CHAPTER I

PLATO

I. THE CONTEXT OF PLATO

IF you look at a map of Europe you will observe that Greece is a skeleton-like hand stretching its crooked fingers out into the Mediterranean Sea. South of it lies the great island of Crete, from which those grasping fingers captured, in the second millennium before Christ, the beginnings of civilization and culture. To the east, across the Ægean Sea, lies Asia Minor, quiet and apathetic now, but throbbing, in pre-Platonic days, with industry, commerce and speculation. To the west, across the Ionian, Italy stands, like a leaning tower in the sea, and Sicily and Spain, each in those days with thriving Greek colonies; and at the end, the "Pillars of Hercules" (which we call Gibraltar), that sombre portal through which not many an ancient mariner dared to pass. And on the north those still untamed and half-barbaric regions, then named Thessaly and Epirus and Macedonia, from which or through which the vigorous bands had come which fathered the geniuses of Homeric and Periclean Greece.

Look again at the map, and you see countless indentations of coast and elevations of land; everywhere gulfs and bays and the intrusive sea; and all the earth tumbled and tossed into mountains and hills. Greece was broken into isolated fragments by these natural barriers of sea and soil; travel and communication were far more difficult and dangerous then than now; every valley therefore developed its own self-sufficient economic life, its own sovereign government, its own institutions and dialect and religion and culture. In each case one

or two cities, and around them, stretching up the mountain-slopes, an agricultural hinterland: such were the "city-states" of Eubœa, and Locris, and Ætolia, and Phocis, and Bœotia, and Achæa, and Argolis, and Elis, and Arcadia, and Messenia, and Laconia—with its Sparta, and Attica—with its Athens.

Look at the map a last time, and observe the position of Athens: it is the farthest east of the larger cities of Greece. It was favorably placed to be the door through which the Greeks passed out to the busy cities of Asia Minor, and through which those elder cities sent their luxuries and their culture to adolescent Greece. It had an admirable port, Piræus, where countless vessels might find a haven from the rough waters of the sea. And it had a great maritime fleet.

In 490–470 B. C. Sparta and Athens, forgetting their jealousies and joining their forces, fought off the effort of the Persians under Darius and Xerxes to turn Greece into a colony of an Asiatic empire. In this struggle of youthful Europe against the senile East, Sparta provided the army and Athens the navy. The war over, Sparta demobilized her troops, and suffered the economic disturbances natural to that process; while Athens turned her navy into a merchant fleet, and became one of the greatest trading cities of the ancient world. Sparta relapsed into agricultural seclusion and stagnation, while Athens became a busy mart and port, the meeting place of many races of men and of diverse cults and customs, whose contact and rivalry begot comparison, analysis and thought.

Traditions and dogmas rub one another down to a minimum in such centers of varied intercourse; where there are a thousand faiths we are apt to become sceptical of them all. Probably the traders were the first sceptics; they had seen too much to believe too much; and the general disposition of merchants to classify all men as either fools or knaves inclined them to question every creed. Gradually, too, they were developing science; mathematics grew with the increasing complexity of exchange, astronomy with the increasing audacity of navigation.

The growth of wealth brought the leisure and security which are the prerequisite of research and speculation; men now asked the stars not only for guidance on the seas but as well for an answer to the riddles of the universe; the first Greek philosophers were astronomers. "Proud of their achievements," says Aristotle,[1] "men pushed farther afield after the Persian wars; they took all knowledge for their province, and sought ever wider studies." Men grew bold enough to attempt natural explanations of processes and events before attributed to supernatural agencies and powers; magic and ritual slowly gave way to science and control; and philosophy began.

At first this philosophy was physical; it looked out upon the material world and asked what was the final and irreducible constituent of things. The natural termination of this line of thought was the materialism of Democritus (460–360 B. C.)—"in reality there is nothing but atoms and space." This was one of the main streams of Greek speculation; it passed underground for a time in Plato's day, but emerged in Epicurus (342–270), and became a torrent of eloquence in Lucretius (98–55 B. C.). But the most characteristic and fertile developments of Greek philosophy took form with the Sophists, travelling teachers of wisdom, who looked within upon their own thought and nature, rather than out upon the world of things. They were all clever men (Gorgias and Hippias, for example), and many of them were profound (Protagoras, Prodicus); there is hardly a problem or a solution in our current philosophy of mind and conduct which they did not realize and discuss. They asked questions about anything; they stood unafraid in the presence of religious or political taboos; and boldly subpoenaed every creed and institution to appear before the judgment-seat of reason. In politics they divided into two schools. One, like Rousseau, argued that nature is good, and civilization bad; that by nature all men are equal, becoming unequal only by class-made institutions; and that law is an invention of the strong to chain and

[1] *Politics*, 1341.

rule the weak. Another school, like Nietzsche, claimed that nature is beyond good and evil; that by nature all men are unequal; that morality is an invention of the weak to limit and deter the strong; that power is the supreme virtue and the supreme desire of man; and that of all forms of government the wisest and most natural is aristocracy.

No doubt this attack on democracy reflected the rise of a wealthy minority at Athens which called itself the Oligarchical Party, and denounced democracy as an incompetent sham. In a sense there was not much democracy to denounce; for of the 400,000 inhabitants of Athens 250,000 were slaves, without political rights of any kind; and of the 150,000 freemen or citizens only a small number presented themselves at the Ecclesia, or general assembly, where the policies of the state were discussed and determined. Yet what democracy they had was as thorough as never since; the general assembly was the supreme power; and the highest official body, the Dikasteria, or supreme court, consisted of over a thousand members (to make bribery expensive), selected by alphabetical rote from the roll of all the citizens. No institution could have been more democratic, nor, said its opponents, more absurd.

During the great generation-long Peloponnesian war (430-400 B. C.), in which the military power of Sparta fought and at last defeated the naval power of Athens, the Athenian oligarchic party, led by Critias, advocated the abandonment of democracy on the score of its inefficiency in war, and secretly lauded the aristocratic government of Sparta. Many of the oligarchic leaders were exiled; but when at last Athens surrendered, one of the peace conditions imposed by Sparta was the recall of these exiled aristocrats. They had hardly returned when, with Critias at their head, they declared a rich man's revolution against the "democratic" party that had ruled during the disastrous war. The revolution failed, and Critias was killed on the field of battle.

Now Critias was a pupil of Socrates, and an uncle of Plato

II. SOCRATES

If we may judge from the bust that has come down to us as part of the ruins of ancient sculpture, Socrates was as far from being handsome as even a philosopher can be. A bald head, a great round face, deep-set staring eyes, a broad and flowery nose that gave vivid testimony to many a Symposium —it was rather the head of a porter than that of the most famous of philosophers. But if we look again we see, through the crudity of the stone, something of that human kindliness and unassuming simplicity which made this homely thinker a teacher beloved of the finest youths in Athens. We know so little about him, and yet we know him so much more intimately than the aristocratic Plato or the reserved and scholarly Aristotle. Across two thousand three hundred years we can yet see his ungainly figure, clad always in the same rumpled tunic, walking leisurely through the agora, undisturbed by the bedlam of politics, buttonholing his prey, gathering the young and the learned about him, luring them into some shady nook of the temple porticos, and asking them to define their terms.

They were a motley crowd, these youths who flocked about him and helped him to create European philosophy. There were rich young men like Plato and Alcibiades, who relished his satirical analysis of Athenian democracy; there were socialists like Antisthenes, who liked the master's careless poverty, and made a religion of it; there was even an anarchist or two among them, like Aristippus, who aspired to a world in which there would be neither masters nor slaves, and all would be as worrilessly free as Socrates. All the problems that agitate human society to-day, and provide the material of youth's endless debate, agitated as well that little band of thinkers and talkers, who felt, with their teacher, that life without discourse would be unworthy of a man. Every school of social thought had there its representative, and perhaps its origin.

How the master lived hardly anybody knew. He never

worked, and he took no thought of the morrow. He ate when his disciples asked him to honor their tables; they must have liked his company, for he gave every indication of physiological prosperity. He was not so welcome at home, for he neglected his wife and children; and from Xanthippe's point of view he was a good-for-nothing idler who brought to his family more notoriety than bread. Xanthippe liked to talk almost as much as Socrates did; and they seem to have had some dialogues which Plato failed to record. Yet she, too, loved him, and could not contentedly see him die even after three-score years and ten.

Why did his pupils reverence him so? Perhaps because he was a man as well as a philosopher: he had at great risk saved the life of Alcibiades in battle; and he could drink like a gentleman—without fear and without excess. But no doubt they liked best in him the modesty of his wisdom: he did not claim to have wisdom, but only to seek it lovingly; he was wisdom's *amateur*, not its professional. It was said that the oracle at Delphi, with unusual good sense, had pronounced him the wisest of the Greeks; and he had interpreted this as an approval of the agnosticism which was the starting-point of his philosophy—"One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing." Philosophy begins when one learns to doubt—particularly to doubt one's cherished beliefs, one's dogmas and one's axioms. Who knows how these cherished beliefs became certainties with us, and whether some secret wish did not furtively beget them, clothing desire in the dress of thought? There is no real philosophy until the mind turns round and examines itself. *Gnothi seauton*, said Socrates: Know thyself.

There had been philosophers before him, of course: strong men like Thales and Heraclitus, subtle men like Parmenides and Zeno of Elea, seers like Pythagoras and Empedocles; but for the most part they had been physical philosophers; they had sought for the *physis* or nature of external things, the laws and constituents of the material and measurable world.

That is very good, said Socrates; but there is an infinitely worthier subject for philosophers than all these trees and stones, and even all those stars; there is the mind of man. What is man, and what can he become?

So he went about prying into the human soul, uncovering assumptions and questioning certainties. If men discoursed too readily of justice, he asked them, quietly, *tò tí?*—what is it? What do you mean by these abstract words with which you so easily settle the problems of life and death? What do you mean by honor, virtue, morality, patriotism? What do you mean by your*self?* It was with such moral and psychological questions that Socrates loved to deal. Some who suffered from this "Socratic method," this demand for accurate definitions, and clear thinking, and exact analysis, objected that he asked more than he answered, and left men's minds more confused than before. Nevertheless he bequeathed to philosophy two very definite answers to two of our most difficult problems—What is the meaning of virtue? and What is the best state?

No topics could have been more vital than these to the young Athenians of that generation. The Sophists had destroyed the faith these youths had once had in the gods and goddesses of Olympus, and in the moral code that had taken its sanction so largely from the fear men had for these ubiquitous and innumerable deities; apparently there was no reason now why a man should not do as he pleased, so long as he remained within the law. A disintegrating individualism had weakened the Athenian character, and left the city a prey at last to the sternly-nurtured Spartans. And as for the state, what could have been more ridiculous than this mob-led, passion-ridden democracy, this government by a debating-society, this precipitate selection and dismissal and execution of generals, this unchoice choice of simple farmers and tradesmen, in alphabetical rotation, as members of the supreme court of the land? How could a new and natural morality be developed in Athens, and how could the state be saved?

It was his reply to these questions that gave Socrates death and immortality. The older citizens would have honored him had he tried to restore the ancient polytheistic faith; if he had led his band of emancipated souls to the temples and the sacred groves, and bade them sacrifice again to the gods of their fathers. But he felt that that was a hopeless and suicidal policy, a progress backward, into and not "over the tombs." He had his own religious faith: he believed in one God, and hoped in his modest way that death would not quite destroy him;[1] but he knew that a lasting moral code could not be based upon so uncertain a theology. If one could build a system of morality absolutely independent of religious doctrine, as valid for the atheist as for the pietist, then theologies might come and go without loosening the moral cement that makes of wilful individuals the peaceful citizens of a community.

If, for example, *good* meant *intelligent*, and *virtue* meant *wisdom;* if men could be taught to see clearly their real interests, to see afar the distant results of their deeds, to criticize and coördinate their desires out of a self-cancelling chaos into a purposive and creative harmony—this, perhaps, would provide for the educated and sophisticated man the morality which in the unlettered relies on reiterated precepts and external control. Perhaps all sin is error, partial vision, foolishness? The intelligent man may have the same violent and unsocial impulses as the ignorant man, but surely he will control them better, and slip less often into imitation of the beast. And in an intelligently administered society—one that returned to the individual, in widened powers, more than it took from him in restricted liberty—the advantage of every man would lie in social and loyal conduct, and only clear sight would be needed to ensure peace and order and good will.

But if the government itself is a chaos and an absurdity, if it rules without helping, and commands without leading,—

[1] Cf. Voltaire's story of the two Athenians conversing about Socrates: "That is the atheist who says there is only one God." *Philosophical Dictionary*, art. "Socrates."

how can we persuade the individual, in such a state, to obey the laws and confine his self-seeking within the circle of the total good? No wonder an Alcibiades turns against a state that distrusts ability, and reverences number more than knowledge. No wonder there is chaos where there is no thought, and the crowd decides in haste and ignorance, to repent at leisure and in desolation. Is it not a base superstition that mere numbers will give wisdom? On the contrary is it not universally seen that men in crowds are more foolish and more violent and more cruel than men separate and alone? Is it not shameful that men should be ruled by orators, who "go ringing on in long harangues, like brazen pots which, when struck, continue to sound till a hand is put upon them"? [1] Surely the management of a state is a matter for which men cannot be too intelligent, a matter that needs the unhindered thought of the finest minds. How can a society be saved, or be strong, except it be led by its wisest men?

Imagine the reaction of the popular party at Athens to this aristocratic gospel at a time when war seemed to require the silencing of all criticism, and when the wealthy and lettered minority were plotting a revolution. Consider the feelings of Anytus, the democratic leader whose son had become a pupil of Socrates, and had then turned against the gods of his father, and laughed in his father's face. Had not Aristophanes predicted precisely such a result from this specious replacement of the old virtues by unsocial intelligence? [2]

Then the revolution came, and men fought for it and

[1] Plato's *Protagoras*, sect. 329.

[2] In *The Clouds* (423 B. C.) Aristophanes had made great fun of Socrates and his "Thinking-shop," where one learned the art of proving one's self right, however wrong. Phidippides beats his father on the ground that his father used to beat him, and every debt should be repaid. The satire seems to have been good-natured enough: we find Aristophanes frequently in the company of Socrates; they agreed in their scorn of democracy; and Plato recommended *The Clouds* to Dionysius. As the play was brought out twenty-four years before the trial of Socrates, it could have had no great share in bringing the tragic dénouement of the philosopher's life.

against, bitterly and to the death. When the democracy won, the fate of Socrates was decided: he was the intellectual leader of the revolting party, however pacific he might himself have been; he was the source of the hated aristocratic philosophy; he was the corrupter of youths drunk with debate. It would be better, said Anytus and Meletus, that Socrates should die.

The rest of the story all the world knows, for Plato wrote it down in prose more beautiful than poetry. We are privileged to read for ourselves that simple and courageous (if not legendary) "apology," or defence, in which the first martyr of philosophy proclaimed the rights and necessity of free thought, upheld his value to the state, and refused to beg for mercy from the crowd whom he had always contemned. They had the power to pardon him; he disdained to make the appeal. It was a singular confirmation of his theories, that the judges should wish to let him go, while the angry crowd voted for his death. Had he not denied the gods? Woe to him who teaches men faster than they can learn.

So they decreed that he should drink the hemlock. His friends came to his prison and offered him an easy escape; they had bribed all the officials who stood between him and liberty. He refused. He was seventy years old now (399 B. C.); perhaps he thought it was time for him to die, and that he could never again die so usefully. "Be of good cheer," he told his sorrowing friends, "and say that you are burying my body only." "When he had spoken these words," says Plato, in one of the great passages of the world's literature, [1]

> he arose and went into the bath-chamber with Crito, who bade us wait; and we waited, talking and thinking of . . . the greatness of our sorrow; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. . . . Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he

[1] *Phaedo*, sections 116-118, tr. Jowett.

came out, he sat down with us again, . . . but not much was said. Soon the jailer . . . entered and stood by him, saying: "To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men, who rage and swear at me when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are the guilty cause. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be; you know my errand." Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said: "I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid." Then turning to us, he said, "How charming the man is; since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and now see how generously he sorrows for me. But we must do as he says, Crito; let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared; if not, let the attendant prepare some."

"Yet," said Crito, "the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and many a one has taken the draught late; and after the announcement has been made to him he has eaten and drunk, and indulged in sensual delights; do not hasten then, there is still time."

Socrates said: "Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in doing thus, for they think that they will gain by the delay; but I am right in not doing thus, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should be sparing and saving a life which is already gone; I could only laugh at myself for this. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me."

Crito, when he heard this, made a sign to the servant; and the servant went in, and remained for some time, and then returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: "You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed." The man answered: "You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act." At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or

change of color or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, as his manner was, took the cup and said: "What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not?" The man answered: "We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough." "I understand," he said; "yet I may and must pray to the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world—may this then, which is my prayer, be granted to me." Then, holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank the poison.

And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept over myself; for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion. Nor was I the first, for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed; and at that moment Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out into a loud cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness: "What is this strange outcry?" he said. "I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet, then, and have patience." When we heard that, we were ashamed, and restrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to the directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard and asked him if he could feel; and he said, "No"; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And then Socrates felt them himself, and said, "When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end." He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face (for he had covered himself up) and said,—they were his last words,—"Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?" "The debt shall be paid," said Crito; "is there

anything else?" There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendant uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, the justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.

III. THE PREPARATION OF PLATO

Plato's meeting with Socrates had been a turning point in his life. He had been brought up in comfort, and perhaps in wealth; he was a handsome and vigorous youth—called Plato, it is said, because of the breadth of his shoulders; he had excelled as a soldier, and had twice won prizes at the Isthmian games. Philosophers are not apt to develop out of such an adolescence. But Plato's subtle soul had found a new joy in the "dialectic" game of Socrates; it was a delight to behold the master deflating dogmas and puncturing presumptions with the sharp point of his questions; Plato entered into this sport as he had in a coarser kind of wrestling; and under the guidance of the old "gad-fly" (as Socrates called himself) he passed from mere debate to careful analysis and fruitful discussion. He became a very passionate lover of wisdom, and of his teacher. "I thank God," he used to say, "that I was born Greek and not barbarian, freeman and not slave, man and not woman; but above all, that I was born in the age of Socrates."

He was twenty-eight when the master died; and this tragic end of a quiet life left its mark on every phase of the pupil's thought. It filled him with such a scorn of democracy, such a hatred of the mob, as even his aristocratic lineage and breeding had hardly engendered in him; it led him to a Catonic resolve that democracy must be destroyed, to be replaced by the rule of the wisest and the best. It became the absorbing problem of his life to find a method whereby the wisest and the best might be discovered, and then enabled and persuaded to rule.

Meanwhile his efforts to save Socrates had marked him out

for suspicion by the democratic leaders; his friends urged that Athens was unsafe for him, that it was an admirably propitious moment for him to see the world. And so, in that year 399 B. C., he set out. Where he went we cannot for certain say; there is a merry war of the authorities for every turn of his route. He seems to have gone first to Egypt; and was somewhat shocked to hear from the priestly class which ruled that land, that Greece was an infant-state, without stabilizing traditions or profound culture, not yet therefore to be taken seriously by these sphinxly pundits of the Nile. But nothing so educates us as a shock; the memory of this learned caste, theocratically ruling a static agricultural people, remained alive in Plato's thought, and played its part in writing his Utopia. And then off he sailed to Sicily, and to Italy; there he joined for a time the school or sect which the great Pythagoras had founded; and once again his susceptible mind was marked with the memory of a small group of men set aside for scholarship and rule, living a plain life despite the possession of power. Twelve years he wandered, imbibing wisdom from every source, sitting at every shrine, tasting every creed. Some would have it that he went to Judea and was moulded for a while by the tradition of the almost socialistic prophets; and even that he found his way to the banks of the Ganges, and learned the mystic meditations of the Hindus. We do not know.

He returned to Athens in 387 B. C., a man of forty now, ripened to maturity by the variety of many peoples and the wisdom of many lands. He had lost a little of the hot enthusiasms of youth, but he had gained a perspective of thought in which every extreme was seen as a half-truth, and the many aspects of every problem blended into a distributive justice to every facet of the truth. He had knowledge, and he had art; for once the philosopher and the poet lived in one soul; and he created for himself a medium of expression in which both beauty and truth might find room and play—the dialogue. Never before, we may believe, had philosophy assumed

so brilliant a garb; and surely never since. Even in translation this style shines and sparkles and leaps and bubbles over. "Plato," says one of his lovers, Shelley, "exhibits the rare union of close and subtle logic with the Pythian enthusiasm of poetry, melted by the splendor and harmony of his periods into one irresistible stream of musical impressions, which hurry the persuasions onward as in a breathless career." [1] It was not for nothing that the young philosopher had begun as a dramatist.

The difficulty in understanding Plato lies precisely in this intoxicating mixture of philosophy and poetry, of science and art; we cannot always tell in which character of the dialogue the author speaks, nor in which form; whether he is literal or speaks in metaphor, whether he jests or is in earnest. His love of jest and irony and myth leaves us at times baffled; almost we could say of him that he did not teach except in parables. "Shall I, as an older person, speak to you, as younger men, in apologue or myth?" asks his Protagoras.[2] These dialogues, we are told, were written by Plato for the general reading public of his day: by their conversational method, their lively war of *pros* and *cons*, and their gradual development and frequent repetition of every important argument, they were explicitly adapted (obscure though they may seem to us now) to the understanding of the man who must taste philosophy as an occasional luxury, and who is compelled by the brevity of life to read as he who runs may read. Therefore we must be prepared to find in these dialogues much that is playful and metaphorical; much that is unintelligible except to scholars learned in the social and literary minutiae of Plato's time; much that today will seem irrelevant and fanciful, but might well have served as the very sauce and flavor by which a heavy dish of thought was made digestible for minds unused to philosophic fare.

Let us confess, too, that Plato has in sufficient abundance

[1] Quoted by Barker, *Greek Political Theory*, London, 1918, p. 5.
[2] *Protagoras*, 320.

the qualities which he condemns. He inveighs against poets and their myths, and proceeds to add one to the number of poets and hundreds to the number of myths. He complains of the priests (who go about preaching hell and offering redemption from it for a consideration—cf. *The Republic*, 364), but he himself is a priest, a theologian, a preacher, a supermoralist, a Savonarola denouncing art and inviting vanities to the fire. He acknowledges, Shakespeare-like, that "comparisons are slippery" (*Sophist*, 231), but he slips out of one into another and another and another; he condemns the Sophists as phrase-mongering disputants, but he himself is not above chopping logic like a sophomore. Faguet parodies him: "The whole is greater than the part?—Surely.—And the part is less than the whole?—Yes.—. . . Therefore, clearly, philosophers should rule the state?—What is that?—It is evident; let us go over it again." [1]

But this is the worst that we can say of him; and after it is said, the *Dialogues* remain one of the priceless treasures of the world.[2] The best of them, *The Republic*, is a complete treatise in itself, Plato reduced to a book; here we shall find his metaphysics, his theology, his ethics, his psychology, his pedagogy, his politics, his theory of art. Here we shall find problems reeking with modernity and contemporary savor: communism and socialism, feminism and birth-control and eugenics, Nietzschean problems of morality and aristocracy, Rousseauian problems of return to nature and libertarian education, Bergsonian *élan vital* and Freudian psychoanalysis —everything is here. It is a feast for the *élite*, served by an unstinting host. "Plato is philosophy, and philosophy Plato," says Emerson; and awards to *The Republic* the words

[1] *Pour qu'on lise Platon*, Paris, 1905, p. 4.

[2] The most important of the dialogues are: *The Apology of Socrates*, *Crito*, *Phædo*, *The Symposium*, *Phædrus*, *Gorgias*, *Parmenides*, and *The Statesman*. The most important parts of *The Republic* (references are to marginally-numbered sections, not to pages) are 327–32, 336–77, 384–5, 392–426, 433–5, 441–76, 481–3, 512–20, 572–94. The best edition is Jowett's; the most convenient is in the Everyman series. References are to *The Republic* unless otherwise stated.

of Omar about the *Koran:* "Burn the libraries, for their value is in this book." [1]

Let us study *The Republic.*

IV. THE ETHICAL PROBLEM

The discussion takes place in the house of Cephalus, a wealthy aristocrat. In the group are Glaucon and Adeimantus, brothers of Plato; and Thrasymachus, a gruff and excitable Sophist. Socrates, who serves as the mouthpiece of Plato in the dialogue, asks Cephalus:

"What do you consider to be the greatest blessing which you have reaped from wealth?"

Cephalus answers that wealth is a blessing to him chiefly because it enables him to be generous and honest and just. Socrates, after his sly fashion, asks him just what he means by justice; and therewith lets loose the dogs of philosophic war. For nothing is so difficult as definition, nor anything so severe a test and exercise of mental clarity and skill. Socrates finds it a simple matter to destroy one after another the definitions offered him; until at last Thrasymachus, less patient than the rest, breaks out "with a roar":

"What folly has possessed you, Socrates? And why do you others all drop down at one another's feet in this silly way? I say that if you want to know what justice is, you should answer and not ask, and shouldn't pride yourself on refuting others. . . . For there are many who can ask but cannot answer" (*336*).

Socrates is not frightened; he continues to ask rather than answer; and after a minute of parry and thrust he provokes the unwary Thrasymachus to commit himself to a definition:

> "Listen, then," says the angry Sophist, "I proclaim that might is right, and justice is the interest of the stronger. . . . The different forms of government make laws, democratic, aristocratic, or autocratic, with a view to their re-

[1] *Representative Men,* p. 41.

spective interests; and these laws, so made by them to serve their interests, they deliver to their subjects as 'justice,' and punish as 'unjust' anyone who transgresses them. . . . I am speaking of injustice on a large scale; and my meaning will be most clearly seen in autocracy, which by fraud and force takes away the property of others, not retail but wholesale. Now when a man has taken away the money of the citizens and made slaves of them, then, instead of swindler and thief he is called happy and blessed by all. For injustice is censured because those who censure it are afraid of suffering, and not from any scruple they might have of doing injustice themselves" (338–44).

This, of course, is the doctrine which our own day more or less correctly associates with the name of Nietzsche. "Verily I laughed many a time over the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had lame paws." [1] Stirner expressed the idea briefly when he said that "a handful of might is better than a bagful of right." Perhaps nowhere in the history of philosophy is the doctrine better formulated than by Plato himself in another dialogue, *Gorgias*, (483 f), where the Sophist Callicles denounces morality as an invention of the weak to neutralize the strength of the strong.

They distribute praise and censure with a view to their own interests; they say that dishonesty is shameful and unjust—meaning by dishonesty the desire to have more than their neighbors; for knowing their own inferiority, they would be only too glad to have equality. . . . But if there were a man who had sufficient force (enter the Superman), he would shake off and break through and escape from all this; he would trample under foot all our formulas and spells and charms, and all our laws, that sin against nature. . . . He who would truly live ought to allow his desires to wax to the uttermost; but when they have grown to their greatest he should have courage and intelligence to minister to them, and to satisfy all his longings. And this I affirm to be natural justice and nobility. But the many cannot do this;

[1] *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, New York, 1906, p. 166.

> and therefore they blame such persons, because they are ashamed of their own inability, which they desire to conceal; and hence they call intemperance base. . . . They enslave the nobler natures, and they praise justice only because they are cowards.

This justice is a morality not for men but for foot-men (*oude gar andros all' andrapodou tinos*); it is a slave-morality, not a hero-morality; the real virtues of a man are courage (*andreia*) and intelligence (*phronesis*).[1]

Perhaps this hard "immoralism" reflects the development of imperialism in the foreign policy of Athens, and its ruthless treatment of weaker states.[2] "Your empire," said Pericles in the oration which Thucydides invents for him, "is based on your own strength rather than the good will of your subjects." And the same historian reports the Athenian envoys coercing Melos into joining Athens in the war against Sparta: "You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question for equals in power; the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must."[3] We have here the fundamental problem of ethics, the crux of the theory of moral conduct. What is justice?—shall we seek righteousness, or shall we seek power?—is it better to be good, or to be strong?

How does Socrates—i. e., Plato—meet the challenge of this theory? At first he does not meet it at all. He points out that justice is a relation among individuals, depending on social organization; and that in consequence it can be studied better as part of the structure of a community than as a quality of personal conduct. If, he suggests, we can picture a just state, we shall be in a better position to describe a just individual. Plato excuses himself for this digression on the score that in testing a man's vision we make him read first large type, then smaller; so, he argues, it is easier to analyze justice on a large scale than on the small scale of individual

[1] *Gorgias* 491; cf. Machiavelli's definition of *virtù* as intellect plus force.
[2] Barker, p. 73.
[3] *History of the Peloponnesian War*, v. 105.

behavior. But we need not be deceived: in truth the Master is patching two books together, and uses the argument as a seam. He wishes not only to discuss the problems of personal morality, but the problems of social and political reconstruction as well. He has a Utopia up his sleeve, and is resolved to produce it. It is easy to forgive him, for the digression forms the core and value of his book.

V. THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

Justice would be a simple matter, says Plato, if men were simple; an anarchist communism would suffice. For a moment he gives his imagination reign:

> First, then, let us consider what will be their way of life. . . . Will they not produce corn, and wine, and clothes, and shoes, and build houses for themselves? And when they are housed they will work in summer commonly stripped and barefoot, but in winter substantially clothed and shod. They will feed on barley and wheat, baking the wheat and kneading the flour, making noble puddings and loaves; these they will serve up on a mat of reed or clean leaves, themselves reclining the while upon beds of yew or myrtle boughs. And they and their children will feast, drinking of the wine which they have made, wearing garlands on their heads, and having the praises of the gods on their lips, living in sweet society, and having a care that their families do not exceed their means; for they will have an eye to poverty or war. . . . Of course they will have a relish—salt, and olives, and cheese, and onions, and cabbages or other country herbs which are fit for boiling; and we shall give them a dessert of figs, and pulse, and beans, and myrtle-berries, and beechnuts, which they will roast at the fire, drinking in moderation. And with such a diet they may be expected to live in peace to a good old age, and bequeath a similar life to their children after them (372).

Observe here the passing reference to the control of population (by infanticide, presumably), to vegetarianism, and to

a "return to nature," to the primitive simplicity which Hebrew legend pictures in the Garden of Eden. The whole has the sound of Diogenes the "Cynic," who, as the epithet implied, thought we should "turn and live with the animals, they are so placid and self-contained"; and for a moment we are likely to classify Plato with St. Simon and Fourier and William Morris and Tolstoi. But he is a little more sceptical than these men of kindly faith; he passes quietly on to the question, Why is it that such a simple paradise as he has described never comes?—why is it that these Utopias never arrive upon the map?

He answers, because of greed and luxury. Men are not content with a simple life: they are acquisitive, ambitious, competitive, and jealous; they soon tire of what they have, and pine for what they have not; and they seldom desire anything unless it belongs to others. The result is the encroachment of one group upon the territory of another, the rivalry of groups for the resources of the soil, and then war. Trade and finance develop, and bring new class-divisions. "Any ordinary city is in fact two cities, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich, each at war with the other; and in either division there are smaller ones—you would make a great mistake if you treated them as single states" (423). A mercantile bourgeoisie arises, whose members seek social position through wealth and conspicuous consumption: "they will spend large sums of money on their wives" (548). These changes in the distribution of wealth produce political changes: as the wealth of the merchant over-reaches that of the land-owner, aristocracy gives way to a plutocratic oligarchy—wealthy traders and bankers rule the state. Then statesmanship, which is the coördination of social forces and the adjustment of policy to growth, is replaced by politics, which is the strategy of party and the lust for the spoils of office.

Every form of government tends to perish by excess of its basic principle. Aristocracy ruins itself by limiting too narrowly the circle within which power is confined; oligarchy

ruins itself by the incautious scramble for immediate wealth. In either case the end is revolution. When revolution comes it may seem to arise from little causes and petty whims; but though it may spring from slight occasions it is the precipitate result of grave and accumulated wrongs; when a body is weakened by neglected ills, the merest exposure may bring serious disease (556). "Then democracy comes: the poor overcome their opponents, slaughtering some and banishing the rest; and give to the people an equal share of freedom and power" (557).

But even democracy ruins itself by excess—of democracy. Its basic principle is the equal right of all to hold office and determine public policy. This is at first glance a delightful arrangement; it becomes disastrous because the people are not properly equipped by education to select the best rulers and the wisest courses (588). "As to the people they have no understanding, and only repeat what their rulers are pleased to tell them" (*Protagoras*, 317); to get a doctrine accepted or rejected it is only necessary to have it praised or ridiculed in a popular play (a hit, no doubt, at Aristophanes, whose comedies attacked almost every new idea). Mob-rule is a rough sea for the ship of state to ride; every wind of oratory stirs up the waters and deflects the course. The upshot of such a democracy is tyranny or autocracy; the crowd so loves flattery, it is so "hungry for honey," that at last the wiliest and most unscrupulous flatterer, calling himself the "protector of the people" rises to supreme power (565). (Consider the history of Rome.)

The more Plato thinks of it, the more astounded he is at the folly of leaving to mob caprice and gullibility the selection of political officials—not to speak of leaving it to those shady and wealth-serving strategists who pull the oligarchic wires behind the democratic stage. Plato complains that whereas in simpler matters—like shoe-making—we think only a specially-trained person will serve our purpose, in politics

we presume that every one who knows how to get votes knows how to administer a city or a state. When we are ill we call for a trained physician, whose degree is a guarantee of specific preparation and technical competence—we do not ask for the handsomest physician, or the most eloquent one; well then, when the whole state is ill should we not look for the service and guidance of the wisest and the best? To devise a method of barring incompetence and knavery from public office, and of selecting and preparing the best to rule for the common good—that is the problem of political philosophy.

VI. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM

But behind these political problems lies the nature of man; to understand politics, we must, unfortunately, understand psychology. "Like man, like state" (575); "governments vary as the characters of men vary; . . . states are made out of the human natures which are in them" (544); the state is what it is because its citizens are what they are. Therefore we need not expect to have better states until we have better men; till then all changes will leave every essential thing unchanged. "How charming people are!—always doctoring, increasing and complicating their disorders, fancying they will be cured by some nostrum which somebody advises them to try, never getting better, but always growing worse. . . . Are they not as good as a play, trying their hand at legislation, and imagining that by reforms they will make an end to the dishonesties and rascalities of mankind—not knowing that in reality they are cutting away at the heads of a hydra?" (425).

Let us examine for a moment the human material with which political philosophy must deal.

Human behavior, says Plato, flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge. Desire, appetite, impulse, instinct—these are one; emotion, spirit, ambition, courage—

these are one; knowledge, thought, intellect, reason—these are one. Desire has its seat in the loins; it is a bursting reservoir of energy, fundamentally sexual. Emotion has its seat in the heart, in the flow and force of the blood; it is the organic resonance of experience and desire. Knowledge has its seat in the head; it is the eye of desire, and can become the pilot of the soul.

These powers and qualities are all in all men, but in divers degrees. Some men are but the embodiment of desire; restless and acquisitive souls, who are absorbed in material quests and quarrels, who burn with lust of luxuries and show, and who rate their gains always as naught compared with their ever-receding goals: these are the men who dominate and manipulate industry. But there are others who are temples of feeling and courage, who care not so much what they fight for, as for victory "in and for itself"; they are pugnacious rather than acquisitive; their pride is in power rather than in possession, their joy is on the battle-field rather than in the mart: these are the men who make the armies and navies of the world. And last are the few whose delight is in meditation and understanding; who yearn not for goods, nor for victory, but for knowledge; who leave both market and battle-field to lose themselves in the quiet clarity of secluded thought; whose will is a light rather than a fire, whose haven is not power but truth: these are the men of wisdom, who stand aside unused by the world.

Now just as effective individual action implies that desire, though warmed with emotion, is guided by knowledge; so in the perfect state the industrial forces would produce but they would not rule; the military forces would protect but they would not rule; the forces of knowledge and science and philosophy would be nourished and protected, and they would rule. Unguided by knowledge, the people are a multitude without order, like desires in disarray; the people need the guidance of philosophers as desires need the enlightenment of knowledge. "Ruin comes when the trader, whose heart is

lifted up by wealth, becomes ruler" (434); or when the general uses his army to establish a military dictatorship. The producer is at his best in the economic field, the warrior is at his best in battle; they are both at their worst in public office; and in their crude hands politics submerges statesmanship. For statesmanship is a science and an art; one must have lived for it and been long prepared. Only a philosopher-king is fit to guide a nation. "Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and wisdom and political leadership meet in the same man, . . . cities will never cease from ill, nor the human race" (473).

This is the key-stone of the arch of Plato's thought.

VII. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOLUTION

Well, then, what is to be done?

We must begin by "sending out into the country all the inhabitants of the city who are more than ten years old, and by taking possession of the children, who will thus be protected from the habits of their parents" (540). We cannot build Utopia with young people corrupted at every turn by the example of their elders. We must start, so far as we can, with a clean slate. It is quite possible that some enlightened ruler will empower us to make such a beginning with some part or colony of his realm. (One ruler did, as we shall see.) In any case we must give to every child, and from the outset, full equality of educational opportunity; there is no telling where the light of talent or genius will break out; we must seek it impartially everywhere, in every rank and race. The first turn on our road is universal education.

For the first ten years of life, education shall be predominantly physical; every school is to have a gymnasium and a playground; play and sport are to be the entire curriculum; and in this first decade such health will be stored up as will make all medicine unnecessary. "To require the help of

medicine because by lives of indolence and luxury men have filled themselves like pools with waters and winds, . . . flatulence and catarrh—is not this a disgrace? . . . Our present system of medicine may be said to educate diseases," to draw them out into a long existence, rather than to cure them. But this is an absurdity of the idle rich. "When a carpenter is ill he asks the physician for a rough and ready remedy—an emetic, or a purge, or cautery, or the knife. And if anyone tells him that he must go through a course of dietetics, and swathe and swaddle his head, and all that sort of thing, he replies at once that he has no time to be ill, and that he sees no good in a life that is spent in nursing his disease to the neglect of his ordinary calling; and therefore, saying good-bye to this sort of physicians, he resumes his customary diet, and either gets well and lives and does his business, or, if his constitution fails, he dies and has done with it" (405–6). We cannot afford to have a nation of malingerers and invalids; Utopia must begin in the body of man.

But mere athletics and gymnastics would make a man too one-sided. "How shall we find a gentle nature which has also great courage?—for they seem to be inconsistent with each other" (375). We do not want a nation of prize-fighters and weight-lifters. Perhaps music will solve our problem: through music the soul learns harmony and rhythm, and even a disposition to justice; for "can he who is harmoniously constituted ever be unjust? Is not this, Glaucon, why musical training is so powerful, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul, bearing grace in their movements and making the soul graceful?" (401; *Protagoras*, 326). Music moulds character, and therefore shares in determining social and political issues. "Damon tells me—and I can quite believe it—that when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state change with them." [1]

Music is valuable not only because it brings refinement of

[1] Cf. Daniel O'Connell: "Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws."

feeling and character, but also because it preserves and restores health. There are some diseases which can be treated only through the mind (*Charmides*, 157): so the Corybantic priest treated hysterical women with wild pipe music, which excited them to dance and dance till they fell to the ground exhausted, and went to sleep; when they awoke they were cured. The unconscious sources of human thought are touched and soothed by such methods; and it is in these substrata of behavior and feeling that genius sinks its roots. "No man when conscious attains to true or inspired intuition, but rather when the power of intellect is fettered in sleep or by disease or dementia"; the prophet (*mantike*) or genius is akin to the madman (*manike*) (*Phædrus*, 244).

Plato passes on to a remarkable anticipation of "psychoanalysis." Our political psychology is perplexed, he argues, because we have not adequately studied the various appetites or instincts of man. Dreams may give us a clue to some of the subtle and more elusive of these dispositions.

> Certain of the unnecessary pleasures and instincts are deemed to be unlawful; every man appears to have them, but in some persons they are subjected to the control of law and reason ["sublimated"], and the better desires prevailing over them, they are either wholly suppressed, or reduced in strength and number; while in other persons these desires are stronger and more abundant. I mean particularly those desires which are awake when the reasoning and taming and ruling power ["censor"] of the personality is asleep; the wild beast in our nature, gorged with meat and drink, starts up and walks about naked, and surfeits at his will; and there is no conceivable folly or crime, however shameless or unnatural—not excepting incest or parricide ["Œdipus complex"]—of which such a nature may not be guilty. . . . But when a man's pulse is healthy and temperate, and he goes to sleep cool and rational, . . . having indulged his appetites neither too much nor too little, but just enough to lay them to sleep, . . . he is then least likely to be the sport of fanciful and lawless visions. . . . In all of us, even in

good men, there is such a latent wild beast nature, which peers out in sleep (571–2).

Music and measure lend grace and health to the soul and to the body; but again, too much music is as dangerous as too much athletics. To be merely an athlete is to be nearly a savage; and to be merely a musician is to be "melted and softened beyond what is good" (410). The two must be combined; and after sixteen the individual practice of music must be abandoned, though choral singing, like communal games, will go on throughout life. Nor is music to be merely music; it must be used to provide attractive forms for the sometimes unappetizing contents of mathematics, history and science; there is no reason why for the young these difficult studies should not be smoothed into verse and beautified with song. Even then these studies are not to be forced upon an unwilling mind; within limits a libertarian spirit must prevail

> The elements of instruction . . . should be presented to the mind in childhood, but not with any compulsion; for a freeman should be a freeman too in the acquisition of knowledge. . . . Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion has no hold on the mind. Therefore do not use compulsion, but let early education be rather a sort of amusement; this will better enable you to find out the natural bent of the child (536).

With minds so freely growing, and bodies made strong by sport and outdoor life of every kind, our ideal state would have a firm psychological and physiological base broad enough for every possibility and every development. But a moral basis must be provided as well; the members of the community must make a unity; they must learn that they are members of one another; that they owe to one another certain amenities and obligations. Now since men are by nature acquisitive, jealous, combative, and erotic, how shall we persuade them to behave themselves? By the policeman's omnipresent club? It is a brutal method, costly and irritating. There is a better way,

and that is by lending to the moral requirements of the community the sanction of supernatural authority. We must have a religion.

Plato believes that a nation cannot be strong unless it believes in God. A mere cosmic force, or first cause, or *élan vital*, that was not a person, could hardly inspire hope, or devotion, or sacrifice; it could not offer comfort to the hearts of the distressed, nor courage to embattled souls. But a living God can do all this, and can stir or frighten the self-seeking individualist into some moderation of his greed, some control of his passion. All the more so if to belief in God is added belief in personal immortality: the hope of another life gives us courage to meet our own death, and to bear with the death of our loved ones; we are twice armed if we fight with faith. Granted that none of the beliefs can be demonstrated; that God may be after all only the personified ideal of our love and our hope, and that the soul is like the music of the lyre, and dies with the instrument that gave it form: yet surely (so runs the argument, Pascal-like, of the *Phaedo*) it will do us no harm to believe, and it may do us and our children immeasurable good.

For we are likely to have trouble with these children of ours if we undertake to explain and justify everything to their simple minds. We shall have an especially hard time when they arrive at the age of twenty, and face the first scrutiny and test of what they have learned in all their years of equal education. Then will come a ruthless weeding out; the Great Elimination, we might call it. That test will be no mere academic examination; it will be practical as well as theoretical: "there shall also be toils and pains and conflicts prescribed for them" (413). Every kind of ability will have a chance to show itself, and every sort of stupidity will be hunted out into the light. Those who fail will be assigned to the economic work of the nation; they will be business men, and clerks, and factory workers, and farmers. The test will be impartial and impersonal; whether one is to be a

farmer or a philosopher will be determined not by monopolized opportunity or nepotic favoritism; the selection will be more democratic than democracy.

Those who pass this first test will receive ten more years of education and training, in body and mind and character. And then they will face a second test, far severer than the first. Those who fail will become the auxiliaries, or executive aides and military officers of the state. Now it is just in these great eliminations that we shall need every resource of persuasion to get the eliminated to accept their fate with urbanity and peace. For what is to prevent that great unselected majority, in the first test, and that lesser but more vigorous and capable second group of Eliminees, from shouldering arms and smashing this Utopia of ours into a mouldering reminiscence? What is to prevent them from establishing there and then a world in which again mere number or mere force will rule, and the sickly comedy of a sham democracy will reënact itself *da capo ad nauseam?* Then religion and faith will be our only salvation: we shall tell these young people that the divisions into which they have fallen are God-decreed and irrevocable—not all their tears shall wipe out one word of it. We shall tell them the myth of the metals:

> "Citizens, you are brothers, yet God has framed you differently. Some of you have the power of command; and these he has made of gold, wherefore they have the greatest honor; others of silver, to be auxiliaries; others again, who are to be husbandmen and craftsmen, he has made of brass and iron; and the species will generally be preserved in the children. But as you are of the same original family, a golden parent will sometimes have a silver son, or a silver parent a golden son. And God proclaims . . . that if the son of a golden or a silver parent has an admixture of brass or iron, then nature requires a transposition of ranks; and the eye of the ruler must not be pitiful towards his child because he has to descend in the scale to become a husbandman

> or an artisan, just as there may be others sprung from the artisan class who are raised to honor, and become guardians and auxiliaries. For an oracle says that when a man of brass or iron guards the state, it will be destroyed" (415).

Perhaps with this "royal fable" we shall secure a fairly general consent to the furtherance of our plan.

But now what of the lucky remnant that ride these successive waves of selection?

They are taught philosophy. They have now reached the age of thirty; it would not have been wise to let them "taste the dear delight too early; . . . for young men, when they first get the taste of philosophy in their mouths, argue for amusement, and are always contradicting and refuting, . . . like puppy-dogs who delight to tear and pull at all who come near them" (539). This dear delight, philosophy, means two things chiefly: to think clearly, which is metaphysics; and to rule wisely, which is politics. First then, our young Elite must learn to think clearly. For that purpose they shall study the doctrine of Ideas.

But this famous doctrine of Ideas, embellished and obscured by the fancy and poetry of Plato, is a discouraging maze to the modern student, and must have offered another severe test to the survivors of many siftings. The Idea of a thing might be the "general idea" of the class to which it belongs (the Idea of John, or Dick, or Harry, is Man); or it might be the law or laws according to which the thing operates (the Idea of John would be the reduction of all his behavior to "natural laws"); or it might be the perfect purpose and ideal towards which the thing and its class may develop (the Idea of John is the John of Utopia). Very probably the Idea is all of these—idea, law and ideal. Behind the surface phenomena and particulars which greet our senses, are generalizations, regularities, and directions of development, unperceived by sensation but conceived by reason and thought. These ideas, laws and ideals are more permanent—and therefore more "real"—than the sense-

perceived particular things through which we conceive and deduce them: Man is more permanent than Tom, or Dick, or Harry; this circle is born with the movement of my pencil and dies under the attrition of my eraser, but the conception Circle goes on forever. This tree stands, and that tree falls; but the laws which determine what bodies shall fall, and when, and how, were without beginning, are now, and ever shall be, without end. There is, as the gentle Spinoza would say, a world of things perceived by sense, and a world of laws inferred by thought; we do not see the law of inverse squares but it is there, and everywhere; it was before anything began, and will survive when all the world of things is a finished tale. Here is a bridge: the sense perceives concrete and iron to a hundred million tons; but the mathematician sees, with the mind's eye, the daring and delicate adjustment of all this mass of material to the laws of mechanics and mathematics and engineering, those laws according to which all good bridges that are made must be made; if the mathematician be also a poet, he will see these laws upholding the bridge; if the laws were violated the bridge would collapse into the stream beneath; the laws are the God that holds up the bridge in the hollow of his hand. Aristotle hints something of this when he says that by Ideas Plato meant what Pythagoras meant by "number" when he taught that this is a world of numbers (meaning presumably that the world is ruled by mathematical constancies and regularities). Plutarch tells us that according to Plato "God always geometrizes"; or, as Spinoza puts the same thought, God and the universal laws of structure and operation are one and the same reality. To Plato, as to Bertrand Russell, mathematics is therefore the indispensable prelude to philosophy, and its highest form; over the doors of his Academy Plato placed, Dantesquely, these words, "Let no man ignorant of geometry enter here." [1]

[1] The details of the argument for the interpretation here given of the doctrine of Ideas may be followed in D. G. Ritchie's *Plato*, Edinburgh, 1902, especially pp. 49 and 85.

Without these Ideas—these generalizations, regularities and ideals—the world would be to us as it must seem to the first-opened eyes of the child, a mass of unclassified and unmeaning particulars of sensation; for meaning can be given to things only by classifying and generalizing them, by finding the laws of their beings, and the purposes and goals of their activity. Or the world without Ideas would be a heap of book-titles fallen haphazard out of the catalogue, as compared to the same titles arranged in order according to their classes, their sequences and their purposes; it would be the shadows in a cave as compared with the sunlit realities without, which cast those fantastic and deceptive shadows within (514). Therefore the essence of a higher education is the search for Ideas: for generalizations, laws of sequence, and ideals of development; behind things we must discover their relation and meaning, their mode and law of operation, the function and ideal they serve or adumbrate; we must classify and coordinate our sense experience in terms of law and purpose; only for lack of this does the mind of the imbecile differ from the mind of Cæsar.

Well, after five years of training in this recondite doctrine of Ideas, this art of perceiving significant forms and causal sequences and ideal potentialities amid the welter and hazard of sensation; after five years of training in the application of this principle to the behavior of men and the conduct of states; after this long preparation from childhood through youth and into the maturity of thirty-five; surely now these perfect products are ready to assume the royal purple and the highest functions of public life?—surely they are at last the philosopher-kings who are to rule and to free the human race?

Alas! not yet. Their education is still unfinished. For after all it has been, in the main, a theoretical education: something else is needed. Let these Ph.D.'s pass down now from the heights of philosophy into the "cave" of the world of men and things; generalizations and abstractions are worth-

less except they be tested by this concrete world; let our students enter that world with no favor shown them; they shall compete with men of business, with hard-headed grasping individualists, with men of brawn and men of cunning; in this mart of strife they shall learn from the book of life itself; they shall hurt their fingers and scratch their philosophic shins on the crude realities of the world; they shall earn their bread and butter by the sweat of their high brows. And this last and sharpest test shall go on ruthlessly for fifteen long years. Some of our perfect products will break under the pressure, and be submerged by this last great wave of elimination. Those that survive, scarred and fifty, sobered and self-reliant, shorn of scholastic vanity by the merciless friction of life, and armed now with all the wisdom that tradition and experience, culture and conflict, can coöperate to give—these men at last shall automatically become the rulers of the state.

VIII. THE POLITICAL SOLUTION

Automatically—without any hypocrisy of voting. Democracy means perfect equality of opportunity, especially in education; not the rotation of every Tom, Dick and Harry in public office. Every man shall have an equal chance to make himself fit for the complex tasks of administration; but only those who have proved their mettle (or, in our myth, their metal), and have emerged from all tests with the insignia of skill, shall be eligible to rule. Public officials shall be chosen not by votes, nor by secret cliques pulling the unseen wires of democratic pretense, but by their own ability as demonstrated in the fundamental democracy of an equal race. Nor shall any man hold office without specific training, nor hold high office till he has first filled a lower office well (*Gorgias*, 514–5).

Is this aristocracy? Well, we need not be afraid of the word, if the reality is good which it betokens: words are wise men's counters, without value of their own; they are the money

only of fools and politicians. We want to be ruled by the best, which is what aristocracy means; have we not, Carlyle-like, yearned and prayed to be ruled by the best? But we have come to think of aristocracies as hereditary: let it be carefully noted that this Platonic aristocracy is not of that kind; one would rather call it a democratic aristocracy. For the people, instead of blindly electing the lesser of two evils presented to them as candidates by nominating cliques, will here be themselves, every one of them, the candidates; and will receive an equal chance of *educational election* to public office. There is no caste here; no inheritance of position or privilege; no stoppage of talent impecuniously born; the son of a ruler begins on the same level, and receives the same treatment and opportunity, as the son of a boot-black; if the ruler's son is a dolt he falls at the first shearing; if the boot-black's son is a man of ability the way is clear for him to become a guardian of the state (423). Career will be open to talent wherever it is born. This is a democracy of the schools—a hundredfold more honest and more effective than a democracy of the polls.

And so, "setting aside every other business, the guardians will dedicate themselves wholly to the maintenance of freedom in the state, making this their craft and engaging in no work which does not bear upon this end" (395). They shall be legislature and executive and court in one; even the laws shall not bind them to a dogma in the face of altered circumstance; the rule of the guardians shall be a flexible intelligence unbound by precedent.

But how can men of fifty have a flexible intelligence? Will they not be mentally plaster-casted by routine? Adeimantus (echoing, no doubt, some hot brotherly debate in Plato's home) objects that philosophers are dolts or rogues, who would rule either foolishly, or selfishly, or both. "The votaries of philosophy who carry on the study not only in youth with a view to education, but as the pursuit of their maturer years—these men for the most part grow into very

strange beings, not to say utter scoundrels; and the result with those who may be considered the best of them is, that they are made useless to the world by the very study which you extol" (487). This is a fair enough description of some be-spectacled modern philosophers; but Plato answers that he has guarded against this difficulty by giving his philosophers the training of life as well as the erudition of the schools; that they will in consequence be men of action rather than merely men of thought—men seasoned to high purposes and noble temper by long experience and trial. By philosophy Plato means an active culture, wisdom that mixes with the concrete busy-ness of life; he does not mean a closeted and impractical metaphysician; Plato "is the man who least resembles Kant, which is (with all respect) a considerable merit." [1]

So much for incompetence; as for rascality we may provide against that by establishing among the guardians a system of communism:

> In the first place none of them should have any property beyond what is absolutely necessary; neither should they have a private house, with bars and bolts, closed against any one who has a mind to enter; their provisions should be only such as are required by trained warriors, who are men of temperance and courage; their agreement is to receive from the citizens a fixed rate of pay, enough to meet the expenses of the year, and no more; and they will have common meals and live together, like soldiers in a camp. Gold and silver we will tell them that they have from God; the diviner metal is within them, and they have therefore no need of that earthly dross which passes under the name of gold, and ought not to pollute the divine by earthly admixture, for that commoner metal has been the source of many unholy deeds; but their own is undefiled. And they alone of all the citizens may not touch or handle silver or gold, or be under the same roof with them, or wear them, or drink from them. And this will be their salvation, and the salvation of the State. But

[1] Faguet, p. 10.

> should they ever acquire homes or lands or moneys of their own, they will become housekeepers and husbandmen instead of guardians; enemies and tyrants instead of allies of the other citizens; hating and being hated, plotting and being plotted against, they will pass through life in much greater terror of internal than of external enemies; and the hour of ruin, both to themselves and to the rest of the State, will be at hand (416–17).

This arrangement will make it unprofitable, as well as dangerous, for the guardians to rule as a clique seeking the good of their class rather than that of the community as a whole. For they will be protected from want; the necessities and modest luxuries of a noble life will be theirs in regular provision, without the searing and wrinkling care of economic worry. But by the same token they will be precluded from cupidity and sordid ambitions; they will always have just so much of the world's goods, and no more; they will be like physicians establishing, and themselves accepting, a dietary for a nation. They will eat together, like consecrated men; they will sleep together in single barracks, like soldiers sworn to simplicity. "Friends should have all things in common," as Pythagoras used to say (*Laws* 807). So the authority of the guardians will be sterilized, and their power made poisonless; their sole reward will be honor and the sense of service to the group. And they will be such men as from the beginning have deliberately consented to so materially limited a career; and such men as at the end of their stern training will have learned to value the high repute of the statesman above the crass emoluments of the office-seeking politicians or the "economic man." At their coming the battles of party politics will be no more.

But what will their wives say to all this? Will they be content to forego the luxuries of life and the conspicuous consumption of goods? The guardians will have no wives. Their communism is to be of women as well as of goods. They are to be freed not only from the egoism of self, but

from the egoism of family; they are not to be narrowed to the anxious acquisitiveness of the prodded husband; they are to be devoted not to a woman but to the community. Even their children shall not be specifically or distinguishably theirs; all children of guardians shall be taken from their mothers at birth and brought up in common; their particular parentage will be lost in the scuffle (460). All the guardian-mothers will care for all the guardian-children; the brotherhood of man, within these limits, will graduate from phrase to fact; every boy will be a brother to every other boy, every girl a sister, every man a father, and every woman a mother.

But whence will these women come? Some, no doubt, the guardians will woo out of the industrial or military classes; others will have become, by their own right, members of the guardian class. For there is to be no sex barrier of any kind in this community; least of all in education—the girl shall have the same intellectual opportunities as the boy, the same chance to rise to the highest positions in the state. When Glaucon objects (453 f) that this admission of woman to any office, provided she has passed the tests, violates the principle of the division of labor, he receives the sharp reply that division of labor must be by aptitude and ability, not by sex; if a woman shows herself capable of political administration, let her rule; if a man shows himself to be capable only of washing dishes, let him fulfil the function to which Providence has assigned him.

Community of wives does not mean indiscriminate mating; rather there is to be strict eugenic supervision of all reproductive relations. The argument from the breeding of animals here starts its wandering career: if we get such good results in breeding cattle selectively for qualities desired, and from breeding only from the best in each generation, why should we not apply similar principles to the matings of mankind? (459). For it is not enough to educate the child properly; he must be properly born, of select and healthy ancestry; "education should begin before birth" (*Laws*, 789).

Therefore no man or woman shall procreate unless in perfect health; a health certificate is to be required of every bride and groom (*Laws*, 772). Men may reproduce only when they are above thirty and under forty-five; women only when they are above twenty and under forty. Men unmarried by thirty-five are to be taxed into felicity (*Laws*, 771). Offspring born of unlicensed matings, or deformed, are to be exposed and left to die. Before and after the ages specified for procreation, mating is to be free, on condition that the foetus be aborted. "We grant this permission with strict orders to the parties to do all in their power to prevent any embryo from seeing the light; and if any should force its way to birth, they must understand that the offspring of such a union cannot be maintained, and they must make their arrangements accordingly" (461). The marriage of relatives is prohibited, as inducing degeneration (310). "The best of either sex should be united with the best as often as possible, and the inferior with the inferior; and they are to rear the offspring of the one sort but not that of the other; for this is the only way of keeping the flock in prime condition. . . . Our braver and better youth, beside their other honors and rewards, are to be permitted a greater variety of mates; for such fathers ought to have as many sons as possible" (459–60).

But our eugenic society must be protected not only from disease and deterioration within, but from enemies without. It must be ready, if need be, to wage successful war. Our model community would of course be pacific, for it would restrict population within the means of subsistence; but neighboring states not so managed might well look upon the orderly prosperity of our Utopia as an invitation to raid and rapine. Hence, while deploring the necessity, we shall have, in our intermediate class, a sufficient number of well-trained soldiers, living a hard and simple life like the guardians, on a stated modicum of goods supplied by their "maintainers and fore-fathers," the people. At the same time every precaution must be taken to avoid the occasions of war. The

primary occasion is overpopulation (373); the second is foreign trade, with the inevitable disputes that interrupt it. Indeed, competitive trade is really a form of war; "peace is only a name" (*Laws*, 622). It will be well then to situate our ideal state considerably inland, so that it shall be shut out from any high development of foreign commerce. "The sea fills a country with merchandise and money-making and bargaining; it breeds in men's minds habits of financial greed and faithlessness, alike in its internal and in its foreign relations" (*Laws*, 704–7). Foreign trade requires a large navy to protect it; and navalism is as bad as militarism. "In every case the guilt of war is confined to a few persons, and the many are friends" (471). The most frequent wars are precisely the vilest—civil wars, wars of Greek against Greek; let the Greeks form a pan-Hellenic league of nations, uniting lest "the whole Greek race some day fall under the yoke of barbarian peoples" (469).

So our political structure will be topped with a small class of guardians; it will be protected by a large class of soldiers and "auxiliaries"; and it will rest on the broad base of a commercial, industrial, and agricultural population. This last or economic class will retain private property, private mates, and private families. But trade and industry will be regulated by the guardians to prevent excessive individual wealth or poverty; any one acquiring more than four times the average possession of the citizens must relinquish the excess to the state (*Laws*, 714 f). Perhaps interest will be forbidden, and profits limited (*Laws*, 920). The communism of the guardians is impracticable for the economic class; the distinguishing characteristics of this class are powerful instincts of acquisition and competition; some noble souls among them will be free from this fever of combative possession, but the majority of men are consumed with it; they hunger and thirst not after righteousness, nor after honor, but after possessions endlessly multiplied. Now men engrossed in the pursuit of money are unfit to rule a state; and our

entire plan rests on the hope that if the guardians rule well and live simply, the economic man will be willing to let them monopolize administration if they permit him to monopolize luxury. In short, the perfect society would be that in which each class and each unit would be doing the work to which its nature and aptitude best adapted it; in which no class or individual would interfere with others, but all would cooperate in difference to produce an efficient and harmonious whole (433–4). That would be a just state.

IX. THE ETHICAL SOLUTION

And now our political digression is ended, and we are ready at last to answer the question with which we began—What is justice? There are only three things worth while in this world—justice, beauty and truth; and perhaps none of them can be defined. Four hundred years after Plato a Roman procurator of Judea asked, helplessly, "What is truth?"—and philosophers have not yet answered, nor told us what is beauty. But for justice Plato ventures a definition. "Justice," he says, "is the having and doing what is one's own" (433).

This has a disappointing sound; after so much delay we expected an infallible revelation. What does the definition mean? Simply that each man shall receive the equivalent of what he produces, and shall perform the function for which he is best fit. A just man is a man in just the right place, doing his best, and giving the full equivalent of what he receives. A society of just men would be therefore a highly harmonious and efficient group; for every element would be in its place, fulfilling its appropriate function like the pieces in a perfect orchestra. Justice in a society would be like that harmony of relationships whereby the planets are held together in their orderly (or, as Pythagoras would have said, their musical) movement. So organized, a society is fit for survival; and justice receives a kind of Darwinian sanction. Where men are out of their natural places, where the business

man subordinates the statesman, or the soldier usurps the position of the king—there the coördination of parts is destroyed, the joints decay, the society disintegrates and dissolves. Justice is effective coördination.

And in the individual too, justice is effective coördination, the harmonious functioning of the elements in a man, each in its fit place and each making its coöperative contribution to behavior. Every individual is a cosmos or a chaos of desires, emotions and ideas; let these fall into harmony, and the individual survives and succeeds; let them lose their proper place and function, let emotion try to become the light of action as well as its heat (as in the fanatic), or let thought try to become the heat of action as well as its light (as in the intellectual)—and disintegration of personality begins, failure advances like the inevitable night. Justice is a *taxis kai kosmos*—an order and beauty—of the parts of the soul; it is to the soul as health is to the body. All evil is disharmony: between man and nature, or man and men, or man and himself.

So Plato replies to Thrasymachus and Callicles, and to all Nietzscheans forever: Justice is not mere strength, but harmonious strength—desires and men falling into that order which constitutes intelligence and organization; justice is not the right of the stronger, but the effective harmony of the whole. It is true that the individual who gets out of the place to which his nature and talents adapt him may for a time seize some profit and advantage; but an inescapable Nemesis pursues him—as Anaxagoras spoke of the Furies pursuing any planet that should wander out of its orbit; the terrible *baton* of the Nature of Things drives the refractory instrument back to its place and its pitch and its natural note. The Corsican lieutenant may try to rule Europe with a ceremonious despotism fitted better to an ancient monarchy than to a dynasty born overnight; but he ends on a prison-rock in the sea, ruefully recognizing that he is "the slave of the Nature of Things." Injustice will out.

There is nothing bizarrely new in this conception; and, indeed we shall do well to suspect, in philosophy, any doctrine which plumes itself on novelty. Truth changes her garments frequently (like every seemly lady), but under the new habit she remains always the same. In morals we need not expect startling innovations: despite the interesting adventures of Sophists and Nietzscheans, all moral conceptions revolve about the good of the whole. Morality begins with association and interdependence and organization; life in society requires the concession of some part of the individual's sovereignty to the common order; and ultimately the norm of conduct becomes the welfare of the group. Nature will have it so, and her judgment is always final; a group survives, in competition or conflict with another group, according to its unity and power, according to the ability of its members to coöperate for common ends. And what better coöperation could there be than that each should be doing that which he can do best? This is the goal of organization which every society must seek, if it would have life. Morality, said Jesus, is kindness to the weak; morality, said Nietzsche, is the bravery of the strong; morality, says Plato, is the effective harmony of the whole. Probably all three doctrines must be combined to find a perfect ethic; but can we doubt which of the elements is fundamental?

X. CRITICISM

And now what shall we say of this whole Utopia? Is it feasible? And if not, has it any practicable features which we could turn to contemporary use? Has it ever in any place or measure been realized?

At least the last question must be answered in Plato's favor. For a thousand years Europe was ruled by an order of guardians considerably like that which was visioned by our philosopher. During the Middle Ages it was customary to classify the population of Christendom into *laboratores* (workers), *bellatores* (soldiers), and *oratores* (clergy). The last

group, though small in number, monopolized the instruments and opportunities of culture, and ruled with almost unlimited sway half of the most powerful continent on the globe. The clergy, like Plato's guardians, were placed in authority not by the suffrages of the people, but by their talent as shown in ecclesiastical studies and administration, by their disposition to a life of meditation and simplicity, and (perhaps it should be added) by the influence of their relatives with the powers of state and church. In the latter half of the period in which they ruled, the clergy were as free from family cares as even Plato could desire; and in some cases, it would seem, they enjoyed no little of the reproductive freedom accorded to the guardians. Celibacy was part of the psychological structure of the power of the clergy; for on the one hand they were unimpeded by the narrowing egoism of the family, and on the other their apparent superiority to the call of the flesh added to the awe in which lay sinners held them, and to the readiness of these sinners to bare their lives in the confessional.

Much of the politics of Catholicism was derived from Plato's "royal lies," or influenced by them: the ideas of heaven, purgatory, and hell, in their medieval form, are traceable to the last book of the *Republic;* the cosmology of scholasticism comes largely from the *Timæus;* the doctrine of realism (the objective reality of general ideas) was an interpretation of the doctrine of Ideas; even the educational "quadrivium" (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) was modeled on the curriculum outlined in Plato. With this body of doctrine the people of Europe were ruled with hardly any resort to force; and they accepted this rule so readily that for a thousand years they contributed plentiful material support to their rulers, and asked no voice in the government. Nor was this acquiescence confined to the general population; merchants and soldiers, feudal chieftains and civil powers all bent the knee to Rome. It was an aristocracy of no mean political sagacity; it built probably the most marvelous and powerful organization which the world has ever known.

The Jesuits who for a time ruled Paraguay were semi-Platonic guardians, a clerical oligarchy empowered by the possession of knowledge and skill in the midst of a barbarian population. And for a time the Communist Party which ruled Russia after the revolution of November, 1917, took a form strangely reminiscent of the *Republic*. They were a small minority, held together almost by religious conviction, wielding the weapons of orthodoxy and excommunication, as sternly devoted to their cause as any saint to his, and living a frugal existence while ruling half the soil of Europe.

Such examples indicate that within limits and with modifications, Plato's plan is practicable; and indeed he himself had derived it largely from actual practice as seen on his travels. He had been impressed by the Egyptian theocracy: here was a great and ancient civilization ruled by a small priestly class; and compared with the bickering and tyranny and incompetence of the Athenian *Ecclesia* Plato felt that the Egyptian government represented a much higher form of state (*Laws*, 819). In Italy he had stayed for a time with a Pythagorean community, vegetarian and communist, which had for generations controlled the Greek colony in which it lived. In Sparta he had seen a small ruling class living a hard and simple life in common in the midst of a subject population; eating together, restricting mating for eugenic ends, and giving to the brave the privilege of many wives. He had no doubt heard Euripides advocate a community of wives, the liberation of slaves, and the pacification of the Greek world by an Hellenic league (*Medea*, 230; *Fragm.*, 655); no doubt, too, he knew some of the Cynics who had developed a strong communist movement among what one would now call the Socratic Left. In short, Plato must have felt that in propounding his plan he was not making an impossible advance on realities which his eyes had seen.

Yet critics from Aristotle's day to ours have found in the *Republic* many an opening for objection and doubt. "These things and many others," says the Stagyrite, with cynical

brevity, "have been invented several times over in the course of ages." It is very pretty to plan a society in which all men will be brothers; but to extend such a term to all our male contemporaries is to water out of it all warmth and significance. So with common property: it would mean a dilution of responsibility; when everything belongs to everybody nobody will take care of anything. And finally, argues the great conservative, communism would fling people into an intolerable continuity of contact; it would leave no room for privacy or individuality; and it would presume such virtues of patience and coöperation as only a saintly minority possess. "We must neither assume a standard of virtue which is above ordinary persons, nor an education which is exceptionally favored by nature and circumstance; but we must have regard to the life which the majority can share, and to the forms of government to which states in general can attain."

So far Plato's greatest (and most jealous) pupil; and most of the criticisms of later date strike the same chord. Plato underrated, we are told, the force of custom accumulated in the institution of monogamy, and in the moral code attached to that institution; he underestimated the possessive jealousy of males in supposing that a man would be content to have merely an aliquot portion of a wife; he minimized the maternal instinct in supposing that mothers would agree to have their children taken from them and brought up in a heartless anonymity. And above all he forgot that in abolishing the family he was destroying the great nurse of morals and the chief source of those coöperative and communistic habits which would have to be the psychological basis of his state; with unrivaled eloquence he sawed off the branch on which he sat.

To all these criticisms one can reply very simply, that they destroy a straw man. Plato explicitly exempts the majority from his communistic plan; he recognizes clearly enough that only a few are capable of the material self-denial which he proposes for his ruling class; only the guardians will call every guardian brother or sister; only the guardians will be

without gold or goods. The vast majority will retain all respectable institutions—property, money, luxury, competition, and whatever privacy they may desire. They will have marriage as monogamic as they can bear, and all the morals derived from it and from the family; the fathers shall keep their wives and the mothers shall keep their children *ad libitum* and *nauseam*. As to the guardians, their need is not so much a communistic disposition as a sense of honor, and love of it; pride and not kindness is to hold them up. And as for the maternal instinct, it is not strong before the birth, or even the growth, of the child; the average mother accepts the newborn babe rather with resignation than with joy; love for it is a development, not a sudden miracle, and grows as the child grows, as it takes form under the painstaking care of the mother; not until it has become the embodiment of maternal artistry does it irrevocably catch the heart.

Other objections are economic rather than psychological. Plato's republic, it is argued, denounces the division of every city into two cities, and then offers us a city divided into three. The answer is that the division in the first case is by economic conflict; in Plato's state the guardian and auxiliary classes are specifically excluded from participation in this competition for gold and goods. But then the guardians would have power without responsibility; and would not this lead to tyranny? Not at all; they have political power and direction, but no economic power or wealth; the economic class, if dissatisfied with the guardians' mode of rule, could hold up the food supply, as Parliaments control executives by holding up the budget. Well, then, if the guardians have political but not economic power, how can they maintain their rule? Have not Harrington and Marx and many others shown that political power is a reflex of economic power, and becomes precarious as soon as economic power passes to a politically subject group—as to the middle classes in the eighteenth century?

'This is a very fundamental objection, and perhaps a fatal

one. The answer might be made that the power of the Roman Catholic Church, which brought even kings to kneel at Canossa, was based, in its earlier centuries of rule, rather on the inculcation of dogmas than on the strategy of wealth. But it may be that the long dominion of the Church was due to the agricultural condition of Europe: an agricultural population is inclined to supernatural belief by its helpless dependence on the caprice of the elements, and by that inability to control nature which always leads to fear and thence to worship; when industry and commerce developed, a new type of mind and man arose, more realistic and terrestrial, and the power of the Church began to crumble as soon as it came into conflict with this new economic fact. Political power must repeatedly readjust itself to the changing balance of economic forces. The economic dependence of Plato's guardians on the economic class would very soon reduce them to the controlled political executives of that class; even the manipulation of military power would not long forestall this inevitable issue—any more than the military forces of revolutionary Russia could prevent the development of a proprietary individualism among the peasants who controlled the growth of food, and therefore the fate of the nation. Only this would remain to Plato: that even though political policies must be determined by the economically dominant group, it is better that those policies should be administered by officials specifically prepared for the purpose, than by men who stumble out of commerce or manufacturing into political office without any training in the arts of statesmanship.

What Plato lacks above all, perhaps, is the Heracleitean sense of flux and change; he is too anxious to have the moving picture of this world become a fixed and still tableau. He loves order exclusively, like any timid philosopher; he has been frightened by the democratic turbulence of Athens into an extreme neglect of individual values; he arranges men in classes like an entomologist classifying flies; and he is not averse to using priestly humbug to secure his ends. His state

is static; it might easily become an old-fogey society, ruled by inflexible octogenarians hostile to invention and jealous of change. It is mere science without art; it exalts order, so dear to the scientific mind, and quite neglects that liberty which is the soul of art; it worships the name of beauty, but exiles the artists who alone can make beauty or point it out. It is a Sparta or a Prussia, not an ideal state.

And now that these unpleasant necessities are candidly written down, it remains to do willing homage to the power and profundity of Plato's conception. Essentially he is right—is he not?—what this world needs is to be ruled by its wisest men. It is our business to adapt his thought to our own times and limitations. Today we must take democracy for granted: we cannot limit the suffrage as Plato proposed; but we can put restrictions on the holding of office, and in this way secure that mixture of democracy and aristocracy which Plato seems to have in mind. We may accept without quarrel his contention that statesmen should be as specifically and thoroughly trained as physicians; we might establish departments of political science and administration in our universities; and when these departments have begun to function adequately we might make men ineligible for nomination to political office unless they were graduates of such political schools. We might even make every man eligible for an office who had been trained for it, and thereby eliminate entirely that complex system of nominations in which the corruption of our democracy has its seat; let the electorate choose any man who, properly trained and qualified, announces himself as a candidate. In this way democratic choice would be immeasurably wider than now, when Tweedledum and Tweedledee stage their quadrennial show and sham. Only one amendment would be required to make quite democratic this plan for the restriction of office to graduates in administrative technique; and that would be such equality of educational opportunity as would open to all men and women, irrespective of the means of their parents, the road to university training and political advancement. It

would be very simple to have municipalities and counties and states offer scholarships to all graduates of grammar school, high school and college who had shown a certain standard of ability, and whose parents were financially unable to see them through the next stage of the educational process. That would be a democracy worthy of the name.

Finally, it is only fair to add that Plato understands that his Utopia does not quite fall within the practicable realm. He admits that he has described an ideal difficult of attainment; he answers that there is nevertheless a value in painting these pictures of our desire; man's significance is that he can image a better world, and will some part of it at least into reality; man is an animal that makes Utopias. "We look before and after and pine for what is not." Nor is it all without result: many a dream has grown limbs and walked, or grown wings and flown, like the dream of Icarus that men might fly. After all, even if we have but drawn a picture, it may serve as goal and model of our movement and behavior; when sufficient of us see the picture and follow its gleam, Utopia will find its way upon the map. Meanwhile "in heaven there is laid up a pattern of such a city, and he who desires may behold it, and beholding, govern himself accordingly. But whether there really is or ever will be such a city on earth, . . . he will act according to the laws of that city, and no other" (592). The good man will apply even in the imperfect state, the perfect law.

Nevertheless, with all these concessions to doubt, the Master was bold enough to risk himself when a chance offered to realize his plan. In the year 387 B. C. Plato received an invitation from Dionysius, ruler of the then flourishing and powerful Syracuse, capital of Sicily, to come and turn his kingdom into Utopia; and the philosopher, thinking like Turgot that it was easier to educate one man—even though a king—than a whole people, consented. But when Dionysius found that the plan required either that he should become a philosopher or

cease to be a king, he balked; and the upshot was a bitter quarrel. Story has it that Plato was sold into slavery, to be rescued by his friend and pupil Anniceris; who, when Plato's Athenian followers wished to reimburse him for the ransom he had paid, refused, saying that they should not be the only ones privileged to help philosophy. This (and, if we may believe Diogenes Laertius, another similar) experience may account for the disillusioned conservatism of Plato's last work, the *Laws*.

And yet the closing years of his long life must have been fairly happy. His pupils had gone out in every direction, and their success had made him honored everywhere. He was at peace in his Academe, walking from group to group of his students and giving them problems and tasks on which they were to make research and, when he came to them again, give report and answer. La Rochefoucauld said that "few know how to grow old." Plato knew: to learn like Solon and to teach like Socrates; to guide the eager young, and find the intellectual love of comrades. For his students loved him as he loved them; he was their friend as well as their philosopher and guide.

One of his pupils, facing that great abyss called marriage, invited the Master to his wedding feast. Plato came, rich with his eighty years, and joined the merry-makers gladly. But as the hours laughed themselves away, the old philosopher retired into a quiet corner of the house, and sat down on a chair to win a little sleep. In the morning, when the feast was over, the tired revellers came to wake him. They found that during the night, quietly and without ado, he had passed from a little sleep to an endless one. All Athens followed him to the grave.