and sleeping there is falling asleep and getting awake, and must there not, between life and death, be a reviving as well as a dying? How if there were no awaking; would not the whole world be faster asleep than Endymion? And where would life be if, after dying, there was no reviving? Cebes admits the soundness of this argument, and also reminds Socrates of his well-known doctrine of learning being remembering; and at the request of Simias Socrates goes once more through the argument about this subject, pointing out that what we are reminded of by seeing it, need not be what we actually have seen, but may be something else. When seeing two things which are equal, we are reminded of what is equal in itself, or the idea of equality, and where can we have seen this except in former life? Taken together, the doctrine of the mutual generation of life and death and that of learning being remembering are, in the opinion of Socrates, which both Thebans admit to be correct, sufficient to prove that the soul does not perish with the body; and as to the popular belief about the soul's dispersion, the admitted fact that, whereas the body belongs to things seen, the soul is invisible, renders it evident that the decomposition which the former, like all visible matter, is subject to, cannot affect the latter, as partaking of the oneness of things invisible. But the soul, when contaminated by its indulging in the pleasures of the body, does not fully retain its character of invisibility, and hence it is that ghosts are seen wandering about the graves, whereas the pure souls, preserved from contamination by an undefiled life, reside after death in the kingdom of Hades the invisible. This, too, is the true reason why those following a philosopher's life abstain from pleasures of the body.

Silence ensued, but the two Thebans are seen whispering to one another, and when Socrates asks them whether they still feel doubts on certain points, it appears that they do,

and that they think it the better plan to give utterance to them. Simias thought that it was possible for the soul to be, in regard to the body, nothing else than what the harmony of a lyre was in regard to the lyre itself. Cebes, while agreeing with this, harboured also another doubt. Should it be assumed that a soul might have gone through many lives, then even this was no reason for being sure that it would not perish; for a man who had worn out many a cloak was, for all that, not immortal. The effect of these remarks on those present was most depressing. Their doubts had been set at rest, and now they were renewed, for the arguments they had heard just now seemed irresistible.

Never, says Phaedo, who tells the story to his friend, did I admire Socrates more than on this occassion. I sat next to him on a low chair, and laying hold of the long hair I wore, he said: to-morrow, perhaps, this hair will be cut off, —which, at Athens, was the usual sign of mourning,—but to-day I shall have your hair and mine cut, unless I get the better of Simias and Cebes. And the better he got of Simias. After a warning against becoming averse to argument in consequence of the impression some arguments might make, —for this would be the very means of being always in doubt, —he first points out that the doctrine of harmony did not agree with that of learning being the same as remembering, and then that harmony and the soul were subject to affections altogether different from one another. There could be, in harmony, a difference of degree; a soul could not be more or less a soul. In a soul there could be good and evil, and want of harmony was the evil; but could there be, in harmony, either another harmony or disharmony? The soul was admitted to rule the body; was not the harmony of a lyre dependent on the condition of the lyre?

In reply to Cebes Socrates enters upon a lengthy discussion of the whole question of coming into existence and perishing. In his youth, said he, he had gone through those studies of nature which were then the fashion, and had fancied he knew a good

many things, for instance that the body grew by eating and drinking, and that ten was more than eight by two; but he had soon to encounter doubts of his own. How could one joined to one become two, and one cut into two likewise? Was, in this case, not the same result brought about by means contrary to one another? Much had he been pleased on finding that Anaxagoras had written a book about intellect (νοῦς) as the ruling power of the world; but in reading it he found nothing about intellect, air and water, bones and sinews being represented as causes of what happened in the world and in the human body. Being afraid of going altogether wrong he had betaken himself to dialectic, and had arrived at the conclusion that if one became two the cause was to be sought for in the accession of duality, and that when things became greater or smaller, it was through receiving greatness or smallness. Now greatness could never become smallness, nor smallness greatness, but smallness gave way to greatness when greatness joined that which contained smallness. Not only, however, had opposites to give way to one another, but also that which contained them. Fire contained heat but was not heat; but when cold came to fire, it did not become cold but made room for cold. What else gave life to the body than the soul? The opposite of life was death, but when death came over a body, life left it and so did the soul, without itself partaking of death. So it was that the soul, not admitting death, was immortal and imperishable, and the only question remaining was where the soul went to on leaving the body.

This question is answered by Socrates with the aid of a story somewhat similar to that in the Phaedrus, except that, as in the Gorgias and also in the Republic, the fate of those is mentioned who have to suffer punishment after death, and that too in conformity, to some extent, with traditions current among the people. But there is another difference worth attending to. Both in the Phaedrus and in the Republic the souls are after death located partly in heavenly, partly in

subterranean, regions; in the Phaedo the earth is represented as being much larger than it is thought to be, with higher and lower regions on its surface, the country bordering on the Mediterranean being one of the lower ones, and the higher ones, full of light and beauty, where air takes the place of what is water in the lower ones, and ether that of air, being the abodes of those to whom, after death, happiness has been allotted. The difference clearly shows that the Phaedo contains a first attempt at giving a description of future life, for which, in the Phaedrus and the Republic, another is substituted.

Now the time had arrived when Socrates had to take a bath before emptying the fatal cup, the others remaining in the room while he retired to an inner one. Then a last farewell took place between him and his children and female relations; and when he had joined again his friends, the messenger of police, a kind-hearted man, who felt deep sympathy with Socrates, came to announce that the hemlock draught was being prepared. On receiving the cup and the instructions how to use it, Socrates asked whether he was allowed to make a libation to the gods. There is just sufficient for the purpose it is to serve, was the reply. Then at all events we can pray to the gods for my safe passage, said Socrates, and cheerfully emptied the cup. Then it was that all burst out crying, and the violent grief shown by Apollodorus was such that it seemed to break the hearts of all; but Socrates warned them not to utter words unsuited to the occasion, and having thus calmed them, lay down on his couch, feeling as he did that the poison was having its effect. "Forget not to sacrifice to Aesculapius the cock we owe him" were his last words to Crito, who closed his eyes and lips when life had departed.

Aristippus, who was not present at the death of Socrates, and whose views would appear not to have been in favour of continued individual existence after death, is said, when asked how Socrates had died, to have replied: "As I should

wish to die." With these words of his the impression made by the Phaedo is at one; and as a monument of Plato's piety towards his great teacher and benefactor, of his full understanding of the man who thus calmly and cheerfully and hopefully quitted this life, and of those descriptive powers of his which could not be used in a more pious cause, the Phaedo ranks very high among his works. But as his dialogue about the soul, it is greatly inferior to the best productions of his pen. It was no difficult matter to write a dialogue like the Meno for the purpose of gratifying a sense of duty; with one like the Phaedo it was a different case. Socrates, in the Meno, is of opinion, and rightly too, that it will not do to try and answer the question whether virtue can be taught, without knowing what virtue is. But is not, in the Phaedo, an attempt made at proving the immortality of the soul, without having a definite idea how the soul must be constituted? In the Phaedrus a sketch of the soul is given which must have satisfied Plato, since he afterwards worked it out in his Republic; there is nothing of the kind in his Phaedo, and what is said in it of souls contaminated by the coarser elements which form the body, and seen hovering about the graves, is evidence that he had not yet formed the ideas he afterwards held about the subject. There are certainly parts of the Phaedo which are of great importance, and will have to be reverted to at a later stage. Such are that where Socrates tells his friends about his studies and experiences in the days of his youth, and that of the philosopher's training his soul for death; the one as illustrating the development of Socratic and Platonic philosophy, the other as an indication of a philosophical asceticism which has little in common with the doctrine of love given in the Phaedrus, and nothing at all with the tenets of Cynicism. But is there not more in the few words of the Phaedrus about the soul being immortal as containing in itself the cause of its motion, than in the rather lengthy arguments of the Phaedo?

Of those arguments the most important ones, that of oppo-

sites, as existing in things, being generated by opposites, and that of opposites as ideas making room for one another, would seem to have been got up by Plato mainly because his subject demanded it, and especially the former one is strangely put. Not even Plato's sketch, in the Phaedo, of the future condition of souls, with its novel ideas about the earth's surface and its attempt at finding a place for the old poetical figments about the rivers of the nether world, is such that he could make use of it in his later dialogues. For all these reasons it will not do to discuss Plato's psychology in connection with the Phaedo, much more being given about it in the Phaedrus and the Republic, whereas the Timaeus, which is a work of Plato's old age, contains views about it which evidently were not held by Plato during the best period of his life. As, however, the Republic contains also matters of quite a different nature, it will be better to leave both Plato's psychology and that idealism of his which is closely connected with it in abeyance, until those of his dialogues have been examined which give his views on human society.

Of these dialogues the Politicus is first to be considered. It is the continuation of the Sophist, but this is no reason why it should not have been written at a considerably later time. In fact, it would appear to be of a later date than the Phaedrus, whose disparaging remarks on written laws it reproduces in a more definite form; but it is certainly older than the Republic, of which it is a forerunner, and perhaps also than the Gorgias, whose condemnation of men like Themistocles and Pericles will, when passed shortly after the publication of a dialogue on the true leaders of men, appear more natural and less offensive than it would be otherwise. For it is the object of the Politicus to give as definite an idea of a man fit to rule the state and of the art he practises, as had been given of the sophist in the dialogue of which it was to be the sequel.

In the Politicus the stranger from Elea acts again the principal part, that formerly taken by Theaetetus being

now given to a young namesake of Socrates. The beginning is like that of the Sophist, the only difference being that the stranger is somewhat more anxious to point out particulars of the method he follows. Arts, or branches of knowledge, are this time divided into those which, like arithmetic, simply tend to know things, and those which, like carpentry, also make them. That of the statesman and king—both are identified in the dialogue,—its work being one of the mind, belongs to a branch of the former class, which combines command over workers with knowledge; and it freely exercises its command, whereas heralds and soothsayers command on behalf of higher powers. Those over whom the king holds command are living beings, and that too beings living in herds or communities. Socrates junior, being asked for a further division, rather sensibly suggests that between men and beasts; but this, says the stranger, is going too fast. Would not cranes—they were thought, in those days, to rank high among animals for their intellectual gifts,—have an equal right to put down their own kind as equivalent to all the rest? So other divisions are proceeded with, until man is left alone with what Plato calls the noblest and at the same time most easily kept of animals, the pig,* and king and swineherd are brought into close contact.

Now a difficulty arises. King and statesman had been all along taken together with herdsmen, who have to provide food for their herds and flocks, and whose command over them is disputed by no one. Will not husbandmen and merchants, bakers and physicians claim equal rights with the king as mainly contributing to the maintenance of the community? To get the better of this rivalry the stranger

* This sounds strange, but is easily explained by the fact that the Greeks knew all about the courage of wild-boars, if not by experience at all events from their mythological traditions. See Plato's Laches, p. 196 E, where the wild-boar killed by Theseus at Crommyon is named as an instance of animal courage.

has recourse to a story like that told by Protagoras in the dialogue named after him, and that by Aristophanes in the Banquet, but one which is less closely connected with the question at issue, and is evidently put in with an ulterior object. In the story of the enmity between Atreus and Thyestes mention was made of a total change in the course of heavenly bodies; there were also traditions about the reign of Cronus, the Golden Age, and the time when men were generated by the earth. These stories, according to the stranger, were reminiscences of things which had actually happened. The universe, although an animated being, does not always move in the same direction, since such constancy is reserved to the gods, but it is at one time ruled by a god, at another by its own power. There was a period when, ruled by the god, it moved in a contrary direction to the present one, and when not only men but all things they wanted were produced from the earth by divine agency. Whether man led then a happier life than now was questionable, for who could know whether, having nothing to do for their maintenance, they did or did not philosophise? But the time having come when fate willed a change, the god who till then had forced the universe to move in a direction contrary to its natural one, left the helm, and a violent revolution took place, heaven moving again from east to west, and the human race being partly destroyed by the earthquakes and hurricanes accompanying the change, partly made subject to a new course of life, in which old age and manhood were followed by youth and childhood. As the universe was left to its own guidance, so were those inhabiting it, sexual generation taking the place of that from the earth; and had not Prometheus and other deities taught man the arts which enable him to keep his own, the human race would have been lost. And what were now the mistakes committed in the debate? The main one was that the attributes of the divine ruler, providing for all the wants of those ruled by him, had been bestowed on the human

one; a lesser one that the functions of the latter had not been properly defined, since it was not his duty to provide food for those ruled by him, but simply to keep them in order. So both the story and its moral come to an end; but the former was evidently also intended to make it felt that, while life in the Golden Age was not such as to set in motion the powers of the human mind, it would be idle for the latter in the present age to aim, in the management of human society, at a perfection reserved to the gods, and that it was better to attend to the lower arts of life in order to arrive at conclusions about the character of the higher ones, than to an imaginary state of matters.

An example offered by these lower arts is now resorted to, with a view to define the true functions of king and statesman. After a rather lengthy sketch of the position held by a weaver among the numerous tribe of those providing for the protection of the body, it is observed that although a mantle is woven by him, he does not do his work unaided —for the wool is to be carded, the threads for warp and woof are to be spun, the fuller has to do with the matter, and there are those who make the various tools used in these operations,—but still the main work, that of handling the shuttle and connecting woof and warp, is his own. Weavers as well as debaters have to attend to the art of measurement, not only as far as the difference between larger and smaller is concerned, but also in regard to the proper measure of the things they have to make. Reverting from the weaver to the king, to whom, of course, this last remark also applies, those accessories to the work he has to do, as the carder, spinner and carpenter are to that of the weaver, are enumerated in separate groups, several of them comprising artisans who cannot be said to have, as such, anything to do with politics, although without them a community could not remain in existence. There are, however, classes of men who might claim to have tasks to perform more closely related to politics, such as priests, who in Egypt

are the ruling caste, and whose functions at Athens are partly committed to a king, annually chosen by lot.

A much more numerous group is then adverted to by the man from Elea, some like lions and centaurs, others like satyrs, but on the whole constituting the most artful portion of the sophistical tribe. There were three forms of government, by one, by few or by many, and they became five when divided according to their owing their existence either to sheer force or to willing submission, tyranny being distinguished by this norm from kingship, and oligarchy from aristocracy. Now it had been admitted that in a king and statesman a peculiar kind of knowledge was required, not dependent on either number, wealth or finding willing subjects; and was this knowledge met with in many? First-rate players at draughts were very scarce; was it likely that knowledge of politics was more generally spread? When in any state those ruling it were in possession of such knowledge, it would be properly governed, whether there were laws or not. But how can a state be governed without laws? asks Socrates junior. The reply reminds one of the Phaedrus. A law cannot provide for all cases, and would it be pardonable in a physician if, in order to keep to certain rules of the medical art, he allowed his patients to come to grief? Say he had to leave them for a time and gave them prescriptions what to do during his absence. Would he not, coming home earlier than he expected, and finding their condition altered, change his treatment too? Would he not act rightly in compelling them to submit to his treatment when it would save them? So it was with the king, but the scarcity of those able to do kings' work caused forms of government of an inferior character to be introduced. A physician might, for purposes of his own, give prescriptions to his patients which would kill them; and how if, suspicions of this kind prevailing against the craft, the public drew up rules to which medical men had to conform? How if men were annually elected, by show of hands or by lot, to practise

as physicians and, having served as such, had to submit to the judgment of a court, inflicting punishment on them when they had not conformed to the rules? Arts so treated were sure to perish, but would not matters be still worse if the men who had to act as physicians did not care for the rules, but did everything to make profit out of their work and get off unharmed?

Any one acquainted with Athenian democracy in Plato's days will at once see the meaning of all this, and it is quite natural that the man from Elea, in spite of what he had said about the weak points of laws, admits that to make such laws and have them observed is an evil of less magnitude than the lawlessness referred to in the last part of his argument. But governments like those which he had described were not genuine, and the spurious politicians who took part in them formed the group of centaurs and the like who claimed a share in the work of the statesman without being entitled to it. There were men indeed who had, on account of their positions in regard to the king, better claims. They were those possessed of knowledge useful to the state, but there was another and higher knowledge: that which enabled the holders to judge in what cases their talents had to be made use of. There were orators and generals, but it was the king's duty to decide when oratory was to be employed and when war was to be made, and so both of them served under him. So did also judges, deciding cases under rules the king had laid down. And so at last the functions of king and statesman are defined as far as his position in regard to his assistants is concerned.

What remained was the consideration of the work the king had in common with the weaver. For there was a similarity between their tasks, the weaver having to connect the soft threads of the woof with the stronger ones of the warp, whereas the king, to make the state what it should be, had to deal with two tendencies of the human mind, each deservedly characterised as a virtue, but opposed to one another, and

each of them offering dangers of its own. They were valour and continence. Continence was an excellent quality, but when in a state it prevailed to the detriment of valour, such a state would soon be despised by its neighbours, and reduced to subjection; and so would one where a predominance of valour, not tempered with continence, would provoke quarrels with neighbouring states and lead to a combination of hostile forces against it. By making the two tendencies act together in harmony—a result partly to be obtained by the king's action on the minds, and partly by his putting a period to the perverse habit of fostering, by intermarriage, the prevalence of valour and warlike propensities in some and that of continence and indolence in other families, instead of using it as a means of tempering the one spirit with the other—the king would accomplish a work most salutary for the state he ruled.

In one respect the Politicus is decidedly inferior to most of the other Platonic dialogues, its form having been less carefully attended to. This will appear from a comparison with other dialogues slightly older or younger. The Theaetetus, after having given most interesting information about the Socratic method, proceeds to demolish a doctrine well known and at one time widely spread at Athens; and although, in its latter part, no conclusion is arrived at, Plato knew, when writing it, that the difficulty which Socrates and Theaetetus had to cope with would soon be overcome. For although it is not unlikely that the Meno and Phaedo were published before the Sophist, Plato undoubtedly had the latter before his mind's eye when writing his Theaetetus. The Sophist itself, while lacking the *mise en scène* which is one of the greatest charms of Plato's dialogues, is a splendid piece of writing, since after the first attempts at finding the personage hunted after, a question of the highest interest is gone into, not only its own solution but also the discovery of the sophist being the result. So, in spite of its rather abstruse subject, the Sophist is easy and pleasant reading even for those who are not exactly

partial to philosophy. Again, the Phaedo, whatever may be its deficiencies, is from an artistic point of view most excellently written, the attention of the reader being suddenly awakened by the doubts given expression to by Simias and Cebes, and the highest triumph gained by Socrates coming immediately before the catastrophe. In the Phaedrus the sharp and not altogether fair criticism of rhetoricians of every description, which evidently was the main object of the dialogue, finds its justification in that magnificent speech by Socrates on love which shows the critic to be head and shoulders above all orators and writers of his time. The merits of the Banquet, as exactly calculated to attain the writer's object, have been dwelt upon already; in the Gorgias not only the bold and clear *exposé* of the views of Plato's opponents by Callicles, after the rather easy victory obtained by Socrates over Polus, but also the clever device of making Callicles shift his ground, are evidence of the masterly way in which Plato handles his subjects. It is otherwise with the Politicus. The Eleatic stranger's repeated references to, and applications of, his own peculiar method; his story of the change in the revolution of the universe, which, however much to the purpose when fully understood, appears at first sight to have only a very slight connection with the subject under discussion; the introduction of the question of measurement—stated by the stranger to be a matter of the utmost importance, and found to be so for the purpose of the dialogue when clearly understood—in connection, not with the main subject but with the method followed in the debate; are unquestionably deficiencies in form which are rarely met with in Plato's works; and the consequence is that beginners, who have not yet learnt to read Plato "with their feet on the fender," will think the study of his Politicus an exceedingly tough piece of work.

On the other hand, however, how brimful of thought, and sound thought too, is the dialogue! In this respect it is hardly surpassed by any other work of Plato's, and one of

its special merits is the light it throws on Plato's idealism. In the Phaedo that idealism shows itself, as has been observed already, in something akin to asceticism, the philosopher, to keep his mind pure and prepare for death as a most desirable release of the soul from the fetters of the body, having to keep clear of the pleasures of life. In the Phaedrus this view is not contradicted, since those philosophising in the right manner will share the privilege of those leading a life of true and pure love; but the idealism seen there—the mind's triumph over the body, not by mortifying its desires but by subduing them by means of the highest instincts of human nature—is essentially different and truly human. In the Banquet the individualism which characterises the aspirations met with in both the Phaedo and the Phaedrus, makes room for an idealism of a different kind, without, however, vanishing altogether, since the final triumph of the man who devotes his life to a love first awakened by, but not centred in, one individual, and having real progress of humanity as its object, is found in his ultimately enjoying a blissful vision like that which, though in a different form, has been celebrated in the Christian world too as supreme happiness. In the Politicus no other idealism could, in consequence of the nature of its subject, be expected than that having the well-being of the community as its object; but here two points are to be noticed. The one—and this has been never lost sight of by Plato—is that between gods and men there will be always an essential difference, and that this is to be taken into consideration in promoting the common good. The other, that an ideal community is impossible without the action of those few highly gifted individuals who really partake of the highest knowledge of matters purely human attainable by man; and so, after all, individualism remains in possession of its rights, the modern democratic and social idealism, which strives after bringing all human beings to the same level, and raising the masses without caring for, or even with a view to crush, those made of better metal and endowed with higher

aspirations, being reserved for a generation of men posterior, and thinking itself much superior, to that of the great philosopher of Athens. By so completing his political web as to create harmony between the mutually opposite tendencies of valour and continence, Plato's king and statesman is to render it proof against decay; but between weaver and web there is the distance which separates the maker from what he makes, and active genius from the sentiment of masses who should remain passive, except where their help in lower matters is required, till the end of days, and whose aspirations are after life like that in the Golden Age, which is so justly made light of by Plato.

The ideal king and statesman, however, was not easily met with in real life; and although Plato's Republic, as far as it refers to the subject its name implies, is essentially a production of idealism, still it aims at things which, in the author's opinion, might be realised. The main, or at all events the original object of the dialogue is, not to give a sketch of an ideal state, but to answer the question what justice is. This object is attained at the end of the fourth book of the ten into which this lengthy dialogue is divided, and it is quite possible that Plato was made to write the other six by an afterthought, the original plan being limited to the virtue he was anxious to define. It is in connection with this question of justice, which at first sight is purely ethical, that Plato's psychology is more clearly brought to light. The Republic is undoubtedly younger than the dialogues already discussed in this essay, for in matters psychological it amplifies the statements met with in the Phaedrus, in matters political those in the Politicus, and already its first book renders it evident that it must have been written after the Gorgias. If there is any truth in the statement that, when the Arcadians with the assistance of Thebes were about to found their "great city," Plato was asked to give advice about its constitution, the Republic cannot have been written after 370 B.C., since the expedition which led to the founda-

tion of Megalopolis took place in the winter of 370—69, and only his Republic can have suggested to the Arcadians as well as, a few years later, to Dion that Plato was an authority to be consulted on political reform.*

A festival in honour of a goddess identified with Artemis, then celebrated for the first time in the Piraeeus, had brought there Socrates and his young friend Glauco, Plato's brother; and when they were about to go home Polemarchus, brother to Lysias the orator, with whom was Glauco's brother Adimantus, induced them to stay and spend the evening at his house. There they found old Cephalus, father of Polemarchus and highly respected at Athens, in whose neighbourhood, though not an Athenian by birth, he had lived for many years. Socrates has a talk with the old man about his age, and Cephalus is found not to complain of the evils attending it, but to think it an advantage to be released from the desires which trouble youth. It might be said that his wealth made old age less onerous to him, but this was correct only to a limited extent. Being asked what he considered to be the main advantage of wealth in old age, his reply was that, when coming near the end of life, the old stories about penalties inflicted, in the kingdom of Hades, on those guilty of fraud and the like, stories thought light of in youth, were apt to disturb one's rest, and what a blessing was it then not to be conscious of any such acts of injustice as those in narrow circumstances were often tempted to commit! Socrates availed himself of the occasion to commence a debate on justice, in which Cephalus, however, took no part, having

* The report about the Arcadians, taken over by Diogenes Laertius (III 1 c. 17) from Pamphila, a careful authoress, is less strange than it looks at first sight, Plato being stated to have declined to interfere as the Arcadians would not allow equality. The fact is that, by raising a separate body of defenders of the new capital, the ἐπάριτοι mentioned in Xenophon's Hellenica, the Arcadians followed the advice given by Plato in his Republic; but from Pamphila it would appear that they objected to the very essential feature of Plato's plan that those defenders should have no private property of their own.

to look after a sacrifice he had prepared before his guests came.

Polemarchus, who had to take his father's place in the debate, had referred already to a passage in Simonides, in which justice was stated to consist in speaking the truth and giving back what one owed to another, and afterwards he explained the latter part as meaning that it was justice to benefit one's friends and harm one's enemies. By questioning him in the true Socratic manner, his opponent made him admit that a just man will not harm anybody, and that a definition like that given on the authority of Simonides, was rather worthy of a tyrant like Periander. But the question what justice was had not been answered, and now Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, a well-known professor of rhetoric repeatedly mentioned as such in the Phaedrus, who did not like the debate as it was carried on but had, till then, been prevented by those present from interfering, broke loose, taking Socrates to task for always questioning people, instead of giving an opinion of his own. A debate, rather angry on his part, ensued, in the course of which he said that he knew a good definition of justice, and would give it when paid for it; and those present pledging themselves to pay for Socrates if the definition proved correct, he stated that justice was that which benefited the better, or stronger, party. When questioned on this definition, the meaning of it was found to be that rulers of states made laws for their own advantage, and that justice consisted in obeying those laws.

Thrasymachus—who is evidently caricatured by Plato—proves in dialectic to be as little up to the mark as Polus in the Gorgias. When asked whether it is just to obey laws which are to the disadvantage of the rulers, who of course are liable to commit mistakes, his reply is that a ruler making mistakes temporarily loses his right to the name, as a physician does when prescribing a wrong treatment; but then Socrates compels him to admit that if such a strict view of the position of a ruler is taken, his only business is to rule for the best

of those ruled. But, asks Thrasymachus, have cattle-herds the well-being of their cattle in view? Rulers who know their business and have the power work only for their own advantage, leaving justice to stupid fellows, since they are well aware that injustice pays better. Here it is that Thrasymachus goes beyond anything stated in the Gorgias, and when wanting to leave after this effusion, he is detained by Socrates, who remarks that it would not do for him to go after thus upsetting the principles on which society is based. The cattle-herd, says Socrates, when killing or selling his cattle does so, not as working his trade but as owner of his stock; like him those assisting in governing the state can, as such, have no other object than to promote the interest of those ruled. The main question, however, had now become whether a life of injustice was more to the advantage of those leading it than a just one; and on this point, taking his stand on the idea that justice is equivalent to an art, he questions Thrasymachus in such a manner that the debate ends in a complete victory in behalf of justice.

Glauco now takes up the cudgels for injustice. Not that he is not in favour of justice, but in his opinion the argument had not fully shown the superiority of a just to an unjust life. To discover the difference between them a man thoroughly just and another thoroughly unjust should be taken, both of them entirely misjudged by the public, so that the just one should suffer every possible evil for alleged crimes, and the unjust one be highly respected. There was the story of Gyges the Lydian herdsman, who, having found a ring which rendered its wearer invisible when the stone was turned inside, with its aid became king by seducing the queen and murdering her husband. Would any one in possession of such a ring stick to justice, instead of using its power to benefit himself at the expense of others? Adimantus, while agreeing with his brother, also points out that fathers, when recommending justice to their sons, refer to the consideration which a just man enjoys on the part of gods and men, and

to the penalties awaiting an unjust one in this life and in the kingdom of Hades; but how if an unjust man was equally considered by contriving to appear just? That the gods, in this life, did not always favour the just was generally admitted, and the unjust had many a remedy against penalties after death, there being no want of those professing to do away, by means of ceremonies propitiating the gods, with the evil effects of crimes committed either by any one himself or by his ancestors. What is there in justice which, in spite of all this, makes a just life preferable to an unjust one? Socrates admits that it is a difficult matter to point out what justice really is; but how when an inscription written in letters too small to make out at a distance, is to be read, and it is found that the same inscription is to be seen elsewhere in much larger letters? A man can be just and so can a state, but in a state it may be easier to find justice than in an individual. And so an imaginary state has to serve as a means for getting an idea of justice.

In any state there are to be those tilling the earth, building houses and making clothes, and it is a better plan to have a division of labour strictly adhered to than that the husbandman should be his own builder and his own weaver. Other trades gradually become necessary, and as the necessaries of life are not all produced in the same place, neither importers and exporters nor retail-dealers can be dispensed with. Then, in case a war breaks out, the town should not lack defenders; and are husbandmen, builders and weavers better able to make use of arms in defence of their country than to practise one another's trades? Surely not, and so there should be a body of defenders of the state, endowed with qualities like those of a faithful watchdog, hostile to strangers but friendly to those he knows, and showing, by thus taking knowledge as a criterion how to act, how highly he values it.

The training of these defenders is a matter of the highest importance, and of course both music—which in Greece com-

prised reading and other elements of learning—and gymnastics would form part of their education. And now comes that well-known onslaught Plato makes on the ancient poetry of Greece whose preliminaries are met with in the Phaedrus. It will not do to allow poetical stories to be told about gods injuring and fighting each other. It will not do to have the minds of the future defenders of the state poisoned by statements that evil as well as good is caused by the gods, or that gods take other forms so as to lead people into error; nor is it advisable to have death and the kingdom of Hades represented to them as something frightful, to introduce heroes and gods as bewailing the fate of their friends, gods as laughing and as being induced by offerings to change their minds, and heroes quarrelling with the gods and being partial to filthy lucre. All this is illustrated by quotations from Greek poets; and not less than the substance of what poets say is their manner of expressing it a matter to be closely attended to in connection with the education of the state's defenders; for whatever is unseemly should be studiously avoided. Similar precautions are to be taken in regard to music in the stricter sense in which the word is now used: to harmony and rhythm. Instead of variety there should be the greatest simplicity, and other artists too should be careful not to make any images which might have a bad effect on the youthful minds, instead of encouraging the growth of the virtues required in them. Love will come of itself, as the result of school-life, but to commit anything unseemly in connection with it should be branded as disgraceful.

Gymnastics follow, with rules for diet and the observation that they should not be taught as an object, as if athletes were to be trained, but as a means to render the defenders fit for their duties; and here a strong condemnation is passed on a new-fangled system combining bodily exercise with medical treatment, and tending to prolong lives of sickly persons, instead of following the healthy practice of Homer's days, when wounded heroes, after having their wounds washed,

at once refreshed themselves with a strong beverage of wine and meal. In fact, Plato considers it a much wiser plan to die at once when troubled with an incurable disease, than to lead a wretched and useless life. Combined with music gymnastics train the mind not less than the body, their joint action bringing about that mixture of valour and continence which, in the Politicus, is one of the great objects to be attained by the king and statesman.

But who are to be the rulers of the state? The very best men, old rather than young, to be met with among the defenders. They indeed are the real defenders of the state, the others being their auxiliaries. Their object is to be a constant improvement of the state, by means of a continued training of the auxiliaries; but then they are to be assisted by a figment calculated to have a salutary effect on the minds. It is that the people have really sprung from the earth, which they have to cherish and defend as their mother, and that they have in themselves a mixture of either gold, silver or a baser metal, the men of gold having to be the rulers and those of silver the auxiliaries. This, however, should not lead to a division of the people into hereditary castes, since sons of men of the golden or silver race should rank with those of brass and iron when not equalling their parents, and the really gifted among the sons of the other people might be raised to the higher ranks. The defenders are to have lodgings of their own and common meals, their wants being supplied by the other people, but no private property in land or otherwise being given to them, since they should abstain from every kind of gain. This might not be approved of by those in whose opinion such a life was not what a defender of the state was entitled to, but without this arrangement the state would not be as it should be, and surely, existing states were not such as to serve as models. The description of the ideal state ends with a reference to its religious rites, which no human lawgiver but Apollo of Delphi would have to regulate.

Could now, in the state sketched during the debate, justice

be discovered? If not at once, the four cardinal virtues might be taken together, so as to find out whether any of them could be traced in part of the state, for when three of them had been found, the fourth would take the place left vacant. The rulers could not be otherwise than very few in number; was there any peculiar knowledge they were to be possessed of so as to be qualified for their task? The reply is that they would have to know how to watch over the interest of the state, and that this knowledge was wisdom, so that the state would be in possession of wisdom by the fact that the very few men ruling it were wise. Valour, of course, is the virtue characteristic of the auxiliaries, and how could there be, between rulers, auxiliaries and the rest of the population, that harmony which was urgently required for the welfare and maintenance of the state, except by means of a continence and self-control (σωφροσύνη) common to all? The place left for justice was to be found in the arrangement mentioned in the beginning in the sketch: that every member of the state should keep to his own business. If this rule were observed, there would be no injustice whatever.

The only question still remaining was whether the result arrived at in considering the ideal state, would also be applicable to the case of individual man. Was there, within the soul, a division into parts corresponding with the rulers, defenders and husbandmen or tradesmen in the state? There was the indomitable spirit for which the Thracians and Scythians were renowned; there were the intellectual powers the Greeks were gifted with, and the love and aptitude for gain common to the Egyptians and Phoenicians. But did the soul act as a whole, or were there special functions of its parts? It certainly would not act as a whole when contending forces were seen to move, within it, in contrary directions; and did not often a struggle take place between man's desires and his understanding? Surely it did, and it would be incorrect not to distinguish between the element from which desires and that from which passion sprung. Was there not a story of

an Athenian citizen who, driven by a desire to have a look at corpses lying about at the place where the executioner did his work, could not resist it but vented his wrath on his eyes for their wanting to feast on such a spectacle? This passionate element was an ally to the understanding, and it will be seen at once that it is represented, in the Phaedrus, by the manageable but spirited horse, the restive one, however, being not subdued in the Republic by the joint action of the charioteer and the better horse, but by the self-control common to the whole of the soul and preserving its harmony.

Here the end of the fourth book and the solution of the question of justice are reached, and it is evident that not a few matters are touched upon in this first part of the Republic which are of great importance for getting a clear idea of Plato's idealism. These, however, will be reserved for the time when the other books of the dialogue have been gone through, and for the present it is only necessary to observe that Plato utterly failed in coming to a clear understanding of the nature of justice. Considering that even in our days those most loudly clamouring for, and most eagerly taking their stand on, justice have at most very hazy notions of it, there is nothing very strange in this failure; and as regards justice as met with in a state, Plato's definition of it is capable, to some extent, of being defended. There is, of course, no real difference between his continence or self-control and his justice, inasmuch as the harmony effected by, and constituting the character of, the former shows itself in, and is impossible without, that keeping to one's own business which is stated to be the essence of justice; but in a state self-control is manifested in the sentiments of the individual citizens, whereas justice may be seen in their not interfering with each other's business, and so there is a difference, not in the existing harmony but in its visible effects. But can any such distinction be made in the mind of the individual? To such justice as championed by Socrates in the Gorgias, is opposed by Callicles a denial that the better

one by nature should be prevented from being in a more favourable position than those inferior to him; but Plato soon turns Callicles into a champion of animal desires, and this makes him spoil his case. Is not, however, the philosopher training for death in the Phaedo, instead of keeping the balance between that part of the mind in which the intellect and that in which animal desire has its seat, interfering with the latter's right—and for good reasons too—in favour of the former? Do not the soul's charioteer and spirited horse in the Phaedrus subdue the troublesome one by sheer force? Where, then, is that justice between the parts of the soul which gives each its due? In fact, the superiority which Callicles claims in the state for the man of real worth, too highly gifted to conform to human laws, is given, both in the Phaedo, the Phaedrus and the Republic itself, to the higher elements of the individual mind, and Plato's so-called justice within it is nowhere to be found. Nor should it, since in reality it is nothing at all. *

At the end of the fourth book Socrates is made to observe

* The inadequacy of Plato's statements about justice would appear to have been felt within the circle of his friends. In the first book of the Republic Clitophon son of Aristonymus is introduced as saying a few words in behalf of Thrasymachus, and a dialogue is in existence, greatly superior to the Axiochus and other dialogues called pseudo-Platonic, in which the same Clitophon answers a question, put to him by Socrates, in rather a lengthy speech, without being interrupted. He had been spoken of as condemning the teachings of Socrates, but this statement was not correct, since he approved of them in several respects. Socrates, however, did not definitely point out the means of improving the mind. This improvement, it was said, was the work of justice, and justice was identified with an art; but medicine was also one and had a twofold effect: that of restoring people to health and that of training medical men. Now justice was stated to render people just, but what other object had it in view? The answers to this question given by those taught by Socrates were vague and unsatisfactory; Socrates himself at one time spoke of justice as benefiting friends and injuring enemies, at another of its not being such as to cause harm to anybody. This induced him, Clitophon, to consider the question whether it would not be more profitable for him to have recourse to Thrasymachus.

that it would be well to take a view of injustice in states and men, it being not simple, like justice, but multifarious, though there were four principal forms in it, corresponding to as many forms of government. He had, however, in the course of his argument about the life to be led by the defenders, dropped a remark about community of wives and children, and both Polemarchus and Adimantus insist on his giving an explanation of this plan. It is found to come to this that, as those keeping watchdogs use the females for the same purposes as the males, though always taking into consideration that the former are less strong, there was no reason why, among the defenders, women should not join as well as men in training and work. They would have to practise gymnastics without covering, but why should they not? There had been a time when men too scrupled to do so, but at the present time nobody saw anything strange in it. It would be said that woman's nature was different from man's, and so it was, but this was no reason for their not joining in the same work. Bald-headed people differed from those with luxuriant hair; but if a bald-headed man were found to be a good shoemaker, would it be inferred from this that a long-haired man could not be one? Except in one respect—that men had to be fathers and women mothers,—both sexes were competent to do the same work; and to maintain the efficiency of the body of defenders, their wives too should be qualified for performing the same duties. Whether or not it was possible to introduce the plan was a matter for future consideration, but when the defenders had lodgings and meals in common, why not wives too, expecially as the two sexes were constantly brought together in gymnastic exercises and otherwise? But, of course, there should be no promiscuous intercourse, since it was necessary to provide the best men with the best wives, and so there would be marriage festivals, so managed by the rulers that the less eligible men were always placed together with females of their own description, without being aware that they owed this to

anything else than drawing less desirable lots; for it would seem that Plato did not see how this cheating by the rulers would be the very thing to destroy the harmony required in his model state. The bravest would enjoy privileges in regard to their connections with the fair sex, for this would improve the race; and the children born from the marriages were to be committed to nurses, who would do away with those unfit for rearing, and at whose place the mothers would have to nurse the little ones, without knowing whether they were theirs. Then there were to be rules about the ages of men and women allowed to marry, and among them one preventing marriages between parents and children but allowing those between brothers and sisters, all children being considered to have all those men and women as parents who, at the time of their births, had reached the age of marriage.

The excellent results of the arrangements made for the ideal state are then discussed at some length, and here Plato takes occasion to advert to the hostilities between Greeks and Greeks, which should be viewed in the light of civil party struggles, and never lead to such extreme measures as devastating the country and enslaving prisoners, the barbarians being the natural enemies of the Greeks, and fit to serve them as slaves. But how about the possibility of carrying the plan into effect? If it could not be done in every respect, it might be partially attempted, and one of the means, in fact an indispensable one, to do so was to make philosophers the rulers of the state. This idea would rouse a storm of disapproval, but what was the difference between a philosopher and a man who was not? That the philosopher—and here we come to the nearest approach in Plato's works to answer the question of knowledge raised in the Theaetetus—was possessed of real knowledge, since he knew such things as beauty and the like not as they were seen in various objects, but as they really were by themselves. In fact, what is meant is nothing else than that which Diotima, in the Banquet, promised Socrates as the reward of his leading the life recommended by her.

Socrates then demonstrates that there is nothing strange in his contention about philosophers governing the state, but Adimantus, while admitting that his argument could not easily be refuted, still points out that it does not find favour with the public, and not without good reason; for students of philosophy as a rule either turn out dangerous characters or utterly useless in matters of social and political life. Socrates fully admits the truth of this statement, but what are the causes of the condition of affairs referred to? Say a ship-owner—of course the Athenian people is meant,—is travelling in his own vessel, a man powerful enough to get the better of the crew, but rather hard of hearing, and not having on board any one qualified to act as captain. Of course the crew, though without any knowledge of the matter, will steer the vessel in a fashion, each of them trying to get the owner on his side, and being praised as a clever steersman when succeeding in doing so. Now if there were on board a man really understanding the art of navigating, would he be either able or willing to take, when having to do with such a crew, the management of the vessel in hand? Such a man is, in the state, that philosopher who is considered useless; but now the dangerous ones! Not every one is possessed of the necessary qualifications for studying philosophy, and only those who are highly gifted are the proper men for it. A highly gifted individual, when badly educated, is apt to become a danger to the state, and how are young men of talent and position educated? By the worst possible educator: the public. Taught by it to strive after its leadership and to have recourse to the arts required for remaining in power, they soon drop philosophy without losing their reputation of being well up in it; and as philosophy is always considered to be worth something more than other pursuits, lots of other men, following their example but altogether incompetent to do so, affect to deal with it. In giving this description Plato once more clearly alludes to Alcibiades and even to his own dialogue of that name, when speaking of men who fancy that they can become

masters of all barbarians as well as Greeks; and the result of his argument is that by such men philosophy is discredited. Very few who might be real philosophers survive the temptations they are exposed to; most of those applying to philosophy take it in hand as a matter of little consequence. But however strong might be the existing prejudice against philosophers interfering with politics, that prejudice would vanish as soon as a true philosopher were found to take the affairs of a state in hand, and to make a picture of such a state as it should be, borrowing his colours from what he saw in his mind. Even the rulers in the ideal state sketched shortly before would not be up to the mark, unless they were philosophers and able to understand the highest subjects of knowledge.

What are these subjects? Not justice and other virtues but that which is really, and in itself, good. Some, says Socrates, sought for it in enjoyment, others in intellectual power (φρόνησις), but both were wrong, and it was difficult to say what is was. Still it was evident that it could only be viewed by the mind, whereas other things were visible to the eyes; and to give a faint idea of it Socrates points out that, whereas for hearing nothing else is required than the organ of hearing and that which is heard, sight requires light to be able to exercise its power. Now as the sun enables the eye to see visible objects, so the mind is enabled to see truth by something higher, in fact, so high that even existence (οὐσία) ranks lower than it: by what is good. As in the visible world both objects and their images were seen, so in the world of thought suppositions were used as means to arrive at conclusions, as was done in geometry, but it was also possible, by means of dialectic, to start from a supposition so as to arrive at a principle; and this method stood in the same relation to the former one, as that of looking at objects in the visible world to that of glancing at images.

Then follows an ingenious comparison of men as on earth they generally are, to prisoners in a subterranean cave, seeing

light only through a distant opening, and so chained that they cannot move their heads and can only look straight before them. Behind them is a large fire; between them and the fire images of various things are so carried that they can only see the shadows of them, cast by the light of the fire on the side of the cave facing them. Of course, seeing nothing but shadows they fancy them to be real things, and form opinions on them as such. Now if any such prisoner were released and brought out of the cave, his eyes would not stand daylight and would have to be gradually accustomed to it; and so would be his mind when his eyes saw so many things of whose images, till then, he had only seen the shadows, taking them for the real things. If such a man had to return to the cave, he would at first not be able to see the shadows as well as those who had never left it, and so the others might laugh at him as unacquainted with what they saw and knew; but he would know, and inform them of, things which they had never seen. His position would be exactly like that of a philosopher among those who were strangers in the world of thought and only knew the visible world; but in the ideal state such men would be compelled to take part in active life, though they might not like it; for the interest of the community came before that of individuals, and the men acquainted with the world of thought would be indebted for this privilege to the state as having provided for their education towards it, and not, as elsewhere, to their own unaided efforts.

What education, however, could be imparted even in the ideal state to those defenders of it who would afterwards have to perform the duties of rulers? Music, as simply serving for the regulation of the minds, and gymnastics would not be sufficient. In inquiring what branches of knowledge would have to be studied for the purpose, attention would have to be paid to the fact that this further education pertained also to those who had to be, and remain, auxiliaries, and for both them and the future rulers it would be a matter of

importance to be first trained in arithmetic and calculations, then in geometry, both of them being required not only for such military arts as those of manœuvring, pitching camps and the like, but also for preparing the minds for philosophical inquiry. Astronomy would come next, but less as a study of the heavenly bodies, which belonged to the visible world, than as a complement of geometry; and the doctrine of the laws of harmony would have to go hand in hand with it. These subjects should be taught to some extent to boys and girls still engaged with music, but when the regular training in gymnastics had come to an end, they would have to be taken up again, so that their mutual connection might be understood, and so the minds of the young defenders of the state would be prepared for dialectic, which, however, to avoid the effects of a propensity of juvenile minds to indulge in controversies mainly limited to words and not going to the roots of things, was to be reserved to those entering manhood and, of course, to the few of them who had been found fit for it. These should be allowed five years for their residence in the world of thought, abstaining from active life; but after this period had elapsed they should have to fill minor offices, so as to get practical training in things of the visible world and have, at the same time, their qualifications further tried, until, having reached the age of fifty and not been found wanting, they should be allowed to spend their lives in the world of thought, except during the periods when their services were required for the government of the state.

Passing now to those forms of government which he considers to be connected with injustice, and to the individual characters corresponding with them, Socrates does not keep to divisions met with in former dialogues, but names four of them, that of the Lacedaemonians and Cretans, where personal ambition predominated, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny. Strangely enough —and it would seem that this was noticed by his friends,—he represents his ideal state, to whose government he gives the name of aristocracy, as being the

original one, whose gradual degeneracy has given rise to the other four. Still stranger is his description how a state like Sparta grows out of his ideal state. By a neglect of certain natural laws the purity of the race of defenders is interfered with, brass and iron taking the place of gold and silver; and as in this manner the love of gain makes its power felt, struggles ensue which end in a division of the soil between the defenders, the people who till then provided for their wants being reduced to subjection or even slavery. Of the old institutions gymnastics, common meals and contempt for trades remain, but mental education is neglected and love of money is paramount. Surely, a more glaring instance of distortion of history can hardly be imagined.

A state like the one just mentioned is converted into an oligarchy, where the rich have the power and the poor are excluded, by the natural tendency of wealth, in states where it is highly prized, to become the ruling power. Under oligarchy there are those who hoard up their wealth, and habits of economy are common, and even characteristic of the individual represented by Plato as corresponding to an oligarchical state; but there are no laws to prevent luxury and prodigality, and those indulging in the latter, when ruined, are deprived of their political privileges and become a danger to the state. On the whole, under oligarchy there are in every state in reality two communities, a ruling one of rich and a subject one of poor people; and when the poor become aware of the growing weakness of the rich, they easily get the better of them and establish democracy. The view taken by Plato of the form of government existing at Athens has been stated already, and the man whose nature corresponds to that of a democratical state is described by him as utterly inconsistent and unreliable. Nor does Plato forget to point out how, under any form of government, oligarchical and democratical tendencies can grow and develop in men through their education and domestic circumstances.

In oligarchical states the poor recruit themselves from the

ranks of those formerly in better circumstances, who, not being accustomed to work at trades, become drones in the human hive. Such drones are also found under democracy, where they are chiefly engaged in making life troublesome to those who, by dint of economy and activity, have prospered. The struggle between them is the reverse of profitable to the real people, sticking to their work instead of meddling with politics, and for this reason distrusted by the democratical drones as in favour of oligarchy. When once the case of the people is taken up by a man of some worth, it is no difficult matter for him to obtain monarchical power, especially when given a body-guard for his defence, and so tyranny is established.

To tyranny and the man of tyrannical habits Plato devotes a goodly part of the dialogue, not only because, as in Solon's days, to be a tyrant was considered by many a most happy fate, but also since, by showing that the reverse was the case, he would prove the truth of his contention that the man following the path of injustice and obtaining the highest prize he can gain by doing so, leads in reality a most unhappy life. Evil desires are alive in every man; even when so subdued by frugal habits and righteous sentiments, as never to make themselves felt in daily life, they show their existence in dreams. The tyrannical man has allowed desires of every kind to rule over his mind; to gratify them he violates his most sacred duties towards his parents and his country; and when he has lost the wealth enabling him to persist in the vicious life he leads, he descends to committing the most vulgar crimes. Hated and despised by every one, his fate is truly deplorable, but worse is that of the actual tyrant, surrounded and supported as he is by men of the worst description, whom he cannot trust but is obliged to flatter, and virtually imprisoned as he is for safety's sake, in his stronghold.

Two other arguments to the effect that the life of the righteous is happier than that of others follow. The philosopher,

the man in whose mind ambition prevails and the one, who wants to make money in order to gratify his desires have, all of them, joys of their own, on which they put high value; but which are the best? Is not the philosopher both better acquainted with all of them than the others, and, as possessed of wisdom, the best judge of them? Again, the pleasures enjoyed through the senses are doubtful, even cessation of pain being often considered as one, although it belongs in reality to those sensations which are between pain and pleasure; but those derived from acquaintance with what really is must also be real. As to the unjust man who appears to be just, how can he be happy when, being thought one in whom the better element of the mind has triumphed over the inferior ones, he carries in reality aspirations and desires within his bosom which are altogether at variance with those of the highest kind?

After thus disposing of the questions moved in the course of the dialogue, Plato, apparently without any reasonable motive, goes out of his way to have another fling at the tragic poets, with Homer—he was sorry to say anything against a man whom, from his early youth, he deeply respected, but higher respect was due to truth—as their teacher and leader at their head. It was quite right to banish them from the ideal state, for did they know and represent things as they were? When a couch was made by an artisan, his model was the ideal couch made by the maker of all things, but a couch in a picture, having had as its model the couch made by the artisan, was much farther removed from the ideal and original couch; and as with painters it was with poets, who were mere imitators and, although credited with something like creative power, in reality knew little and effected little. Had Homer and Hesiod made any man better, as lawgivers like Lycurgus and Solon and philosophers like Thales and Pythagoras had done? There existed, says Socrates, an old feud between poets and philosophers, and certain passages of lyric poetry, otherwise unknown, are quoted as showing in how disparaging

terms philosophy was referred to by poets. However much poetry might be admired, it would not do to admit it—hymns in honour of the gods and poems to celebrate the merits of virtuous men being, of course, excepted—into a state where its charms could do nothing but harm. In poetry heroes were seen weeping over losses which might be painful, but which in actual life respectable men would not like to be seen crying over. Was it right thus to fill the ears of the public with matters contrary to approved principles and habits? It is just possible that, the first parts of the dialogue being already public property and being unfavourably commented upon on account of the attacks on poetry they contained, Plato may have thought it necessary to give further reasons for his enmity towards poets and poetry; but if this was his object, he can certainly not be said to have bettered his position by thus reverting to the matter.

To complete his argument in behalf of justice, Socrates winds up with a description of the rewards bestowed, here and hereafter, on those who take it as their guide through life. Glauco is somewhat surprised on finding that, in his friend's opinion, souls are immortal; but a novel argument in favour of this, not met with either in the Phaedo or the Phaedrus, is now brought: that the soul does not, like the body, perish by the diseases infecting it, injustice being too active to have anything to do with killing those whom it has laid hold of. On earth the soul was infected with evils, mainly through its contact with the body; in its pure and undefiled state it could only be seen by the minds of those who had been taught, by philosophy, to see things as they really were. The gods, however, saw the condition of human souls even in life on earth and watched over them, and so it was that there too, as a rule, injustice was seen to lose the race against justice. What happened to the souls after death is then given as told by Er, a Pamphylian who had perished in battle, and whose corpse, having been conveyed home, was placed on the funeral pile, when he awoke to tell what he had seen since the time of his death.

His soul, said Er, and those of others had come to a place where wide double gaps were seen both in heaven and in earth, from which many souls came together to appear before judges who, after judging them, gave to each a pass, to the righteous for heaven, to others for lower regions. His own soul was ordered to return to its body after seeing what would happen. Many souls were seen to pass the gaps, both from heaven and from earth, evidently tired by a long voyage and glad to enjoy rest in a large meadow, where old friends recognised each other, the one bewailing his trials on and beneath the earth, the other praising the wonders of beauty seen in heaven. One of them asked where great Ardiaeus was, a man who, as a tyrant in a town of Pamphylia, had, some centuries before, become infamous through his crimes. He will not be here, was the reply, and in fact, it was found that when the souls of impious men were about to issue from the gaps, a sound was heard at which devils * came and seized them to take them to a place of punishment. Those who reached the meadow remained there for seven days, after which they had to leave for a place where a wonderful light was shining, and where the spindle of Destiny or Necessity (Ἀνάγκη) was seen, handled by her three daughters, the goddesses of fate, and so described as to show its having cosmic power as well as regulating the fate of men. A prophet then announced to the souls that they would have to choose their own destinies or, as Plato's expression is, demons, † no deity being responsible for the results of the choices made; and numbered marks having been thrown down, the souls picked them up and could make their choices according to the num-

* Plato, not being acquainted with "the old gentleman," calls them "fierce men glowing like fire."

† The δαίμων, mentioned here, who accompanies each man during life, and whose counterpart is found in the "genius" of the Romans, is much the same as that fate (μοῖρα or αἶσα) which, in Homer, man cannot escape when he has once come into existence. The only difference is that δαίμων suggests a personal being, but even in Homer πρὸς δαίμονα comes much to the same as "against fate."

bers they had got. Those who came from heaven were often, being unused to the evils of life on earth, seen to make imprudent and wrong choices, the very first one being seen desperately to cry over his choice of a tyrant's life which had attracted him by its outward splendour, but was found, when it was too late, to teem with fearful crimes and evils. Of the heroes of old, Ajax chose a lion's life, Agamemnon that of an eagle, Orpheus that of a swan, whereas Odysseus, who was the last to make his choice, was happy to find the life of a man quiet and of no consequence whatever, which had attracted nobody, but which he, after the trials of his former life, preferred to any other. Having then left for the field of Oblivion, the souls drank from the river flowing through it, the wiser ones sparingly, the unwise so as to forget whatever they had seen and known in former lives, after which a thunderstorm and earthquake caused all of them to disperse. Let us, says Socrates after telling the story, act in conformity with the lessons given, and neither commit mistakes in passing the river of Oblivion nor forget to keep always to the right path.

This brief and, in one respect, incomplete outline of the contents of the dialogue is sufficient to show that, as the Republic fails to give an adequate answer to the question what justice is, it also in other respects is by no means free from deficiencies; but it certainly has great merits too, and throws much light on the question of Plato's idealism. Before attending to this point, however, a matter of great importance is to be touched upon.

In the general reference to idealism in the beginning of the present chapter, mention was made, in regard to it, of Christianity; but when Christian idealism is spoken of by those holding the Christian faith, the meaning of this expression cannot be anything else than an idealism favoured by, or having its foundation in, the Christian religion; for idealism being essentially a human tendency, a religion revealed from above, as the source from which mankind can learn its rela-

tions with the higher world, its duty and its destiny, cannot have an idealism of its own. Socrates had an intuitive notion of what revelation means for man; Plato too does not fail to show his respect for such revelation as the oracle of Delphi was thought to be the organ of. Now in the Sophist the stranger from Elea promises to sketch successively the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher as three distinct personages, and submits that he may have found the philosopher in the man able to see one idea running through a great many things, and to combine many things under one idea; but of his philosopher he gives no separate sketch. In the Phaedo the philosopher is mainly engaged in training for death by purifying his soul; in the Phaedrus the souls forming part of the following of Zeus are, when love lays hold of them, partial to future philosophers, whereas the followers of Hera are captivated by youths of a kingly nature; in the Politicus the ideal king and statesman is possessed of a special kind of knowledge, but he is a distinct personage from the philosopher. The Republic actually gives an image of the philosopher such as the man from Elea had promised. Having been trained for life in the world of thought, he applies what he has seen there to matters human, so that, in the ideal state, he occupies the place assigned in the Politicus to the king and statesman; but how has he been enabled to use his mental sight in the world of thought? As men in the visible world, provided with sight and surrounded by things visible, cannot see without light, so the medium through which mental sight is enabled to exercise its power in the world of thought, is "that which is good." So this is not only, like beauty and justice, to be seen by the mental eye, but it is also that which renders it possible, for the mind, to see anything; and since the source of light in the visible world, the sun, is held by Plato to be endowed with life as the gods are, very little is wanted to bestow personal attributes on the source of light in the world of thought also. Plato does not do so in the Republic, and the statement given

there about what is good is not met with in any former dialogue of his; but if he had done so, his philosopher would have become a prophet of revealed truth, and there are expressions in works of his old age which may be, and have been, explained as if he had the idea of revelation before his mind.

This point, however, which might have been somewhat more fully explained in this chapter, will have to be reserved till the next. As to Plato's idealism, it is, in the Republic, chiefly seen in his sketch of an ideal state ruled by philosophers, widely different from the possible outcome of the both idealistic and moderate counsels given in the Politicus, but not so altogether out of touch with the actual condition of affairs in his days as would appear at first sight. In the Corinthian war it had been most clearly brought to light that, as military matters stood, bodies of trained soldiers, making military service their trade, were of more use than the armies of citizens who had triumphed at Marathon and Plataeae, even a Lacedemonian regiment having been well-nigh destroyed by the troops recruited by Iphicrates from Thracia and elsewhere. There was, of course, a danger lest commanders of such forces, like at a somewhat later period Timophanes of Corinth, might find occasion to obtain, with their aid, tyrannical power in their states; and although monarchical ideas were gaining ground and preparing the minds for times like Alexander's, this danger could not be ignored. By recommending the formation of a military body like his defenders, Plato started an idea which, under such circumstances, had its *raison d'être* and was, it would seem, something better than what one would call the dream of a utopist. Family life was, as far as the defenders were concerned, destroyed by the plan, but neither in Sparta, where men had to take their meals in common and almost stealthily to visit their wives, and where the marriage ties were, in some respects, rather loose, nor at Athens, where the education of females was utterly neglected, and where they and the males had separate apartments and

little in common, was family life what it is in our days. But making allowance for all this, the idea of a state where the subject classes are at full liberty to follow their own pursuits—for measures to prevent excessive wealth and excessive poverty, though mentioned in a few words, are left undescribed,—and where the ruling classes are made to lead a life unheard of in history and, in spite of its defence by Socrates, altogether unbearable, is simply preposterous. So Plato's social idealism, as given in the Republic, stands self-condemned, but how was Plato driven to come before the public with it? The answer to this question is that, being deeply convinced of the utter unsoundness of the moral basis on which Athenian democracy was resting—for it should not be forgotten that both by nature and by the results of circumstances he was a thorough aristocrat,—he first, as part of the task allotted to him, attempted to give, in the Politicus, the outlines both of the personal qualifications of the reformer and of the main features of his work, but must then, having condemned in the Gorgias whatever Athens admired in the glorious policy which had caused her greatness, have been compelled, by the impression he had made by doing so on the public and on his friends, to put his whole mind into a work which would give an idea of what should, and perhaps might, be done to find sound foundations for a state in which all the four cardinal virtues would find room for making their salutary influence felt. His somewhat exaggerated picture of the evils which tyranny causes and tyrants have to suffer from, may partly have had its origin in his reluctance to give too much offence to his fellow-citizens by his anti-democratic and monarchical ideas, which might be balanced by his demonstrations of hatred against tyrannical power; but it may also be the result of his determination to make it clearly felt what was in store for democratic states like Athens when persisting in the course they were following.

This subject might be dropped here, were it not for its connection with Plato's attacks on Greek poetry. Adimantus

had rightly pointed out that there was no want of ideas and practices connected with the then prevailing religion which did not tend to improve public morality; but it is one thing to lessen the evils thus brought about, and another to break, on their account, with the best and brightest national traditions. Homer and Hesiod, the lyric and the tragic poets of Greece are even in our days studied by the true leaders of human thought, both as models of form and as sources from which ideas of the highest importance for humanity may be derived. How could Plato think of banishing them from his ideal state, as not agreeing with his ideas on matters divine and human? Puritanism, when based on religion, may not be generally and in all respects approved of, but it is not less natural and capable of defence than other tendencies of the human mind. A philosophical puritanism like Plato's is hardly worthy of respect, and even somewhat laughable when viewed in connection with his ideas about gymnastics without distinction of sexes. But this is not all. Had it not been for the same want of perception in matters historical which prompted Plato to pass sentence on men like Themistocles and Pericles, he would not have found fault with poetical works and religious traditions which had grown up together with the Greek nation, and which testified to the soundness of its views and sentiments. Was it not a true sentiment by which they endowed the gods who ruled the world with feelings shared and understood by men, and were those gods not worthier objects of public worship than the meaningless impersonations of what is good he made of them? Had the practices condemned by Adimantus—and they were mostly of foreign origin but, as providing for an existing moral want, productive of good as well as evil,—such baneful effects that on their account a sweeping change should be brought about in whatever was sacred to the Grecian mind? Here, as in the Gorgias, Plato no longer takes his stand on purely Grecian sentiment, but is led, by his philosophy, to occupy a neutral ground where, in course of time, Hellenism would be utterly defeated;

and he is seen at his worst when thus breaking with the traditions of a nation of whose genius his own works are among the noblest monuments.

Plato's idealism as regards the development of individual man is closely connected with his psychology. Here the disadvantage he laboured under is owing to the doctrine started in Greece by Pythagoras, under influence of foreign ideas, of the transmigration of souls, and to its natural result, that of learning being remembering, which was so dear to Socrates. In the Phaedo, although the latter doctrine is largely made use of, its effects are not quite clearly seen, since Socrates, to some extent, loses sight of it in referring to the future state he hopefully looked forward to. In the Phaedrus its result is that the evil propensities which might have been imputed to the connection between soul and body, are made to arise from one of the component parts of the soul itself; and in the Republic this idea is made use of as a foundation for an ethical theory. The Phaedo with its asceticism, the Phaedrus with its undefiled love, the Republic with its triumph of the philosopher all represent the human soul as susceptible of high development and supreme bliss when free from the thraldom in which it is held by the body; but in the Phaedrus another idea, indicated also in the Politicus—that, after all, the human soul is inferior to the divine one, and always liable to a relapse,—is strongly insisted upon. In the Phaedo, the Gorgias and the Republic the doctrine of immortality is used as a means to repress evil tendencies of the human race on earth; and in the concluding part of the Republic this idea is, on the lines indicated in the Phaedrus, consistently worked out, especially as regards the loss of memory of what happened in former lives, the weakest, most disheartening and therefore least practical point, as seen already by Athenaeus, of the Platonic doctrine of the soul's immortality, but the unavoidable result of the teaching of Socrates, and rendered somewhat less offensive by what is said about the sojourn of souls in celestial regions. But then

the choice of earthly lives allowed to souls which are doomed again to be connected with mortal bodies, condemning man to a life of crime in consequence of a wrong choice inadvertently made, is so entirely at variance with whatever else is found in Plato's works, that it can hardly be otherwise explained than by a novel idea of his like that about the light spread in the world of thought, and hardly capable of explanation except in connection with tendencies not met with, to any great extent, in Plato before his old age.

## § XII. PLATO'S OLD AGE.

PLATO must have been between fifty and sixty years of age when he wrote the Republic, the work which, notwithstanding its defects, would seem to have contributed most to his fame. Of his later works the Timaeus and Critias, which are even more closely related to one another than the Theaetetus and Sophist, begin with a reference to the Republic which makes it felt that Plato—and for good reasons too, as will afterwards be shown—was anxious to make them appear a sequel to it. The subject of the Laws is intimately connected with that of the Republic; in fact, this lengthy dialogue must have been written for the purpose of substituting something more practical for the ideal state which gave its name to the older work. Of the dialogues written after the Republic the Philebus would seem to have been the oldest. It contains a debate on the question whether or not enjoyment is the highest good, evidently in connection, on one hand with the argument between Socrates and Callicles in the Gorgias, on the other with what, in the Republic, is said about neither enjoyment nor wisdom being that which is good. As it was almost a matter of necessity for Plato to given a further explanation of his views on a question so often discussed in his days and considered to be of paramount importance, it may be assumed that the Philebus was written shortly after the Republic, and before Plato's departure for Syracuse.

Plato was not one of those whose vigour of mind remains unimpaired long after reaching the age when according to Solon it begins to weaken; but although he may have passed that age and have been something like sixty when writing the Philebus, no decline of his is seen in it. It lacks an introduction like that of the Republic, but its argument is, perhaps, the most perfect specimen of the Socratic method met with in Plato. Socrates had been invited to a meeting of young men, one of whom, Philebus, held the opinion that enjoyment (ἡδονή) was the highest good, or rather equivalent to that which is good (τὸ ἀγαθόν). Socrates gives the palm to the intellectual faculties of man, and Protarchus,* a friend of Philebus, takes the latter's part in the debate. The question as put by Socrates for discussion is whether enjoyment or intellectual power is that which makes life happy, and if neither of them, which of them most contributes to it. Philebus does not like the latter part of the question; Protarchus agrees to take the whole of it as put by Socrates. That "what is good" is understood here in a sense rather different to that given to it in the Republic, need hardly be observed.

Socrates opens the debate by observing that there are various kinds of enjoyments, some valued by wise and sober men, and some sought after by men of a different character, and that it would be difficult to take them together in an argument like that between himself and Protarchus. They are the same as far as their being enjoyments is concerned, replies Protarchus; and although this had been previously admitted by Socrates himself, the debate might have come to grief on a misunderstanding in regard to this point, had not Socrates pointed out that it was the same with what he

* Protarchus is called the son of Callias, and the latter is mentioned in terms showing that he must have been a man of note. Perhaps Callias son of Calliades is meant, who at the head of an Athenian force perished in battle shortly before the Peloponnesian war broke out (Thuc. I 63), and who is stated, in Plato's first Alcibiades, to have studied philosophy under Zeno.

maintained to be the highest good, there being many branches of knowledge different from one another, so that he was not in a better position than his opponent. There was the well-known question about things being one and many, which gave rise to childish debates, but which assumed a different shape when the doctrine of ideas—that which in the Republic makes the one ideal couch the origin and model of all couches made by artisans—was mixed up with it. In connection with this doctrine it should be kept in view that between the one idea and the infinite number of its reproductions there lay something in the middle, which Socrates explains by observing that between the idea of voice and the numberless sounds designated in Greek by the same word (φωνή) there was the limited number of sounds expressed by the letters of the alphabet, which again belonged to different classes. This had also to be attended to in regard to enjoyment and intellectual power. Philebus agrees with this; Protarchus is afraid of entering upon an interminable discussion, and charges Socrates with resorting to his old trick of putting such issues before his opponents as they cannot try. As, however, Socrates now says that, seeing as he does that neither enjoyment nor intellectual power can be the highest good, but that something else, superior to either, is to be sought for, and that for this reason an arrangement of enjoyments under different heads can be dispensed with, this difficulty is got rid of.

That neither enjoyment nor intellectual power can be that which, by itself, can make man happy is demonstrated by Socrates by supposing both a life full of enjoyment and without any intellect, and one in which the highest intellect is unaccompanied by any pleasure. Could there be a truly happy life for one who could not even think of his happiness? It would be like the life of a jellyfish. Protarchus at once admits this and, of course, also that good sense and knowledge are worth little when enjoyment is altogether wanting, an exception being made by Socrates, as to the latter point, for that true intellect which is characteristic of the gods. But was

there not a life combining both? If so, the question would arise to which of the two its happiness was chiefly owing. To answer it, Socrates first makes a distinction between what is infinite and what is finite, a third class being a combination of both, and the cause of this combination being a fourth factor. By what is infinite—for both words are used in different senses from those they have in our days—is meant whatever involves, or is susceptible of, a difference in degree, such as more and less, hotter and colder, very and hardly; finite is that in which there is no such difference, such as equal, double and whatever is defined by number or measure. But now the third. It comes into existence when the finite is mixed with the infinite so as to generate something definite: health in the human body, harmony in the world of sounds, even beauty and strength. The cause, which was fourth, was required since there must be a difference between that which is made and that which makes it. And now comes the life combining enjoyment and intellectual power. Philebus admits at once that enjoyment as well as pain belongs to what Socrates calls infinite; but which class is intellect (νοῦς) to rank with? The world was ruled by it, and as in the human body fire was found and water, air and earth, but all of them as parts or productions of those elements as found in the universe, so the soul was derived from the universal intellect, so that intellect could not be viewed otherwise than as belonging to the fourth factor, the cause.

Now pain and pleasure, though infinite, took their origin in the third class, to which harmony belonged, for pain was caused by the destruction of harmony, pleasure by its restoration. Heat and cold, when increased to such a degree as not to agree with the nature of those subject to them, caused pain; pleasure was the result of their acting in accordance with that nature. Both pleasure and pain could be seated in the soul, either as hope and fear or as memory; and this being granted, the question whether pleasure was in all cases to be welcomed, would find its answer.

Here it is first pointed out that, when pain and pleasure are connected with destruction and restoration, there must be a condition of life in which neither is felt; and in connection with this Socrates observes that a life without either, though not considered happy, is both possible and probably that of the gods, both joy and grief being hardly compatible with their nature. Man's happiness, when limited to the mind, would be seen in memory, but what was memory? The remembrance of changes affecting both body and soul. This remembrance by the mind, when taking the form of a desire, is always directly opposite to the condition of the body; when in the latter there is emptiness, the former desires replenishing. So desires belong to the mind, not to the body, and it is possible to feel at the same time pain through thirst and pleasure through the hope of its being taken away. Hope is an opinion, and as an opinion can be false, so there can also be false enjoyments, a conclusion which Protarchus does not agree to until after a long argument, in the course of which it is also pointed out that, as besides a life of pain and one of pleasure there is a third one without either of them, the opinion of those cannot be maintained who, from a sense of the evil nature of some pleasures, identify pleasure with the cessation of pain, and so, in some measure, deny its existence as something by itself.

This aversion to recognise the existence of pleasure is explained by Socrates from the fact that pleasures enjoyed to an exceedingly high degree are rather experienced by diseased bodies and minds than by sound ones; and here he refers to the itch and the scratching it occasions mentioned in the Gorgias. In many such cases pain is mixed with intense pleasure, and this is seen in the mind as well as the body, since wrath, sorrow and envy, though certainly partaking of the nature of pain, also bring pleasures of their own, such as are felt when in tragedy and comedy, both those on the stage and in actual life, either tears are shed over misfortunes with a feeling of gratification, or laughter is raised by the

sight of friends ridiculed. But there are certainly also pleasures unaccompanied by pain, such as those caused by the sight of what is beautiful and by hearing what is harmonious; and especially those connected with that action of the mind by which knowledge is enlarged. They may be less intense than other pleasures, but they are pure and genuine. Still, as pleasure is felt in connection with what is being made and growing into existence (γένεσις), and as existence itself (οὐσία), as the object aimed at in bringing it about, is to be classed with what is good, pleasure cannot belong to the same class; nor can pleasure be identified with what is good, when it is found that what is good in the mind—wisdom, self-control, valour—has nothing in common with it.

Passing from pleasure to intellect and knowledge, Socrates insists on the distinction to be made, both between those arts and branches of knowledge which proceed methodically and those experimental, and between arts nominally the same, such as arithmetic and geometry, when applied to daily life and when used in connection with philosophy, since in the latter case they actually belong to another and superior order. Knowledge and arts which have to do with what really is, take higher places than any other, and although the art of persuasion, praised by Gorgias as the highest and most powerful of all, may be very useful in actual life, it certainly does not hold equal rank with them.

Having thus gone through the whole of the subject under discussion, Socrates recapitulates what has been accomplished during the debate, and then passes on to the mixing of enjoyment and intellect, like honey and water, so as to obtain a life combined of both. Whatever might be the difference in rank and value between the various branches of knowledge, all of them can be admitted into the mixture, since arts founded on experiments are by no means useless. So also genuine enjoyments, but there are certainly such enjoyments as intellect cannot consent to live with, and so they are not allowed to enter. So a life of real symmetry would come into existence,

more closely related, on account of this character, with beauty than with that which is good, but where beauty and symmetry go hand in hand with truth; and neither with these three nor with knowledge and the like has enjoyment anything in common. Its contribution towards the happiness contained in the life thus brought about, is therefore only one fifth of the whole, and so the contention of Socrates against Philebus, although not having gained the prize it had laid claim to, is on the whole victorious.

Whoever compares the Philebus and the results arrived at in it with the Protagoras, the Laches and even the Theaetetus and their want of definite conclusions, will see at once the difference between Plato in the earlier time of his philosophical career, and Plato after producing those splendid works of his of which the Sophist comes first. Nor will any one while studying the Philebus fail to see that, although it apparently contains a refutation of the views of those who, in the Republic, are condemned for holding enjoyment to be the highest good, Plato carefully avoids anything from which it might be inferred that his argument is about that idea of what is good which is the shining light in the world of thought. But in two respects what is met with in the Philebus is at variance with the results of former dialogues. The Platonic, or rather Socratic, ideas are mentioned in terms hardly different from those used in the Republic; but when not only health and harmony but also beauty and strength are represented as brought about by a combination of the finite with the infinite, where do the ideas of beauty and strength come in, by partaking of which things in the visible world are endowed with them, and where is that vision of beauty which causes, in the Phaedrus, the lover's enthusiasm? Beauty, in the Philebus, is seen in symmetry and in forms like the circle and the sphere, in the Phaedrus in human beings endowed with the charms of youth; and who but a man cured of all youthful idealism, whose individuality is well-nigh absorbed in abstract study, will see progress and development in this? Of greater importance still,

as containing a much more decided deviation from paths formerly followed, is the change of the individual soul, immortal as such since it has its principle of motion in itself, into an efflux of the intellect ruling the world, just as the material elements found in the human body are particles of those existing in the universe. About this question of the soul more will have to be said when going over the contents of the Timaeus.

In the Timaeus Socrates is introduced as meeting Critias, Timaeus of Locri in Italy, well-known as a philosopher, and Hermocrates of Syracuse. Of the latter of these two new personages nothing is said tending to identify him with the famous general and statesman known from Thucydides and Xenophon, who after having been the leader of what might be called the patriotic party in his native town, and been mainly instrumental in securing to Syracuse her victory over the Athenian forces, was soon afterwards banished, and perished in an attempt at effecting his return. It is much more likely that Plato thought of another Hermocrates, father of Dionysius the elder, and that the dialogue was written at a time when he was in hopes of bestowing, with the aid of Dionysius the younger, actual existence on his ideal state. As there are also reasons in the dialogue itself to consider it probable that, when it was written, Plato was under the influence of philosophical ideas commonly held in Italy but altogether different from those of Socrates as given in the Phaedo, the time to which the Timaeus and its sequel, the Critias, are to be assigned would seem to be that between Plato's first and second visit to the court of the younger Dionysius.

The Timaeus begins with a reference to a conversation held the day before, when Socrates had given particulars about his plan for an ideal republic. Having recapitulated, in conversation with Timaeus, the principal points, he adds that, as one seeing noble animals quietly together, would like to see them also move about, he himself would like nothing better than to see the state he had sketched in action; but

even a sketch in writing of such action could not be expected either from poets, who did not go beyond what they were themselves accustomed to, or from sophists, always travelling about and lacking experience in dealing with the management of states. How if those present would help him to what he desired? Critias, then says Hermocrates, had told a wonderful story about ancient times which might be the very thing his friend was anxious for. This story is found to have been told to Critias by his grandfather, who had it from Solon. The latter, while in Egypt, had visited the town of Saïs, sacred to Athena, where he made many friends and, when referring to the oldest traditions of the Greeks, was informed by a priest that the Greeks knew hardly anything about times of old, their memory not reaching beyond the last great change brought about by floods. When such changes took place, few people were saved, and those too the most ignorant and illiterate, herdsmen living high up the mountains and the like; but Egypt had, by the action of the Nile, suffered little, and had thus been able to preserve records of what had happened, not only in the country itself but also with neighbouring states, for several thousands of years. Athens was founded a thousand years before Saïs, and was in ancient times a most powerful state, with institutions not unlike those of Egypt, the defence of the country being committed to a military caste; and her great claim to the gratitude of the human race lay in her defence of Europe and Asia against an invasion by the people of Atlantis, an island equal in extent to Africa and Asia together, and situated to the west of the columns of Hercules, but since destroyed by floods and earthquakes. Of these exploits Critias remembered everything as he had heard it from his grandfather, and willingly would he give the information required; but he and his friend thought it a better plan first to allow Timaeus, who was fully at home in astronomy and natural science, to give an account of how the world and the human race had sprung into existence, this being the best present they could bestow on Socrates in

return for what he had told them about his ideal state.

On advice given by Socrates, and in conformity with his own habit, Timaeus first invokes the gods, and then begins his argument, in which he is not interrupted by any question, by a reference to the distinction to be made between that which always is and that which is in constant course of generation and extinction. To the latter class belongs the universe, as being visible and tangible, and as such it must have had a cause or a maker, whom it is difficult to find, and impossible to tell the public about. That maker—he cannot be called the creator, since he finds the matter ready of which to make the universe—was by his very nature compelled to take as his model that which is for ever, as being the best, in other words the world of thought. Still, what belongs to the class of things generated is but an image of what really is; it does not admit of true knowledge but only of correct opinion; and so what is said about it cannot be otherwise than imperfect.

In the universe its maker included whatever is visible, and a soul was given to it as well as a body, so that it actually is a god. The body had fire and earth as its elements, bound together by air and water, a twofold binding element being required in solids. Its form was a sphere, not only as the most perfect one but also because there was nothing outside it and, having no other motion than that of turning round its axis, it required no limbs. Before the body of the universe its soul was made, by mixing into one undivided and divided existence (οὐσία)—that which always remains one and that of the various beings,—and joining to this mixture the two elements known from the Sophist, the same and the other, which, however, were not easily mixed together. So on the whole the ontology given in the Sophist is not abandoned, and there is no reason, when the passage is taken by itself, for supposing that the soul of the universe, on account of its partaking of "the other" and of divided existence, should be thought to contain a material element, existence being with

Plato always an abstraction, and different from the visible thing that is.

Then a division of this mixed existence takes place, and here is brought in that arrangement of the visible universe which causes the apparent course of such heavenly bodies as the sun and the planets to move in a different direction to that of the sky with its fixed stars. In the outer circle, that of the fixed stars, "the same" predominates, and as destined to be the ruling one it is not further subdivided, whereas the inner one, that of "the other," is divided into seven—the number of those heavenly bodies after which our days of the week are named,—this whole division being on an arithmetical basis which cannot be explained here. Within the soul of the universe its body is put together, and the soul itself is the cause either of opinion or of knowledge, according as in its motion its comes into contact with what belongs to either "the other" or "the same," the visible world or that of thought.

Eternity was reserved for the model which the universe was formed after; as a substitute for it in the visible world time was made, divided into past, present and future, and destined to last as long as the universe. To mark time, sun, moon and planets were made, as live beings and therefore gods, the former two marking divisions of time in general usage, whereas few people troubled themselves about the great year, the period required for all those heavenly bodies to reach once more the points they had started from together. Now it was also resolved to people the visible world with those live beings whose ideal forms existed in the world of thought. First came the gods, whose bodies were mostly made of fire, and by whom the fixed stars are meant; then beings not very respectfully called demons, since they were in reality the gods of public worship. Though not eternal they would not be mortal either, since they would remain in existence as long as the universe lasted, and its maker had provided for its duration and did not intend dissolving it; but it would be their

duty to make live beings subject to mortality. For the souls of these a mixture was made by the great maker, consisting of the remnant of what had been formerly employed, mixed with less pure elements, and when formed the souls were located on stars, so as to get a proper view of the universe, and afterwards to pass into the bodies of the most godfearing kind of animals, the better half of whom would be called men. In men's souls perception and love, fear and passion would find their places, and the proper management of all these would constitute a righteous life and be followed by a return to the stars they had inhabited. Otherwise they would be made to enter the bodies of women and afterwards those of inferior animals.

The gods at once proceed to fulfil the task allotted to them, taking their maker's work as model; but the souls, when enclosed in bodies requiring, to remain in existence, a constant change of matter, are in a sad plight by the violent motions consequent upon it, and this is why in the beginning of life intellect appears to be wanting, the time for its manifestation being that when a diminution of growth, especially when assisted by education, renders its action possible. The imitation of the great maker's work by the gods is seen in the spherical form of the head, in which the outer and ruling part of the soul is quartered, and which, having the body as support and its limbs as means of motion, contains in front—for of the various motions the forward one, also met with in those heavenly bodies whose motion is not identical with that of the universe, is the most natural—the organs of the principal senses, the eye being mentioned as having rendered philosophy possible, and hearing being praised as hardly less valuable than sight. In all this the action of the intellect was seen, to whose persuasion even necessity (*ἀνάγκη*) was found to yield; but still the latter too had to be taken into account, and so Timaeus passes from his observations about the human body, to those on matters in general, as found in the universe.

It had been assumed that four elements were at hand when

the body of the universe was to be made, but was this a correct supposition? Nothing had been said about the process by which they came into existence, and to take this subject in hand it was not sufficient solely to attend to the two factors mentioned when the question of the formation of the universe was being considered—the model and the generated and visible world modelled on it,—but also a third one had to be noticed, that in which generation takes place, which may be either called place or matter; a matter shapeless since if it had a form of its own it could not well reproduce the forms generated in it. Was it not more correct to consider fire and the other elements as mere forms taken by this shapeless matter, constantly changing from one into another, since water became earth when condensed, and air when evaporating? This was a difficult question, it being not even clear whether this shapeless matter had to be dealt with by intellect and reason or by opinion; but it could be taken for granted that as the world of thought could be called the father of the visible world, so matter was its mother, and that, as in the latter there was constant motion for want of balancing power, there was also a tendency for particles similar to one another to congregate and for those dissimilar to separate. In fact, the four elements did exist in it, the supposition that they were merely forms of it being incorrect. And now a theory is proposed somewhat like that of the atomistic school—although Democritus, its founder, is named nowhere in Plato's works,—and based on such knowledge of geometry as Plato was possessed of. The elements were solid bodies; to understand the latter one had to begin with planes. The simplest plane was the triangle, and that too the rectangular one. Of rectangular triangles the principal two were the isosceles and that of which the shorter side is equal to half the length of the hypotenuse, so that two of them joined together at the longer side would form an equilateral triangle. Of the regular solids—only four of the six are mentioned in the dialogue—three are formed by equilateral triangles, one, the cube, by squares which are equal to two

isoscelic ones. The cube, as most stable, is the constituting element of earth; fire, air and water have respectively the pyramid, the hexahedron and the octahedron as their component parts, fire being most and water least movable of the three.

To explain the phenomena resulting from this, it is assumed that the size of the bodies constituting the elements is not always the same, and that for this reason the action of the one on the other is also variable. This action consists in their constant motion, caused on one hand by the tendency of similar elements to come together and of dissimilar ones to separate, on the other by their always trying to fill any vacant space. When earth is thus decomposed by the action of other elements, its component parts remain as they are, and so earth is not really changed into anything else; but as both the octahedron and hexahedron are composed of pyramids, and a double hexahedron is found in the octahedron, they can, by decomposition and by condensation, be converted into one another. The results are described by Timaeus in such a manner as to explain the formation and qualities of metals—which as they can be smelted, are represented as forms of water—and various other substances; and other particulars referring to the changes brought about in nature are likewise touched upon, until, flesh having been reached as the substance these changes act upon, man again becomes the subject of investigation.

In connection with it, sensations and their causes, such as heat and cold, heaviness and lightness, are also considered, and explanations are given of the functions of the organs of sense. Among the sensations are also pain and pleasure. The fact is that with the flesh those parts of the soul are taken together which Timaeus calls mortal, and which accordingly must have partaken of the nature of matter. More about this is said when, having gone through the various sensations and senses, Timaeus declares the consideration of the effects of necessity to have reached its end, so that he will resume that of the action of the gods in so constructing, in conformity

with their maker's plan, the human body that the evils it is subject to—evils described when the sensations were discussed, and caused by necessity so that their exclusion was impossible, —would be tempered. Not only made they the body so that its head, in which they had located the divine part of the soul, was separated by a narrow neck from the rest of the body, but they also divided the latter into two parts by the diaphragm, placing in the higher one that part of the mind which was the seat of passion and courage—the same, therefore, as that which in the Phaedrus was the spirited and manageable horse,—and where the heart, as quarters for the force at the disposal of the intellect, was caused to beat by passion and fear, but recovered coolness by the action of the lungs. The lower part formed the residence of that part of the soul where desires were master, and it would be difficult to make them listen to the voice of reason, had not the liver been made to serve as a mirror, reflecting the warnings given, and to act, in regard to the lowest element of the mind, as a soothsayer and his art did in behalf of the least intelligent part of the public. The liver of an animal offered in sacrifice to the gods was the main source of information for those who, from the entrails, inferred and predicted what was going to happen; alive, its action was even stronger. What the lungs were for the heart, the spleen was for the liver.

A further description of the body, with explanations of the origin, use and action of its various parts, follows, in which marrow is represented as its principal and most effective element, made as it is of the various triangles which are also component parts of the four elements found in the universe; and here the gods are stated to have made the human skull, as the receptacle of the principal mass of marrow, thin and covered with skin instead of flesh because, although they were aware that by making it thick and amply covering it, they might double the length of human life, they preferred for man a short life in which the mind would have freedom of action,

to a long one in which it would have to vegetate. Then the food of man and the manner in which it attains its object—in connection with which plants are stated to have been made for the use of men and to count, as endowed with life, as animals,—respiration and its causes and effects, and the diseases of the body are commented upon, until Timaeus passes from the body to the soul and the evils it suffers from.

Of these evils want of reason and understanding, either from ignorance or from madness, is the worst, and one kind of madness arises from passions and desires, indulgence in which should not call forth condemnatory language—for, as Plato often states, and as especially in the Timaeus the view of human nature he gives compels him to do, no one is wilfully bad, but what is condemned as vice is in reality the consequence of a peculiar constitution of the body coupled with want of mental culture,—but for which a cure can be found in establishing harmony between mind and body, disproportion between them being a fruitful source of evil. To cure both body and mind various remedies are indicated, such as gymnastics when a strong mind is enclosed in a weak body, and musical and philosophical study when the contrary is the case; whereas medicine properly so called should only be resorted to when other remedies are found to be ineffective. What should never be lost sight of is the care due to that part of the mind which has its seat in the head and is most nearly related to the soul of the universe, since its culture contributes most of all to real happiness.—A brief reference to the migrating of souls into the bodies of lower animals is the end of the dialogue, women being first named, and birds being best fitted to harbour the souls of flighty and shallow-minded people, who fancy that they can altogether rely on their senses, whereas quadrupeds, reptiles and, last of all, fishes receive those of men labouring under deficiencies of brain-power.

The Timaeus contains much that is interesting for students of the history of the philosophy of nature; much more than

is seen from the brief sketch here given of it. The interest, however, lies more in what is found in it about the attempts made in ancient Greece to create a natural science in which, in our own days, undreamt of progress has been and is being made, than in anything else; and for the purposes of this essay it is sufficient to point out what light it throws on Plato himself. In regard to this it is first of all to be noticed that Plato, who at the time when in his Sophist he showed that he left the path trodden by his late teacher, wrote his Phaedo as a monument of the merits of the man to whom he owed his first views on philosophy, now, being upwards of sixty years of age, deviated to a much greater extent from the course he had kept till then. Socrates, in the Phaedo, tells those present on the day of his death that he was disgusted, in his youth, on finding that a philosopher whose doctrine was that intellect ruled the universe, explained, in spite of this, everything from material agencies, and adds that since that time he had stuck to dialectic. As late as the time when he wrote his Republic, Plato, though in favour of such studies as geometry and astronomy, likewise considered dialectic to be the true method to come to the highest truth, and now he is found at once to strike into a new path, and abandon his former studies for those of a subject new to him and foreign to the spirit in which, till then, he had worked and written.

There is, however, one peculiarity of the Timaeus which will remind its reader of the Republic. There Plato makes an observation to the effect that in the study of the world of thought there is a difference of method similar to one in that of the visible world, where either images of things or things themselves can be seen and studied. The one method, making use of something between opinion and the understanding which leads to true knowledge, takes its stand on a supposition from which it proceeds to conclusions; the other, guided by true understanding (νοῦς as opposed to διάνοια), proceeds from a supposition not to conclusions but to a prin-

ciple. The former method corresponds, in some measure, to what is now called the inductive, the latter to the deductive method; and what do we see in the Timaeus? That Plato *does* arrive, not at a conclusion but at a principle hatched in his own imagination: that of the four regular bodies being each of them the component parts of one of the four elements; and that, starting from this production of his fancy, he enters upon an elaborate explanation of the universe and the human body, which may be very ingenious, but is not founded on anything connected, in the remotest way, with either verified facts or even the smallest amount of probability. *Que diable allait il faire dans cette galère!* What business had Plato thus, in his old age, to come to the front with a crude theory on a subject from which he had altogether kept aloof for so many years?

Other matters connected with the Timaeus will be discussed at the end of this chapter, but there are points, referring to Plato's theology and his psychology, which are to be touched upon at once. Plato's theology, as found in his former dialogues, presents very little of real interest, since he was not in a position fully to enter into the matter. He found pandaemonism and the Olympus as they are met with in Homer and as they were believed in by such of his countrymen as stuck to the popular ideas on religious matters, and he could not go against them on account of a necessity similar to that which the gods in the Timaeus had to count with in making man. As, however, he did not believe in them, his gods became nondescript beings, supremely good and supremely happy, dealing with mortals only through the agency of demons, not even indulging in anything so human as joy, and strengthening themselves by the sight of ideal goodness and ideal beauty instead of feasting on nectar and ambrosia, except when, as in Diotima's story, a family event was to be celebrated. No one, considering the times in which Plato lived, can find fault with this, but in the Timaeus, where, as in the Sophist and the Politicus, he does not take Socrates as his

mouthpiece, he ventures to place before the public a god whom he hardly knows and whom they should not know at all, the maker of the universe out of a mass of matter having its origin in triangles, but who, at all events, does not think it beneath his dignity to admire his work and be glad, as mortals would. Of course this passing from polytheism to virtual monotheism is quite natural, and agrees with what is seen in the later history of the races now ruling the world; but under this god there are those made by him, first the one whose body is the universe, then the visible world's first inhabitants, and ultimately those worshipped in Greece, as mere underlings of his, not distinguished from demons, and to whom tasks are assigned, their immortality lasting only during pleasure. This is hardly an improvement on the faint-hearted theology of his younger days, and certainly not on that of Homer, with its truly human gods.

Then his psychology. The souls, to begin with that of the universe and those of the other gods, are not as in the Phaedrus immortal as having the principle of motion in themselves, but are made and can be unmade; and while it will hardly do, as stated before, to consider what is said about the first mixture made for them as evidence that they contain a mortal element, the human soul *is* stated to be partly mortal, and the doctrine of transmigration assumes such a shape that it is extremely difficult to see what is meant by the soul. Is it a principle of life met with even in plants, so that it may be thought—as implied, in fact, by what is said in the Philebus about intellect—to follow after death the law to which matter is subject, or has it, as argued in the Phaedo and elsewhere, an individual existence which cannot be destroyed? How can this question be answered when, on one hand, souls of men are seen to enter fishes, and on the other there are plants containing souls like the mortal part of the human soul? Surely, Plato's ideas about the soul, vitiated as they were from the beginning by the doctrine of "learning is remembering" which he took over from Socra-

tes, cannot be said to have profited by his attempts to deal with questions which his great teacher had prudently laid aside.

Of the sequel to the Timaeus, the Critias, hardly anything need be said. Judging by the introductory part of the Timaeus, its object must have been to give a description of an ancient state more or less like the ideal state of the Republic: a description which was certainly required after Plato's representing his state as being actually ruled according to the original form of government from which that of Sparta had degenerated. Athens as she was some eight thousand years before Plato, was to be the state governed according to his ideas, but first the powerful kingdom had to be described which had its seat in the isle of Atlantis, and whose rulers, already obeyed in Western Europe and Africa, attempted to extend their power eastward, but were utterly defeated by the Athenians. Plato, however, does not tell the story of this victory of his countrymen, the dialogue stopping before the description of Atlantis is completed. He may, after his discomfiture at the court of Dionysius on the occasion of his last visit to it, have thought it useless to complete a work whose beginning is by no means promising, and have preferred to write a political dialogue which his military caste formed no part of, and further to stick to the pumpkins which formed the subject discussed between him and his scholars after he had come to study nature as well as man.

Plato's last and longest dialogue is the Laws, divided into twelve books. It will be remembered that in the Phaedrus written laws are treated somewhat disrespectfully, and so they are in the Politicus, although it is there admitted that, as matters are, it is not easy to do without them. There is a short dialogue among Plato's works, the Minos, where Socrates discusses with a friend the question what law is, and where it is represented as the outcome of a search after what, in matters pertaining to the government of states, really *is*, the true royal law being paramount, whatever may be called

law by those unacquainted with truth. The laws of Creta are praised as the work of an ancient king admitted to personal intercourse with Zeus, and Minos is defended against the prejudice prevailing against him at Athens, and owing to misrepresentations by tragic poets, much older than Thespis and Phrynichus; for Athens had been infested by them in very ancient times. Reminiscences of the Politicus—statesman and king joined together, judges only servants of kings, &c. —are very striking throughout the dialogue; the questions and answers are in a style frequently met with in Plato, but so easily imitated that it may occasionally be taken as betraying imitation rather than as evidence of Plato's own hand; and to take the defence of historical or semi-historical personages, as done in the dialogue, not only in regard to Minos but also to the evidently mythical Talos, is hardly Platonic, so that the existing doubts about the Minos being Plato's own work are by no means groundless. *

In the Laws, as in the Timaeus and Critias, the connection with the Republic is clearly seen, an attempt being made in the dialogue to give a somewhat less unpractical idea of a state as is should be than that met with in the Republic. In Plato's third letter a reference is made to certain prefaces of laws discussed with Dionysius, which shows that one of the main ideas given in the Laws—that all laws should have prefaces,—must have been before his mind at the time of his visits to Sicily. On the other hand there is a report, recorded by Suidas, that Plato did not himself publish the Laws, but that this was done by one of his scholars, Philippus of Opus, who completed it by writing its continuation, the Epinomis. This report is confirmed, to some extent, by the fact that, in certain

* The dialogue called Hipparchus, having love of gain as its subject, contains a rehabilitation of the son of Pisistratus similar to the one of Minos, and the forms of the two dialogues are so much alike that they may be taken as the work of one writer, contemporaneous with, and perhaps a scholar of, Plato. For the latter's philosophical and other views it is, even if genuine, of as little importance as the Theages, the Rivals, the second Alcibiades and the smaller Hippias.

parts of the dialogue, there are changes of construction such as one might expect in a work written by an old man but neither revised nor corrected—as Plato would appear to have regularly done,—as well as by other evidence of defective revision. *

The personages of the Laws are Clinias of Cnosus, in Creta, Megillus the Lacedaemonian, and an unnamed stranger from Athens, who takes the principal part in the dialogue. They are making together a journey on foot from Cnosus to a cave consecrated to Zeus, and the Athenian, anxious for a conversation on an interesting subject, questions his companions on the laws of their countries, those of Creta being said to have been given by Zeus, and those of Sparta by Apollo. Why were in both countries common meals usual with the citizens? It is found that the other two consider this to be a measure necessitated by the fact that enemies are to be constantly encountered, so that the citizens should be prepared for the community of life required during campaigns; but the Athenian mentions internal struggles, both in states and in individuals, as being worse than wars with neighbouring states, and asks whether it is not a better plan to establish harmony than, by constant readiness for fighting, to give a preponderance to fighting qualities which is by no means conducive to the welfare of a state. The legislation of a state was not as it should be, unless it aimed at promoting both moral and material well-being, the former having to be preferred; and

* That what is called anacoluthia is both common and, as a rule, easily explained in Plato's dialogues, is well known; but what is meant here is of a somewhat different nature, as will be seen from the very striking instances met with in Laws VI p. 769 E, from *ξυννοεῖ* to *πάμπολυ*, and p. 770 D and E, from *τελευτῶν* to *πέφυκε ποιεῖν*. In the same book (p. 754 E, p. 761 E) also instances are found of statements not agreeing with, or not such as to be explained from, what has been said before, which would have been corrected had the dialogue been revised by its author; and not till book VIII it appears that the new state was to take the place of an ancient settlement by Magnetes, of whom remnants were still in existence.

could his companions show that, through education or otherwise, this was provided for in their laws?

Megillus then mentions the gymnastic exercises Spartan youths had to go through so as to strengthen their bodies, and other institutions which made them ready to encounter pain and hardships. Was there, asks the Athenian, anything either in Spartan or in Cretan legislation tending to render youth as much proof against the allurements of pleasure, as against hardships and pain? Did not an evil well-known in Creta—that aberration in matters of sexual love which has been touched upon in the tenth chapter of this essay—too often go hand in hand with excessive use of gymnastics? Neither of the others knew how to reply to these questions, until both hit on the tendency of the laws they lived under to prevent drunkenness, whereas both at Athens and in the Lacedaemonian colony of Tarent the festivals in honour of Dionysus always caused a great deal of it. The Athenian, however, is of opinion that, if the potations indulged in on such occasions are condemned as tending to lead to crimes and misdemeanours, one might just as well blame goats for destroying plantations when no herdsman is looking after them. The proper thing was to have no other compotations allowed than those under strict supervision. As the other travellers are fully prepared to listen to an explanation of this rather strange idea, their new friend enters upon an argument in favour of training the younger generation for the duties they will have to perform during manhood, by accustoming them to the practice condemned in Creta and in Sparta.

Education, he says, is a matter of the highest importance, and one of its main objects is to bestow on man the self-control which makes him get the better of weaknesses and desires. Pleasure and pain, hope and fear are advisers who cannot be controlled except by reason, which should pull the wires causing the human individual to move and act. Desires acting on man were strengthened when he was under the influence of liquor; of the twofold fear existing—that of

suffering evil and that of making by one's conduct an evil impression—the latter might effect a great deal of good. Was it not better to yield to shame than to be swayed by fear of danger, and if there were a beverage causing such fear in the minds of men, would not a legislator ordain its use as a means of putting those he made laws for to the test whether or not they were proof against fear? There was no such beverage in existence, but wine had the effect of elevating man and raising his spirits and hopes, until he lost that fear which was equivalent to shame. So wine was a most powerful means of putting those drinking it on their trial as far as their moral sense was concerned, without bringing them to grief, and of making them practise self-control when properly accustomed to its action.

This, however, was not the only matter connected with this wine question. What was required for the state was that from childhood, when reasoning power was quite undeveloped, to old age there should be a proper and lasting sentiment of what was to be sought for and enjoyed, and what should be shunned and hated. In youth there were strong perceptions of this, manifesting themselves in quick motions of the body and loud utterances, which in man alone, of all animals, could be regulated by rhythm and harmony. When the effects of age made themselves felt, the buoyancy of youth disappeared; but the gods, having compassion on man, made the Muses and Apollo, and Dionysus too, take part in his festivals and joys. The great question was how to impart to these joys the character they should have. In Egypt the music used at festivals was still the same as it had been for thousands of years; in fact, it was thought to be of divine origin. In Greece it was quite different, novelties in music and the like constantly making their appearance; and who was to judge whether they were to be approved or disapproved of? Surely not the public at large, as in the Grecian towns of Italy and Sicily, nor could the enjoyment they gave be in itself a proper criterion; but on the other hand it would not do to make a

feeling gain ground as if there were a radical difference between what was enjoyable and what was right. In fact, what was done at festivals would not answer its purpose, which was mainly educational, unless it served to make youth feel that there was no contrast between enjoyment and virtue, but that the righteous and unrighteous had each of them joys of their own, those of the former being far superior. The truth of this might be doubted at first sight; but was not this the view which youth should be taught by the lawgiver to hold, and was it impossible to do so? Not if, at festivals, this view was inculcated by the songs of the children's choir under guidance of the Muses, and confirmed by that of youths approaching manhood and led by Apollo. But how with the older people, whose leader was Dionysus? Unwilling and ashamed to make their voices heard, they required the gift bestowed on mankind by the deity guiding them, to be inspired with truly festive sentiments; but they should partake of it under the supervision of still older men, whom as the appointed guardians of the law they should obey as their commanders, and who, instead of celebrating the gods by joining in solemn chant, might do so by their words. For lads under eighteen, full of life as they were, wine was not the proper beverage; from eighteen to thirty it should neither be forbidden nor used to any great extent; but for those upwards of thirty it was required to keep them up to the mark. In those states, however, where such legislation was not adopted, the best plan was to follow the example of Carthage, where the law confined the use of wine within very narrow limits.

The Athenian now passes on to a subject seemingly different from the one discussed till then: that of the origin of states. Taking the view set forth in the beginning of the Timaeus and indicated already in the Politicus, he points out that there must have been, in olden times, many states flourishing and decaying of which no memory was preserved, and that this ignorance of their existence must be owing to physical changes, destroying the human race with the exception of the few

uneducated mountaineers who were spared. These men, while destitute of metals and of the implements made of them, so that many useful arts of life would have to be invented anew, still had retained such primitive arts as, coupled with the plentiful means of existence the earth supplied them with, enabled them to live on in the manner of Homer's Cyclopes, under patriarchal governments and unwritten laws and traditions, without knowing either wealth or poverty. Lawgivers were also unknown to them, until the various small knots of men had to combine into larger communities, and their family laws had to be equalised. A further step was taken when, as in Homer the founders of Troy, communities formerly settled on slopes of mountains descended to the plains, and here the observation is made that at that time the tradition about the last flood must have been lost through length of time, for how could otherwise the Dardanians have removed to a country so exposed to inundations as the plain of Troy? At that time there were already many towns, and communication by sea had long been re-opened; and the Trojan war—the consequence of the fear of an Assyrian invasion of Greece, Troy being an Assyrian outpost—soon put an end to the existence of Troy, but at the same time led, as the result of the long absence of the Grecian army, to disturbances in Greece which ended in the return of the Heraclides as rightful owners of the country.

The Doric invasion resulted in a settlement of the country which promised both safety and greatness to Greece, through the establishment of three kingdoms, ruled by brothers or near relations, and united by a close alliance. This arrangement however, the result, to some extent, of the still existing necessity to guard against a possible Asiatic invasion, did not last, only one of the kingdoms retaining its original power, but never being at peace with its neighbours. How did this happen? Wilfulness took the place of reason; already in the beginning that preference of valour to other virtues manifested itself which had been the first topic of conversation among

the travellers; and the true feeling which keeps states together, that there is a necessary connection between what is good and what is enjoyable, soon vanished through the ignorance of rulers who, instead of using that moderation which Hesiod recommended, assumed powers altogether at variance with the natural laws settling the relations between those governing and those governed. That Sparta had not suffered from the same evils as Argos and Messene was owing, in the first place, to that divine intervention which caused her to be ruled by two kings instead of one, and besides to the law which limited royal power by that of the senate and that of the ephors. Had similar limitations prevailed in the other kingdoms, an expedition like that of Xerxes would never have been thought of, and Greece would have been spared the disgrace that, while Sparta and Athens combined against the invader, Argos kept aloof. Had the conviction that a state cannot exist without liberty, mutual good feeling and wisdom prevailed from the beginning, matters would have taken a different shape.

So that which seemed to be a digression proves another way to arrive at a result similar to that of the original discussion, and the Athenian now proceeds to point out how, through want of moderation, forms of government so utterly different from one another as the monarchy found in Persia and the democracy prevailing at Athens had both brought evils. Cyrus was an excellent general, and while making the Persians the ruling race in Asia, he neither deprived them of their liberty nor oppressed the conquered nations; but he was not himself sufficiently educated to see the danger of allowing his sons to be educated by women who taught them to indulge in wilfulness; and Darius, who reconstructed the Persian Empire, and by associating his principal supporters to his power tempered the absolutism of monarchy, fell into the same error. The consequence was that the Persian king was only nominally great, his subjects being both unwilling and unable to fight for him. Athens, again, was governed shortly before the Persian war by laws giving to each part of the community

the influence due to it, and her citizens were rendered, by their fear of the Persian invader, doubly obedient to law; but afterwards they allowed the old rules prevailing in regard to education and festivals to fall into desuetude, and so the masses were made to rule both the theatre and the state. Was it possible to found a state in which a happy medium was hit upon between immoderate despotism and immoderate liberty?

This question becomes at once a very practical one by the statement made by Clinias that he is a commissioner for the foundations of a new state in his island, and that he would like nothing better than a discussion about the laws by which it would have to be governed. It appears that the new town will be situated some eight miles from the sea and at a goodly distance from other towns, in a country producing almost anything, but scantily provided with timber for ship-building, and too broken and rocky to yield very abundant harvests. All this is welcome news to the Athenian, since a town inhabited by sea-faring, exporting and commercial people is infested with various evils, and attempts at becoming a naval power spoil the citizens for military service. The new population will be rather mixed, many colonists from various parts of Greece joining those from Cnosus. This, says the Athenian, is in one respect a disadvantage, since the inhabitants will lack, in the beginning, that union which is met with in a homogeneous community; but then it will be easier to make them submit to new laws. To make such laws, however, is a difficult task, not to be accomplished by mere ability but requiring the aid of the gods and of good luck; and the most favourable circumstances under which it can be done is when a tyrant, young and of good parts, endowed with that virtue which does not shine but should be common to all—self-control,—and assisted by an able adviser, is anxious for good legislation. But what government is the new town to have? asks Clinias. Surely not one under a tyrant? The Athenian asks in his turn what is the form of government

prevailing in the states which have to found the town, and the reply is that neither in Sparta nor in Cnosus a form of government exists to which a definite name can be given. In Sparta, replies the Athenian, there *is* a constitution; in other states the laws are too often made with no other view than to secure the privileges of the rulers, whereas they should be made in the interest of the whole community. In the good old times under Cronus every town had a demon as its ruler, and the nearest imitation of this would be to give the ruling power to those most willing to obey the laws, and to make the people understand that law is a divine institution, and that to transgress it is sure to bring its own punishment.

The first law proposed is one stating the duties enjoined by piety to be performed towards gods of the upper and of the nether world, demons and heroes, and likewise towards parents. In fact, the scope of the law is to cause men willingly to perform their duties. But how is this to be effected? It had been observed that poets should not be allowed to have their own way, since they might say things not in accordance with the laws; but poets raised their voices under inspiration, and legislators, instead of simply laying down rules, should explain them. And now, after giving an instance of a law containing such an explanation, and stating reasons for its commands, the Athenian starts the idea of those prefaces to laws which are also mentioned in Plato's third letter.

Such a preface, not to any single law but generally to those following that about piety towards the gods and towards parents, is then given in the form of a long moral sermon, beginning with the soul as the most valuable possession of man, which should be duly honoured as such, not by flattering and humouring it, nor by trying to avoid a death of whose real nature nothing is known, but by doing what the lawgiver puts down as good and abstaining from what he condemns as evil, since by acting otherwise one would have to rank and be in contact with the wicked. Then comes the

body, which should be so managed by means of self-control as not to exercise undue influence on the soul; and here it is pointed out that the older generation should teach, by their conduct, the younger one to be ashamed of doing wrong, and that a victory gained in the Olympic games is far less valuable than one obtained by faithfully assisting in the execution of the behests of the law. Truth is to be the guide of mankind, and not to do wrong, though praiseworthy, is much less so than to prevent others from doing wrong by reporting them to the authorities, and to assist them in becoming good citizens and getting rid of the evils they labour under. It is called a wrong doctrine that man is, and should be, most friendly to himself, many evils arising from a selfishness which causes man to excuse his own shortcomings and to lose his perception of truth. It is human to prefer pleasure to pain, but every one should ask which description of life is preferable in regard to this point, and then he would find that in a virtuous life the balance of pleasure and pain is best regulated.—All this agrees pretty well with what is heard in our days; in fact, hardly anywhere in Plato is a more glaring instance found of that doctrine of subordination of the individual to the common weal and of that tendency to extol moral principles laid down by man above the sense of the individual of what he is to be, which are certainly not characteristic of the old and genuine sentiments of the Greek nation.

Proceeding to legislation, the Athenian observes that whenever this work is taken in hand in existing states, they should be purified by ordaining the emigration of those who, for want of subsistence, have become a nuisance, and that there are cases in which it might be necessary to resort to cancellation of debts and interference with proprietary rights; but as a rule this should be avoided and, of course, in founding a new town there was no necessity to do anything else than exclude uneligible intending colonists. To prevent, for the future, the necessity of measures like those referred to, the number

of citizens should be fixed beforehand, and that of five thousand and forty is recommended, on account of the subdivisions this number is capable of. Before settling the land-question between them, parts should be set aside both for old local deities and for the tutelary gods and heroes of the various sections of the state.

Of all forms of government, the best is that in which everything is held in common, and when this cannot be thought of, the next best plan is to keep to it as closely as possible. To till the land in common is subject to great difficulties, and so it should be equally divided among the citizens, each holder being allowed, at his death, to leave his land by will to one of his sons or, when he has none, of his daughters. When there are more sons than one, they may either get the allotments of citizens dying childless, or marry heiresses of lands; and all questions referring to this matter should be dealt with by one of the chief magistrates, who in case of over-population may resort to emigration, when the reverse takes place to immigration; but here the greatest caution will be required. No citizen should be allowed either to practise the lower arts of life or to invest money on interest. The currency should be such as to be valueless in other states; coin current in Greece should be only kept for embassies and the like. On the whole, accumulation of wealth should be prevented, since it was sure to be the result of improper dealings; and while it would not do to have complete equality of property—for inequality would answer better when public duties were to be allotted, and there should be opportunities to see the difference between citizens who knew how to deal with property and those who did not,—no one should have more than four times the value of the land allotted to him. The difference in wealth was to form the basis of a division of the citizens into four classes, and another division, of a territorial character, would be that into twelve tribes, each with its own sanctuaries, quarter in town and share of the land. The town would have to be built in as central a place as

possible and after selecting spots required for temples, a building lot in town should be given to each citizen, together with two allotments in the country, one near the town and the other near the boundary. Of course there might be difficulties in the way of this plan, but its tendency—that to prevent the citizens from being tainted with the vulgarity and love of gain common to Egyptians and Phoenicians—was to be closely adhered to.

Then follows the appointment of magistrates, civil and military, the best legislation being sure to prove a failure when magistrates are not competent for their duties. For the citizens of a new state, unknown to one another, it would be difficult to make a proper selection from among themselves, and so the advice is given to have the highest magistracy, that of the guardians of the law, appointed in the first instance by the state of Cnosus, eighteen of the thirty-seven from her own citizens and the rest from the colonists. About the other magistracies and public services it will suffice to say that the senate is formed on the model of that of Athens, with its πρυτάνεις always on duty, and the police somewhat on that of the Spartan secret police, its members being young men who have to serve for two years and to take their meals in common; that the wealthier classes have a larger share in the service of the state, while the citizens, the guardians of the law and other magistrates, and chance are made to take part in the elections; and that the tendency of the arrangement is to keep a middle course between monarchy and democracy.

After a few words about the spirit in which alterations of the laws should be made when required, the real work of lawgiving is commenced. First come festivals, both those of the state and of the tribes, where lads and girls have to perform dances somewhat in the style of the gymnastics recommended in the Republic; then follows a preface to the law of marriage, where the necessity is insisted upon of not consulting one's own taste but the interest of the state, the doctrine of the Politicus, about sprightliness having to be

matched with continence, being once more set forth, and those remaining unmarried after thirty-five being threatened with rather stiff penalties. The question of the management of property, and especially of slaves, is also taken up. The slaves have to be treated justly and kindly, but to be punished instead of reasoned with, and conspiracies among them are to be prevented by not taking men of the same race into one's service. A wall for the defence of the town is unnecessary, the police having to provide a defence of the frontier which renders it almost impassable; but the houses at the outskirts of the town may be so built as to form a wall by themselves. Strict rules are given about home life, legislation for the state being of no avail when this is neglected; and here the care bestowed on the rearing of fighting cocks is taken as a model the state has to imitate in providing for children both before and shortly after birth. What is said, however, on this point is of greater importance for students of early physical and moral training, than for the purpose of this essay. Worthy of notice is the remark that, were it not for wrong training in childhood, the left hand would be as useful to man as the right one.

Passing on from infants to children big enough to play, the Athenian reverts to Plato's old and familiar topic. Constantly new playthings and amusements for children were invented, but was this the proper thing? Would it not tend to inspire them with novel ideas, and would it not be a much better plan to stick, as in Egypt, to what is old and time-honoured? As this remark finds favour with the others, he asks whether it is right, when sacrifices are offered to the gods, to allow poets, instead of avoiding unseemly language and remembering that on such occasions only prayers should be heard, so to train the choirs under their direction as to make the public shed tears over imaginary misfortunes. In fact, they should not even have the right to show their poems to anybody, before they have been approved of by the guardians of the law. So those who, in our days, object to a free press have Plato's authority to back them.

Censors, of the ripe age of past fifty, are also to be appointed for approval or otherwise of hymns in honour of the departed, since here too their effects on the living have to be considered. As to training in gymnastics, the idea advocated in the Republic that girls should partake of it, is adhered to; but what the Athenian does not approve of is that in Sparta, where such training is usual, women are allowed to stay at home, without doing anything. For his part he would prefer a life in which women and children as well as men would have common meals, agriculture being mainly practised by slaves, and the lower arts of life by foreigners; but instead of laziness being indulged in, any one sharing in such a life should use all his energies in improving his mind and body and in watching over the interest of the state. Even at night they should be awake for this purpose, and in daytime they should have an eye on the children they meet, and chastise them when they do anything unseemly; for this was the right method to teach them obedience to the law. For the same reason, there should be strict rules in regard to education, no child being allowed to spend more or less than the usual number of years at school. Here Plato's mouthpiece returns to the charge by condemning the old method of burthening the children's heads with all kinds of poetry; and what should be substituted for it? The lessons learnt that day, by himself and his friends, from their conversation. As to music and gymnastics, the men of sixty charged with their supervision should take care that the proper methods were followed by the paid foreigners teaching them, and in connection with this an interesting digression gives Plato's views about the various dances then in usage, ending with a new denunciation of tragedy as being altogether inadmissible.

As in the Republic for the defenders, so in the Laws the study of arithmetic, geometry and astronomy is recommended as part of the general education of youth, not to go deeply into them, except in few cases, but in the Egyptian fashion, by teaching them as in play. In these matters the ignorance

prevailing in Greece was amazing, hardly any one being acquainted with such a thing as surds, or aware that the sun and moon moved regularly, instead of wandering about. A reference to the chase closes the chapter on education.

Reverting to a subject already touched upon but requiring further legislation—the festivals in honour of the gods—the Athenian recommends to connect with them military exercises on a grand scale, in which both men and women have to join, and games tending to make both sexes better prepared for such exercises. Why this is not done elsewhere is explained by references, first to the love of gain, which in most states absorbs all energies of men, and secondly to the fact that whenever in states, whether under democratical, oligarchical or tyrannical government, there is a ruling element, its subjects cannot be allowed to become a danger to it. In the state to be founded in Creta there will be, as far as the citizens are concerned, neither rulers nor subjects, nor will it be possible to strive after immoderate wealth; but another danger is to be signalled. Young people of both sexes, in good condition, not exhausted by degrading labour, and associating with one another on friendly terms, cannot but experience those sexual desires which are the cause of so many evils, and how are the consequences of this to be avoided? Here the aberrations leniently treated in the Phaedrus, but held to be disgraceful in the Republic, are most strongly condemned; but it is admitted that, however unnatural, they have their *raison d'être*, since between purely physical desire and the fellow-feeling which leads to friendship, there is something intermediate—readers of the Phaedrus know it—which has to be taken into account. The remedy against the evil infesting even Sparta and the Cretan states is sought for in the fact that even those given to unwholesome desires will abstain from incest, as held by all in abhorrence as an offence against both divine and human laws. Could not the aberrations so strongly condemned be put on the same footing? Again, men engaged in training for athletic exercises

keep aloof, in many cases during the whole of their lives, from sexual intercourse. Could not the citizens of the new state be brought to do the same, until their time for marrying, twenty-five for males, had arrived? If not, the aberrations referred to should be condemned by law, and intercourse with women bought as slaves or not being born citizens might be secretly resorted to by those not equal to total abstinence, its discovery bringing a certain amount of disgrace.

Plato, who when writing this had evidently reached the age at which, as stated by Cephalus in the Republic, Sophocles rejoiced at having escaped the tyranny of erotic desire, gives here pretty well the sentiment and condition of affairs now prevailing in a world ruled by Christian civilisation, and for this reason cannot, as in some other respects, be charged with recommending something utterly impracticable. But it should not be forgotten that the moral sentiments now prevailing are the results neither of philosophical research nor of human legislation, but of a religion which has obtained a firm hold on the human mind; and then there is one other point which tells against Plato as seen in his old age. The love painted in glowing colours in the Phaedrus does exist in the Christian world, the difference being that there it is the natural love between the sexes. This love is altogether ignored by Plato when he puts the age of marrying at twenty-five or later, and then enjoins those about to marry not to make their choices in accordance with their own inclinations, but with an eye to the interests of the state. Here it is that, being not only cured by old age of impure desires but also deprived of his sense of love as an ennobling sentiment, he goes wrong, and clearly shows that his years may have rendered his moral feelings similar to those which now happily prevail, but did certainly not enlarge his mental horizon.

Simply referring, in regard to his common meals, to the examples given by Sparta and the Cretan states, the Athenian proceeds to legislate on matters connected with supply of food

and the means of procuring a livelihood, observing at the same time that in a state where commerce and its evils are unknown, and everything may be obtained from the country itself, much fewer laws on this subject are required than elsewhere. Very sharp laws are to prevent or punish all encroachments on fields, water rights and the like, and likewise all interference with the produce grown, before the lawful time for harvesting has arrived, those who take ripe fruit for immediate consumption being more leniently treated, but a difference being made, of course, in this respect between freemen and slaves. Citizens are strictly forbidden to engage in any trade or keep slaves working as tradesmen, their trade being to perform the duties of citizenship; and no foreigner is to be allowed to practise more than one trade. Importation of foreign goods is limited to what is required either for public worship or for war. Of the produce of the country, as customary in Creta, one third is to be sold for the use of artisans and other strangers, the rest being kept for citizens and slaves as far as required, and that which is not required for them being divided among the citizens according to the number of cattle and other domestic animals kept by them, so that, although there is to some extent community of property as far as produce is concerned, those best providing for husbandry are made to reap the fruit of their care. This part of the Laws is completed by rules about habitations and market management.

The administration of justice, which had been touched upon already when the magistrates of the new state were under discussion, is now reverted to in connection with crimes punishable by law, such as sacrilege, treason, theft, murder or homicide—there being, in Greek, only one name for both—assault with intent, &c. Especially as regards murder and homicide elaborate statements are given, but a close consideration of them would be out of place here, and rather pertains to an inquiry into the ideas on criminal law prevailing in Greece. Of more importance is the explanation given of Plato's

well-known doctrine that no one commits an injustice of his own free will; a doctrine which had to be discussed in connection with the criminal law, since between wilful and involuntary homicide a great difference was made. It is now seen that, in Plato's opinion, passion, desire and ignorance are the causes of crime, and that those under their influence are considered by him to be driven unwillingly to crime. So crimes are seen to arise either from what in the Timaeus are the lower and mortal parts of the soul, or from deficiencies in the higher one. Punishment by death is, for all that, allowed in the case of those who, by remaining on earth, would injure others without benefiting themselves. Crimes arising from passion (θυμός) are, though there should be premeditation, much more leniently treated than those from desire.

When insulting conduct (ὕβρις) is reached, a most interesting discussion takes place. The insult might be offered to the gods, and would, in this case, be worst of all, and how if those guilty of it did not believe in the existence of gods, or believed them not to care for human affairs, or to be, when sinned against, easily propitiated? How if they ask for proofs that there are gods, and that they are not such as they fancy them to be? Clinias can hardly believe that there are such people. Do they not see such living gods as sun and moon? There are, replies the Athenian, wise men who tell the public that sun and moon are nothing else than stony masses. At the request of the others he enters upon a demonstration to the effect that gods had always been believed in, and that young men who refused to do so, invariably changed their views when they grew older; but suddenly he remembers a doctrine he cannot ignore. Things, it was said, owe their existence either to nature, to accident (τύχη) or to art, but the share of art in it is the smallest. By nature the four elements exist; out of them accident has made the world; art is human and has made small things, but it has made laws and gods have been made by law, as is seen from the fact that nations worship different gods. Was, asks the

Athenian, a legislator simply to forbid and punish the propagation of such a doctrine, or was it to be refuted?

The latter plan is approved of, and now the Athenian points out that those considering the four elements to be the oldest things existing forgot the soul, which was the cause of whatever changes took place in nature, and which must have existed before anything else. This is demonstrated by the old argument of the Phaedrus, that the soul is the only being which has its principle of motion in itself. Things existing had each of them a name and a definition, and what was the definition of what is called soul? The motion which can move itself. So the soul was, in the universe, the ruling element, or rather there were two souls, the one bestowing benefits and the other producing contrary results. It was the former, partaking as it did of intellect, which guided the regular motions of the world, and when the sun was seen to move, could this be through anything else than its soul, which caused it to be a god? Those denying the existence of the gods should either admit that they were in error, or prove that the soul was not the origin of all process of generation.

Then follows a lengthy demonstration that the gods cannot be held to leave either the world or even the lowest being in the world to itself; that human individuals have each of them a part to act which is the object of their existence, since it would not do for them to fancy that they were, by themselves, of any account; and that the idea of making the gods change their minds and do what no man who had a duty to perform could commit without dishonour, was preposterous. The law against irreligious language and conduct, which in case of a second offence makes death the penalty, closes this part of the legislation for the new state.

Between what is stated in the Laws and in the Timaeus about the gods there is no real difference, but in the Laws it is more clearly seen that by soul is meant a general principle of life, the insignificance of individual man is more strongly insisted upon, the distance separating gods from men

becomes greater, and, last but not least, a novel distinction is made between a soul benefiting the world and endowed with reason, and another of a contrary nature. This need not be taken as a reference to a struggle between a good and an evil principle, but it is of some importance for a proper understanding of Plato's views in his old age.

The last books of the Laws chiefly contain regulations about a number of matters of legislation, mostly civil, such as sales, inheritances, guardianship of orphans and a good many more, intermixed with a few regulations about courts of law and the like, which one would have expected to meet with in earlier parts of the dialogue. For those anxious to become acquainted with such ideas of law as were current among thinkers in Greece, all this is of considerable interest; here it will not do to give particulars about it except a few, such as the prohibition of foreigners settled in town and freedmen to extend their residence in it beyond a fixed number of years, especially after having obtained a certain amount of property; a regulation against influencing courts of law by speeches, which shows that there was, besides tragic poets, another class of men viewed with disfavour by Plato even in his old age; and another against administering oaths to parties pleading in court, such oaths simply serving to fill the state with perjurors. Towards the end, however, of the dialogue an institution is mentioned which is of great importance for Plato's views at the time he wrote the Laws, and which he evidently had in view long before describing it.

This institution is an assembly meeting every morning before dawn, and consisting of the ten most eminent guardians of the law, of those citizens who, having been at a mature age, over fifty, intrusted by the guardians of the law with missions to visit various parts of the world and report about useful institutions met with in them, are found on their return to have both improved their own minds and obtained valuable information for the state, and of an equal number of younger men, of thirty or older, selected by the older members as

the ablest and most promising. They assemble at a time when nothing else is doing in town, and they are to serve as the anchor on which the vessel of state can safely lie. The human head is both the seat of intellect and that of the principal organs of the senses, and without a head to observe and watch any state would come to grief. In one state the scope of policy was to keep the ruling part of the population in power, in another to obtain wealth and power over other states; but safety was to be found in virtue, and virtue was to be the object for the new state to strive after. There were four cardinal virtues, two of which, valour and wisdom (φρόνησις), differed inasmuch as the former was common to men and beasts, and was met with at a very early age, whereas the latter had to be sought for in those whose minds had been matured by their years of life. This was the reason why the task of watching over the safety and interest of the state was to be imposed on a body of young as well as old men; men who could take a view not only of the many things seen in life, but also of the one thing containing them all. For this it was necessary for them both to understand what was meant by the soul as the moving principle of all things, and to have an idea of that actual motion of the universe in which the action of the gods was seen, and whose regularity should be the model of human legislation. The nightly assembly would maintain the institutions essential for the welfare of the state, but it would not do to legislate for it, implicit faith having to be put in its own action.

There is nothing in the Laws, as there is both in the Theaetetus and the Timaeus, to show that a sequel is to come; but the Epinomis nevertheless begins with a statement that the three friends had promised to meet again for an inquiry how man can obtain wisdom. Not the wisdom, however, shown in the lower arts of life, nor even that of the general or orator; and although there is one art—arithmetic,—without which no learning was possible, it did not give the wisdom which makes men good. After an

argument about the formation of animate beings, mentioning ether as a fifth element made of a fifth regular body, but otherwise containing reminiscences from the Timaeus, a knowledge of the gods as they are seen in the heavenly bodies, and therefore of astronomy, is stated to be that which can make the few men capable of obtaining it both wise and happy. There is no reason for doubting the truth of the tradition which denies the dialogue to be Plato's own work.

As to the Laws it cannot be denied that the state to be founded in Creta has a somewhat more practical appearance than the ideal state sketched in the Republic; and although giving enough and more than enough of legislative wisdom in his last and longest dialogue, Plato remains true to his old idea about the insufficiency of written law by what he says about the powers and position of his nightly council. But after all, what is the state he wants to found? One, he says, in which there will be no ruling as against a subject class; but not only are there slaves to till the earth, but trades altogether indispensable for the existence of any community are not to be worked at by citizens but by strangers settled in the country. This contempt for the lower arts of life is in accordance with ideas commonly held in Greece in Plato's time, but it is certainly at variance with the equality he is in favour of, the foreign tradesmen being practically a subject race as long as they remain in the country. Again, all the work the citizens have to do is to assist in watching over the safety of the state and the execution of the laws, but why form a community and make laws simply with a view to preserve them intact? A virtually aimless life like that of citizens who have nothing else to do than to see that their lands are worked, to act as informers in regard to one another, to indulge in potations under supervision of old wiseacres for the purpose of learning self-control, to marry for the sole purpose of maintaining the population at the number fixed by law, and now and then to have grand military manœuvres, is the dreariest imaginable, and as much at variance with the

Attic life so graphically described by Plato in his older works, as with the splendid picture of love met with in the Phaedrus. But it cannot be denied that not only in the matter of sexual intercourse but also in regard to the maintenance of the law by the citizens as a body and to the levelling tendencies which in our days are not even tempered with Plato's dislike for trades and those engaged in them, a similarity is found in Plato's views in old age to those of our own times which clearly shows that the genuine Greek view of life had been making room in his mind for that of later ages.

Plato's old age is not fully known without his letters, as far as they refer to the views he held. First of all certain passages are to be mentioned from which it would appear that Plato did not like to commit his views to writing, and was anxious that what he wrote to his friends should be kept secret. In fact, in his second letter he denies having written anything; what was stated to be his work was in reality that of a young Socrates. This reminds the readers of Plato's fulminations, in his Phaedrus, against written records; but it *was* quite a different thing whether, like Protagoras, he wrote anything under his own name, or only recorded discussions, real or imaginary, between Socrates and his friends. What is meant by this "handsome and young Socrates" of his is doubtful. To think of an idealised Socrates is to substitute modern for ancient thought. A Socrates junior is introduced in the very dialogues in which Plato began to follow a course of his own; but as he is mentioned nowhere else, it is quite possible that he is an imaginary character. It is only in the eleventh letter, written to a certain Laodamas who wanted advice about a new town which was to be built, that Plato mentions a Socrates as a companion prevented by illness to pay a visit to his correspondent. But why should not Laodamas, a person altogether unknown, have fancied, on reading Plato's dialogues, that the Socrates mentioned in them was alive, and have received a reply humouring him and at the same time excusing Plato for not complying with his request?

Why was, is a further question, Plato anxious not to be held responsible for dialogues well-known to be his work? It may have been from fear of suffering his late teacher's fate. In fact, in a letter to king Perdiccas the younger of Macedonia, Plato clearly states that his refraining from advising the Athenian people in matters political was on account of its being as dangerous as it was useless. Another reason, however, is given in the seventh letter (p. 342 sqq.), which has been misunderstood although its meaning is easily made out. Plato's argument comes to this, that to know a thing, its name, its definition (λόγος) and its image are to be taken into account, the image, which is not mentioned in the dialogues, being probably added since Plato, in his old age, meddled more with mathematics than he did before, and had therefore to use circles and other geometrical figures and forms, drawn or manufactured. Then came knowledge itself, and ultimately the real thing that had to be known. Now when discussing the first four one might get off without much trouble, but on account of their want of clearness and the necessity of having mastered them before giving an answer about the fifth, it was difficult to give that answer in a satisfactory manner. In fact, such things might be learnt—but only by those who had a special aptitude for them and at the same a goodly amount of quick-wittedness—by means of dialectic, and then they would at once become clear to the mind; but to commit to writing one's serious thoughts on such matters was a grievous mistake.

What Dionysius, at the time when the second letter was written, wanted to know from Plato, referred to the same question of the origin of things which Thales had put to himself when entering upon philosophical research; and Plato, in his reply, couples with it "the king of the universe and the cause of all that is beautiful." In a letter to Hermias—perhaps the ruler of Atarneus, opposite Lesbos—and two of his neighbours, mention is made of "the god who is leader of existing and future things, and the father [and] master of

the leader and cause." What else does this refer to than to the maker of the universe and to the universe itself as mentioned in the Timaeus; to the soul as the origin of all motion and the actual course of heaven in the Laws? Plato nowhere, in his dialogues, gives a complete idea of that dialectic which led to the highest knowledge, and his theory about the gods in his latest dialogues was not such that he could safely communicate it to the public at large in his own name. The Timaeus was, perhaps, to give to some extent the reply asked for by Dionysius; about the almost unconscious manner in which truth flashed upon the mind, sooner or later, by means of well-applied dialectic, hints are given both in the second and in the seventh letter. No esoteric doctrine is to be thought of in all this, but while Plato wrote dialogues to explain his views to the public, the real means of seeing the truth, nowhere more clearly indicated by Plato than in the passage of the Republic about the light which, in the world of thought, took the same place as the sun in the visible world, was to be given by the living word.

## § XIII. Conclusion.

To Socrates—the true Platonic Socrates, whom Xenophon never knew, but who, in his old age, kept Plato spell-bound by dialectic and personal influence, as he had, in the vigour of his manhood, kept Alcibiades—Plato owes two leading doctrines of his philosophy, that of the ideas and that of learning being remembering, in other words that of an immortality of the individual soul on the basis laid by Pythagoras. Whether or not Socrates arrived at the conception of ideas by himself is not quite clear from the passage in the Parmenides (p. 130 B) where he is asked this question, his reply referring to another part of it; and when in the Phaedo (p. 100 B) he states that, after having found no satisfaction in the doctrine of Anaxagoras, he had reverted to those things generally talked

about (πολυθρύλητα), that there is something like beauty, goodness, &c., by themselves, it is evident that Plato does not consider the doctrine to have originated with him. In fact, had he done so he would not have made him say in the Theaetetus that he was master of the art of mental obstetrics, but deprived of productive power of his own.

In the Parmenides Socrates believes in ideas both of relative qualities like similarity, and of moral and physical ones like goodness and beauty, but doubts about ideal men, ideal elements, &c., and is afraid of going wrong when descending to small and contemptible things. In Plato's earlier dialogues not only the former class is frequently mentioned, but the ideal couch of the Republic finds its counterpart in the ideal shuttle of the Cratylus. Of an ideal man or ox nothing is heard between the Parmenides and the Philebus.

Ideal beauty, goodness, &c., are partaken of by what is beautiful and good in the visible world. The ideal shuttle and couch are reproduced in it by human art, without any philosophy being required, since every carpenter does so. But the ideas of justice and the like are not seen by mortal eyes, an exception being made, in the Phaedrus, for beauty alone. They can be seen by the soul when separated from the body, but only in some measure, the full view of them being reserved for the gods, and they can likewise be seen by a mental eye trained by philosophy. The process by which the goal is reached is not clearly indicated anywhere. Diotima in the Banquet, Plato himself in his letters represent the vision of them during life on earth as being caused by a sudden flash of light, either as the reward of a life spent like that of Socrates in associating with youth for the highest purpose, or as the result of a dialectic which nowhere in Plato is so described that any reader can see at once what is meant; but that there is an unconscious process of the human mind, altogether different from reasoning, by which a view of subjective truth —truth whose character as such cannot be doubted by the one seeing it—is obtained, must be evident to all who have ever

tried, from records studied, to catch and reproduce a human character or something like it, and for them Plato's words are intelligible. Then there is the light spread, in the world of thought, by that which is good: a light closely connected with that which, in Christian life, is thought to effect conversion of mind and heart.

But now this world of thought! What is seen in it is nothing but those very ideas, and it is the soul, released from influences which impede its free action, which can, under certain circumstances, see them. This is intelligible enough; and when the ideal shuttle is seen by the carpenter when he has to make a new non-ideal one, there is nothing strange in the thought that for seeing ideal beauty, &c., something more is required than the mental faculties met with in carpenters. But in the Sophist the ideas of beauty and the like are represented as living beings, with souls of their own, and how is it with the ideal man and ox of the Philebus? Have they souls, as the ideal shuttle and couch cannot be supposed to have, or are they, like the shuttle, reproduced in the visible world as mere bodies, to be inhabited by souls existing independently of them? It may be said that the main object of the Sophist is to give an ontology, not as a fruit of that indefatigable search after truth which is characteristic of philosophers, but as a result wished for by Plato so as to have a ground to take his stand on without having to fear the attacks of any one coming forward with old and worn-out arguments, and that therefore this statement about ideas having souls may have been somewhat inconsiderate. But when the idea of what is good is, in the Republic, not only seen by the mental eye but also spreading light so as to enable that eye to see other ideas, it is evident that the view met with in the Sophist is also found elsewhere in Plato.

In the Timaeus the maker of the universe begins by making its soul, and afterwards peoples it with living beings, reproducing those found in the world of thought. Here again

something quite novel is met with. Socrates lived at a time when the idea of a creator of the world, as expressed in the first verse of Genesis, was unknown in Greece; and already in his youth he dropped the studies of nature then generally indulged in, for the purpose of keeping to dialectic. So for him the visible world and the world of thought must have been two worlds co-existing, with whose origin he had not to trouble himself, his sole object being to ascend, and teach others fit for it to ascend, from the visible world to that of thought. This was a perfectly sound stand-point for the man who, as Cicero says, brought philosophy down from speculations about nature to take its place in the common life of mankind, and Plato is generally seen to take it likewise. As long as he does there are, for him, things in the visible world, and ideas in the world of thought partaken of, or reproduced by, those things. But when he attempts to explain the origin of the visible world, he is seen to represent the world of thought as having existed before it; and what does this existence come to? Souls are made, by the maker of the universe, of a compound substance—if the word "substance" may be used for a mixture of abstractions—for the gods who are to rule the universe, and these gods again use a less pure substance to make those of men and other animals, whose ideas, like those of themselves, exist already in the world of thought. What are they doing there? In the visible world anything endowed with life exists for some purpose or other; what their ideas were meant for before having to be reproduced in the visible world seems to be something beyond human understanding, and a philosopher going beyond human understanding is evidently on the wrong track.

It is possible, however, that Plato's world of thought, peopled by ideas before the visible world came into existence, may have had for him a definite meaning. Who is, in the Timaeus, that maker of the universe, whose name is not easily found and cannot be communicated to the public at large? In Plato's letter to Hermias he is evidently that supreme power and

father of the leader of the world who is named together with the latter, and who is therefore superior to that soul of the universe on which, in the Laws, its motion depends? How if he were that idea of what is good which in the Republic gives the light by which the mental eye can see the world of thought? If so, the purpose for which the universe has been made of existing matter, and endowed with life and with gods and other living beings to people it, must have been to Plato's mind that of reproducing that which is good in a visible world, and the ideas may be taken to have existed in the mind of the highest deity as models for that world. It would be rash, however, to see anything else in this than a possible explanation of what is not quite clear in the conclusions Plato had arrived at in his later years, and the indication, in the Laws, of the existence of a soul opposed to intellect must remain unexplained for want of other references to the subject. The only thing which, in connection with all this, is quite evident, is that the virtual monotheism contained in the idea of supreme goodness, as such, being the maker of the universe could not have been openly avowed by him.

Plato makes use of the doctrine of learning being remembering for various purposes, but neither the conversation between Socrates and Meno's slave about the Pythagoric theorem, nor the passage of the Phaedo in which Socrates attempts to prove pre-existence of the soul by representing the power of abstraction met with in human thought as nothing else than an effect of memory, is such as to make any very deep impression on the minds of men in the present century, although Meno was fully convinced by the former, and the, men who visited Socrates in gaol by the latter. Socrates would seem to have been a thorough believer in it, and so may have been Pythagoras, whose idea of the transmigration of souls was closely connected with it. For Plato the dogma must have been very attractive, since it could serve as a weapon against those who might be tempted to consider his teachings as mainly founded on speculation, and he could not

have written the speech made by Socrates in the Phaedrus, had he not likewise believed in it. But by thus making the philosopher's mind visit the world of thought as being no stranger to it, he was compelled to represent the soul as not born together with the body it animates, and as being only mechanically joined to it, by a process nowhere described except in the strange story told, in the Republic, of Er's vision. In the Phaedrus the existence and fate of the souls are dealt with in a manner most agreeably affecting the reader's mind, the souls, when leaving the bodies in a comparatively pure state, being represented as enjoying a happy existence in the celestial regions, without being altogether sure that they may not have to return to the earth, and therefore—although this is not expressly stated—not merely blessed with a beatific vision requiring on their part no exertion whatever. But then there is the idea of punishment after death, by no means uncommon in Greece, which is taken advantage of in the Gorgias—for in the Phaedo the popular ideas would appear to be given without any particular object, —and afterwards in the Republic, to impress disbelievers in justice and other virtues with a salutary fear of what is to come when they persist in the errors of their ways. In the Laws too, this idea is by no means abandoned, whereas already in the Banquet the idea of future life for the good is becoming somewhat hazy.

In the Timaeus another doctrine is taught. There the human soul is divided, as in the Phaedrus the souls of gods and men are, into three parts; but the two represented in the older dialogue by the horses are in the Timaeus mortal, intellect alone being possessed of such immortality as is met with in the visible world. This immortality might have been such as is indicated in the Philebus, and as is compatible with Diotima's doctrine, the soul's intellect being absorbed in the intellect ruling the world; but in the Timaeus the transmigration of souls is adhered to, even fishes becoming receptacles of them. It has been observed already how Plato,

in Er's vision, mixes up a doctrine of destiny, otherwise hardly mentioned by him, with an altogether novel story about souls selecting their own lives; but in the Timaeus, where parts of the souls are mortal, it would appear as if souls are doomed to inhabit the bodies of lower animals, in consequence of the weakness of their intellectual and immortal factors. All this inconsistency might have been avoided had Plato, like Socrates, kept to mankind instead of attempting to set up a theory about the universe. But by doing so he simply yielded to the influence exercised on him by the times he lived in; times which soon after his death would see science get the better of idealistic thought.

For all that both Plato's approach to monotheism and perhaps to the doctrine of the world being ruled by supreme goodness, and his ideas about the souls' immortality as they were when he wrote the Phaedrus, had a grand future before them; but how was that future to come? Not through philosophy but through religion. Philosophy cannot create a new spirit and faith in new ideas among the human race; but religion—and in times like Plato's one may say only revealed religion—can. In stating this, no opinion is given about the character of any religion as seen at its first appearance on earth. All religion is based either on popular belief having its origin in times unknown to the historian, or on professed revelation. The religion of the ancient Greeks was of the former kind, for although Homer must have given to the Olympic gods the character they retained, and Hesiod got up a theogony generally believed in and followed, they were never considered to be anything else than poets. When the Christian religion is called a revealed one, it need not be taken for granted that one calling it so is either guided by historical research after the origin of Christianity, or by that personal experience known to many holding the Christian faith. But when ideas started by what professes to be a revelation become rooted in the people's minds and, having become so by satisfying existing mental cravings, conquer the

world, then the religion which thus becomes a ruling power, must from a historical point of view be held to have a full claim to be called revealed.

Still philosophy, however unequal to the task of accomplishing that which lies within the province of religion, can effect a great deal by its influence on minds open, through circumstances or through natural gifts, to ideas which can never lay hold of the masses. Plato's thoroughly aristocratic mind was fully alive to this. The access to the world of thought was reserved, in his opinion, to the happy few both endowed with a disposition to enter it and generally talented; taking their work seriously and not prevented from doing so by the allurements of what is found in other spheres of action. They are the real brain-power and the natural rulers of any state, though public opinion may refuse to admit this. This view was never abandoned by Plato even while sketching, in the Laws, a state where all citizens have to take part in political affairs, and where tradesmen are to belong to a subject race. And here, to some extent, his views agree with those of Callicles in the Gorgias, inasmuch as in the latter's first speech too the palm is given to the few who are too highly gifted to rank with the common herd. But there is, of course, a difference too, and a very great one, and this is the point at which Plato breaks with the traditions of Grecian sentiment.

The gods, in ancient Greece, are happy; mortals are condemned to misery; but where is the happiness of the gods seen, and where the nearest approach by mortals to that happiness? At the convivial table, where on Mount Olympus Hephaestus causes "inextinguishable mirth" when acting as cup-bearer to the gods, and where, in his palace, Alcinous is "drinking wine like a god." What, after health, beauty and wealth obtained without fraud, was the greatest boon man could wish for—to be young with his friends,—was enjoyed for ever by the gods, whereas man was possessed of it only during a few years. A life of joy was the Greek's wish; no longing for unseen and unknown happiness existed in his mind, but

only regret that such a life could not last for more than a few years. This view of life had its dark as well as its bright side; but the sensuality and recklessness it might beget were outweighed by its splendid results, seen both in the history of Greece and in her literature and art. And now, how was such a life to be had? By what Callicles calls πλεονεξία, a larger share in the good things of this life than could be had by all, and one which even those worthy of it by their pre-eminence to the common herd of mankind could not obtain, unless the rules preventing their being better off than others were dispensed with. This was the object aimed at by men like Alcibiades, but the policy he followed, as Pericles had done before him, was to secure similar privileges to Athens above other states, and thus to carry into effect in her favour the ideas advocated by Callicles. Plato is found to disapprove of such privileges, although maintaining slavery, and to substitute for them, not indeed the socialism which was reserved for our days, but a rule of life fixed by law, calculated to crush all independent spirit in individuals, and—although this certainly was not his object—sure to banish all joy from human life. Many a reader of the Phaedrus, the Republic and the Laws will feel shocked at the manner in which Greek poetry is dealt with by Plato, though himself endowed with a truly poetical mind; but Plato certainly cannot be blamed for keeping Homer and the lyrics, tragic as well as comic poetry out of his ideal states, for they would, when admitted, soon have revolutionised them.

Alcibiades had left the scene of his earthly labours before Plato entered upon his philosophical career, and for a man like him there was no longer room at Athens. The grand scheme ascribed to him in the dialogue bearing his name—the conquest of Asia by the Greek nation—was resumed by others; but the result of its execution was such that it may be doubted whether its main promoter in the literary world, Isocrates, showed himself, when recommending it to Philippus, a better friend to Greece than Plato, who never says a word

in favour of it, though insisting on the difference between Greeks and barbarians in a manner which, in our days, would horrify Exeter Hall. But there were men who, without having objects in view like those aimed at by Alcibiades, and likewise without being in the position of the men extolled by Callicles as tearing asunder the fetters of law, knew the meaning of individualism and stood up for it. Among them were Cynics like Antisthenes and Diogenes, but however high an opinion Alexander the Great may have held about the latter, they certainly, when looking for personal independence in a quasi-asceticism which did not prevent their gratifying the vilest desires in the vilest manner, did not represent the true feelings of the noble nation they belonged, or pretended to belong, to. But how different a character was Aristippus of Cyrene! He was not placed in a position similar to that of Alcibiades; he could not hope to be master of Greece and of Asia; his writings are no longer extant; in fact, we know nothing about him except what is found in a few scraps of information met with in Xenophon and other writers. But the well-known verse of Horace which states him to have taught man to be master of, not ruled by, circumstances is sufficient to show what he was worth, and that his longing for independence, seen in his unwillingness to be a citizen of any Grecian state, marks him as the true apostle of an individualism which, however much it may have been disfigured by Epicurus and those professing to be his followers in ancient and modern times, will never lose its hold on mankind.

There is nothing strange in the fact that Aristippus, as far as his views are known, did not indulge in theories about continued existence of the human individual after death, as Socrates and Plato did; for although the views held by the latter two were not altogether at variance with current belief, this belief was, among men of culture, anything but general. Epicurus, the man who gave his name to the school of which Aristippus is stated, by Horace, to have been the real founder, is even praised by Rome's great didactic poet for his relieving

mankind of an abject fear of evils to be suffered after death; and his denial of an immortality which Socrates looked forward to when cheerfully meeting death, whereas Plato values it as a means to assist in enforcing law, is easily explained by his making the study of nature one of the main objects of his school. But the individualism advocated by Aristippus does not in itself imply disbelief in continued existence. When we find him partaking of the joys of life when they came in his way, and showing his contempt of them when they were not to be had, it would almost seem as if his view of life was incomplete without a hope of future happiness, such as Virgil would seem to have indulged in, in spite of his taking Lucretius as his model and guide, and as was found in Sulla, who though by no means an Epicurean is in the world's history the great hero of individualism. But Aristippus was too much impressed with the truth of the advice on the gate of the temple at Delphi, and therefore too well aware of the necessity of minding his own business, to look forward for himself to a career as before him Alcibiades and after him Sulla followed; and had he lived at a time when a statesman of real genius had brought about, under his own rule, a lasting peace like that in Horace's time, he would have been, to the ruler, a friend and perhaps a useful ally.

In our days the men who have been led to abandon the faith in continued existence which their fathers held, are generally found to favour an idealism altogether at variance with individualistic tendencies. But say that Plato's Callicles had shared the views given, on future existence, in Plato's Phaedrus. Would he not, in his debate with Socrates, have been on vantage ground? Not all pleasures—and this is fully admitted in the Philebus—are those longed for by the soul's wild and restive horse; the spirited but manageable horse and the charioteer have theirs, and will any one believe that a man like Alcibiades was a mere sensualist, and did not aim at an individual development raising him above the rest of mankind? Callicles, when asked by Socrates the difference

between enjoyments better and worse, might, when being at one with his interlocutor about future existence, have replied that the better ones are those on which man's higher instincts feast, and which are conducive to a development of the human individual tending, in the case of men born to rule, to entitle them to disregard the notions about justice current among the public. But what becomes of this individual, after having been allowed in Plato's Phaedrus the full rights he can lay claim to, in Plato's Laws? A mere pawn, moved by an invisible hand for an unknown purpose. Plato, by what he says in his last work about man's subordination to the aims of a higher power, may touch chords in the human heart rendering a grateful sound, but certainly does not express the true sentiments of the nation which counted Homer and Pindar, Achilles the mythical and Alcibiades the historical hero among her sons.

The end of this essay has been reached, its object not being to give an idea of Plato's philosophy as part of the history of human thought, but simply a sketch of him and the substance of his works, in connection with the times he lived in. Neither in writing such an essay nor, perhaps, in reading it can the fact be ignored that even in our days, when on the one hand such unheard-of progress is made in the knowledge of nature and the art of making it subservient to the material well-being of man as to cause almost everything else to be lost sight of, and on the other hand the masses are allowed to rule the world in a fashion, it may be of some use to study ancient Greece and her heroes in the field of politics and literature, especially in those parts of the world where another and better condition of affairs can still be brought about than that now witnessed in the old seats of European civilisation.

THE END.