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GOD, MAN AND STATE:

GREEK CONCEPTS

ALSO BY KATHLEEN FREEMAN:

THE WORK AND LIFE OF SOLON

IT HAS ALL HAPPENED BEFORE

COMPANION TO THE PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

ANCILLA TO THE PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

THE MURDER OF HERODES AND OTHER TRIALS FROM THE ATHENIAN LAWCOURTS

THE GREEK WAY

GREEK CITY-STATES

GOD, MAN AND STATE:

GREEK CONCEPTS

by

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LONDON
MACDONALD & CO., (PUBLISHERS) LTD

First published in 1952 by
Macdonald & Co. (Publishers), Ltd.
16 Maddox Street, W.1
Made and printed in Great Britain by
Purnell and Sons, Ltd.
Paulton (Somerset) and London

PREFACE

THE PURPOSE of this book is to present in non-technical language, for ordinary intelligent men and women, what the Greeks said about five fundamental matters with which modern thought is much preoccupied, and over which modern theory is often wildly astray, namely, God, Man, Society, Education and Law. Because of a lack of knowledge of the history of thought, views are still put forward as new and workable which were exhaustively discussed and closely examined over two thousand years ago by some of the acutest minds the world has ever produced. It is a pity that this knowledge should be the prerogative of a few, and should be left unexplored by anybody interested—and what man of goodwill is not?—in the destiny of the human race. At least let our theorists start from a basis of what is known already, and not waste their energy "inventing" what was *vieux jeu* in Plato's day! They remind one of the man brought up on a desert island, whose forebears had been living there isolated for centuries; the man was a genius, and in due course, with the materials at his disposal, he invented a nut-cracker. He was rescued and he reached the civilised world eager to exhibit and reap credit for his invention, only to find that it had long been in everyday use.

Greek thought is not uniform. On all subjects there were many different views, sometimes directly opposed. The object of studying these is to seek, not a dogma, but a criterion; not to bow to an authoritative pronouncement, but to examine, weigh and come to one's own conclusion.

Greek philosophy with its passion for truth, its rational method, its belief in intelligence allied to goodness, can and must be called in to help the Christian ethic and love of humanity to save the world.

CONTENTS

I

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

THE CONCEPT of God reached by the Greek philosophers must first be considered against the background of Greek religion—a religion often beautiful and rich in emotional appeal, but with little moral and no intellectual content, and with many elements both stupid and ugly as well as cruel. Homeric polytheism presented a family of deities, Zeus at the head, an omnipotent but by no means omniscient or always benevolent father, with Hera his jealous wife, and his beautiful sons and daughters grouped round him, sometimes obedient, more often rebellious and deceitful, differing not at all from a disunited human family except in their absolute power and their immortality. They are the projected wishes of an aristocratic society, and as such they were long accepted by the lower orders as well as by their rulers. Even when city-States became completely democratic, they did not discard their aristocratic gods, especially the god or goddess chosen as patron.

Older than these deities and at first subservient to them, but gradually regaining their power, were the very different supernatural powers worshipped by the conquered people, deities of magic, superstition, fear, the underworld. These, like their worshippers, were dispossessed by the invading Hellenes, sometimes violently, sometimes less so. At Delphi, the earlier earth-deity, the Python, was slain and superseded by Apollo, but the Python's spirit remained

below ground and sent up the magic vapours from the chasm in Apollo's temple; these vapours made the Pythian priestess rave and pronounce what were translated by her priests into oracles, but when she spoke, it was Apollo who spoke through her. Instances of the clash of cults can be found all over Greece, and the conflict formed an inseparable part, not only of Greek religion but of Greek thought in general.

Besides the existence of these major forces, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in alliance, one must also remember the multiplicity of cults, divinities and rites existing all over the Greek world in historical times, each city and each village possessing its own variations of these. I doubt whether when trying to envisage the life of ancient Greece we allow sufficiently for these manifold cults and customs. Our mental picture is usually drawn either from Homer and the dramatists with their major deities each having a well-defined sphere of activity, or from the historians and the later philosophers. That is why many of the customs and stories recorded of the gods strike us as strange and sometimes as un-Hellenic; yet these customs and beliefs were the religion of the ordinary man and woman. They vary according to their habitat, town or country, sea-board or inland, east or west, north or south, in Asia or in Gaul, in Thrace or in North Africa, Italy or Sicily. If we think only or mainly of Athens in her hey-day and in Athens only or mainly of the religious thought of her greatest men, we shall fail entirely to understand the nature of the different communities in which the Greek philosophers did their work, and the immense contrast between that work and the opinions current in the society around them.[1]

We must also bear in mind that, pressing in on the Greek

[1] For details of these, consult L. R. Farnell's great work, *Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford, 1896–1909).

world on every side were the beliefs of other nations: Egypt with her animal-gods and ancient eschatological lore; Persia and Babylon with their astrology and their hierarchy of the Magi who were believed to be able to control Nature with "magic" rites and spells and who kept their teachings secret, handing them down only within the priestly clan from generation to generation; Scythia with her prophets; Crete with animal-worship and a tradition of human sacrifice; and many more. The work of the Greek philosophers, especially the earliest of them, cannot be fully appreciated unless the complexity and variety of these foreign influences is constantly remembered.

The earliest school of rational thought, it is agreed by all authorities, arose at Miletus in the early sixth century B.C. It was a "school" in the sense that a small community of brilliant men banded together to work at a new idea, and accepted one of their number as their head. This group collected data and studied them according to an original and enlightening theory, which was simply that Nature is intelligible and will yield up the knowledge of her laws to Man's reasoning powers. This work and this method persisted at Miletus for over a century, until the city-State was sacked by the Persians in 494 B.C.

We know the names of three successive heads or leaders. The first recorded name—we are told that he had predecessors but that their names have not been preserved—is Thales, the second, Anaximander, the third and last, Anaximenes. After that, the "school" was broken up when Miletus was captured and her population killed, or sold into slavery, or scattered; but their knowledge was scattered with them and took root in other parts of the Greek world.

The great city-State of Miletus, a sea-port and a centre

of Ionian Greek wealth and culture, was devoted to the worship of Apollo. This god had a temple and a famous oracle at Didyma, some eleven miles to the south, the focus of an annual pilgrimage. There were numerous temples in the city itself: one to Apollo under the cult-title "Delphinian", others to Athena, Aphrodite, Aesculapius. In the seventh century B.C. the city was the busiest market of the Aegean Sea, acting as a distributing centre between the rich inland country and the rest of the civilised world. Milesians explored the coasts of the Mediterranean, Egypt, the Black Sea. They planted a trading-station on the Dardanelles, and, it is said, no less than forty-five on the shores of the Black Sea. Their seamen went everywhere, bringing back the products of other lands and the tales of their inhabitants. This was the flourishing, rich, materialistic and intensely vigorous State in which Greek and therefore European philosophy was born.

What did the Milesian thinkers say about God or the divine? Almost nothing, so far as we know. Nothing they wrote or taught has survived except as quoted by much later writers, so that they may have had more to say on the subject than is recorded. But what has survived is meagre. Thales, according to Aristotle, who wrote two and a half centuries later, said: "All things are full of gods." This can be taken in conjunction with Plato's remark that Thales thought that the soul was some principle of mobility, since he said that the magnet had soul or life because it could move iron. Thales' example has been thought inept because the magnet alone, so far as he knew, had this property of being able to move another substance; therefore, it has been argued, he should have said or deduced that only the magnet had soul or was "full of gods". This criticism, however, ignores the fact that Thales had observed the same power of attraction in amber (in Greek, *êlectron*).

Now amber does not attract other substances unless it is stimulated by rubbing. Therefore, since Thales knew about this, he may easily have thought that all substances contained the force spontaneously exhibited by the magnet, and that if one knew how, one could make them display it. The force which Thales thought divine and akin to soul or life we now know to be electricity: it was given this name by an Englishman in the sixteenth century in commemoration of Thales and his experiment with amber.

We can well understand how to the inquiring minds of the Milesian scientists this property in substance seemed almost miraculous. But to say that this means that "all things are full of gods" goes further. What exactly Thales meant we can only guess; but there does seem to be in this remark a sort of defiance of the orthodox Milesian religion. It is as if he wished to say to his fellow-citizens: "You believe that the gods are like our patron Apollo: they live in huge temples, look like their statues, and receive their worshippers' offerings there. I say that 'the gods' are in everything, and are unseen, manifesting themselves by their power to move what is apparently inanimate." It is unlikely that he would have been able to say this openly, since the government of Miletus was based on hierarchy: the chief official or President was also the Chief Priest of Apollo at Didyma, and other officials were entitled Molpoi (psalmists); they too were priests of Apollo, and it was from their number that the President was elected. Even the State archives were kept in the two temples of Apollo, at Didyma and in the city, and in spite of struggles between the landowners and merchants on the one side and the workers on the other, the propertied class, powerfully backed by the priests, retained their power. It is probable, therefore, that Thales' remark was part of his more intimate teaching among his pupils and associates.

Nothing can be gathered as to whether Thales connected any ethical teaching with his scientific theories. So far as we know, his studies concerned only the physical universe: meteorology, astronomy and allied subjects useful to navigators and explorers. But we know of another of his encroachments on Apollo's sphere: that of prophecy.

Two prophecies were ascribed to Thales: one that of a good harvest of olives, which was a main crop of the Milesian countryside and a great source of her wealth; the other that of an eclipse. Neither of these was done by magic. The prophecy of a good olive-harvest was due to his knowledge of meteorology, and the prophecy of an eclipse was due to mathematical calculations based on existing records of the recurrence of eclipses (neither Thales nor his successors at Miletus knew their cause). He used both forecasts for a strictly practical purpose: the former to establish a "corner" in olive-presses, so that when the harvest came he could hire out these for a large sum, and so prove that a philosopher can get rich if he cares to try; the latter to stop a battle between two neighbouring armies (28th May, 585 B.C.). It is perhaps not going too far to suppose that the scientist was demonstrating that if you want to obtain sure knowledge of the future, you must go to the scientist and not to the oracle of Apollo. If so, then the first known philosopher is also the first of a long line of scientists who have cast doubt on the miraculous content of religion. In Miletus, scepticism concerning Apollo came eventually into the open: towards the end of the sixth century, Hecataeus, a historian and geographer and a member of the "school", advised the Milesian government not to resist the invading Persian army, but if they decided to do so, let them confiscate the treasure of Apollo of Didyma and equip a fleet. His advice was not taken, and Apollo's treasure was left for the Persians to pillage.

Thales' successor Anaximander is not known to have said anything about God or the divine, though he suggested that there was a principle of "justice" at work in the physical universe. Whether this was literally or symbolically meant cannot now be decided, though one may conjecture. The third and last head of the Milesian group, Anaximenes, believed that air was the vital principle as well as the basic form of matter. He said that God is Air, and that our souls also are air. Apparently he derived this view from his observations of the physical world: life depends on breath, therefore breath (or air) *is* life. Thus the Milesians thought of the divine as the source of life, and our souls or any other manifestation of life or activity as part of the divine.

The next great name in the history of philosophy is Pythagoras, who was a younger contemporary of the Milesians (his prime of life is given as 530 B.C.) but whose work was carried on at the other side of the Greek world, in Croton, a Greek city-State of southern Italy. His birthplace was on the island of Samos, which lies off Cape Mycale to the north of the Gulf of Latmos on which Miletus stood, within sailing distance of twenty-five miles. It is certain that the influence of the Milesian thinkers had reached Pythagoras in Samos and set him on the way of philosophic enquiry. From another source he assimilated also much knowledge of religions other than the orthodox Greek beliefs, in particular of Orphism, the religion of reincarnation.

He left Samos, it is said, because he was at variance with the dictator Polycrates, who ruled the island in the middle of the sixth century B.C. After travels to Babylon and Egypt, where he acquired mystical and mathematical lore, he settled at Croton and gathered round him a group of

disciples to whom he taught a complete way of life. He and his adherents gained political power and ruled Croton for a time, but not without opposition. Pythagoras eventually retired to Metapontum, another Greek coastal city-State a hundred miles to the north, and died there. Those of his disciples who remained behind were massacred, all but two, who fled to Greece and spread Pythagorean doctrine on the mainland.

The influence of Pythagoras, personal and doctrinal, on Greek philosophical thought was immeasurable. He left no writings, and even his oral instruction was in part secret, so that its details are still the subject of controversy; but its basic tenets are clear. He taught mathematics to those able to understand them, believing that in Number, or numerical formulae and geometrical figures, lay the explanation of all things and experiences. He also taught the Orphic doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Whether he gave his disciples any direction concerning the nature of God or the divine is not known; but it seems likely, judging from what they taught later, that he regarded God as the Architect (*Dêmiourgos*, Craftsman) of the universe, and thought of Him as creating the original Numbers which explain it. It is probable that he put before his most advanced pupils this intellectual concept of a God who has made an intelligible universe, who, as Plato says in the *Timaeus*, is "always geometrizing". This was the form in which his concept came down to later disciples such as Philolaus who wrote about it; it was no doubt too difficult for the more simple-minded of Pythagoras' followers, and these were offered a way of life according to certain rules. The service of God was inculcated as a means of controlling Man's unruly nature; Pythagoreans were expected to observe certain precepts concerning religious ceremonial, food and clothes. Many of these savour of magic; but

some can be explained in relation to the doctrine of reincarnation. Orphics were not allowed to sacrifice animals or to eat animal flesh or beans, the former because an animal might house a migrating soul, the latter for an unknown reason, no doubt derived from the East.

Pythagoras adopted these rules, wholly or in part, and added others picked up on his travels, for instance, one rule said to be Egyptian, that woollen clothes must not be worn at religious ceremonies, and others which seem purely superstitious and are probably Babylonian. All these things seem to have little to do with the divine and to be wholly concerned with a concept of ritual purity by which the soul would be judged at the end of its incarnations, before the Gods of the Underworld, Pluto and Persephone.

Pythagoras' house at Metapontum was consecrated after his death as a temple of Demeter the mother of Persephone, in commemoration of this aspect of his teaching. He traced his own soul's migration back to a son of the god Hermes, who was identified with the Egyptian god Thoth, the inventor of Number as well as of writing. Pythagoras favoured the cult of Apollo also in one of his aspects, so much so that at one time the people of Croton named him after the god. From all this it is clear that Pythagoras was willing to use the religious concepts of Greece and other countries if they suited his purpose, which was to inculcate a sober and orderly life devoted to religious exercises and to study; but his own concept of the Deity was that of the Creator of the universe with its harmonies and proportions, which can be understood by those who can and will learn the mathematical properties of things, especially geometrical theory.

One of the Pythagorean rules was: "It is forbidden to wear a ring carrying an image of the Deity." This shows that idolatry was discouraged and that God, when wor-

shipped, was to be reverenced by the mind. It also shows that Pythagoras would not allow his disciples to take the image of God in vain by using it as a seal. It is interesting to know that Pythagoras' father Mnêsarchus was an engraver of seal-stones at Samos under Polycrates, when the island was a famous centre of craftsmen. Pythagoras must have been familiar with the whole technique of making rings used for sealing, so that this prohibition would readily occur to him. The dictator's own most valued possession was a signet-ring made of an emerald set in gold ; the story of how he threw it into the sea and how it was returned to him in the belly of a fish is well known. The moral of the story is that " God is a jealous God ".[1]

The doctrine of the spiritual nature of God was brought into prominence by Xenophanes, whose attacks on the legends of the gods as narrated in the poets had an effect far-reaching both on poetry and on philosophy. He was born at Colophon on the coast of Asia Minor to the north of Ephesus and Miletus, and he early assimilated some of the teachings of the Milesian scientists about methods of observation, especially regarding the physical changes of the earth's surface caused by the sea, and allied subjects. His chief interest, however, was not in physical geography but in the nature of the divine.

At the age of twenty-five, as he himself wrote, he left home and travelled about the Mediterranean, especially in the west, along the Italian and Sicilian shores. He wrote poetry and gave public recitations of his works, probably as a means of earning his living ; fragments of these poems survive, and they give us a clear picture of his attitude to Greek orthodox religion and his own concept of God. He said :

[1] For this story and its sequel see Herodotus, Book III, Chapters 40–42, and 120–125.

" God is one, among gods and men the greatest, not at all like mortal men in body or in mind. He sets everything in motion by the thought of His mind, without effort. He remains always in the same place and does not move, for it does not beseem Him to change His position from time to time."

There was no doubt much more in the same strain, but these lines contain all that is left of Xenophanes' attempt to describe a God who is spiritual and not an outsized king with his family, like the Homeric gods. As a preparation for this purified concept he attacked with lively satire the creations of the poets, especially Homer and Hesiod, saying :

" They have narrated every possible wicked story about the gods. They have attributed to them all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind : theft, adultery and mutual deception. Homer began this : he was earlier than Hesiod, and has remained the instructor of all Greece on these matters.

" Mortals believe that the gods are born, and that they have the clothes, voice and body of a human being. But if oxen and horses had hands and could draw and make works of art like those made by Man, horses would draw pictures of gods like horses, and oxen of gods like oxen, and they would make the bodies of their gods after the pattern of their own particular form. Ethiopians have gods with snub noses and black hair, Thracians have gods with grey eyes and red hair . . ."

The worship offered to the gods is wrong, he says : sacrifice and prayer are offered as to a deity, but often the ritual implies that its object is like a human being, as for example the lamentation of the people of Elea for the sea-goddess Leucothea and of the Egyptians for Osiris.

This attack on anthromorphism was timely. No persecution arose to curb Xenophanes' tongue, because his biting words expressed thoughts already present in the minds of the thoughtful, though they took no action. The scepticism of the few did no harm to the worship of these deities by the majority, who loved the festivals associated with the various cults and were willing to maintain the temples and the celebrations. The priests could afford to ignore any criticisms, but from that time onward no serious thinker could be deaf to Xenophanes' strictures, and his view became a vital part of philosophical theories of education, above all in Plato.

Xenophanes offers a new concept of God in place of these traditional portraits of " the gods ". His concept is intellectual, that of a deity stripped of human qualities, such as a physical form, a particular nationality, and above all of sin. This God has no need of physical attributes, since He is able to initiate the movement by which our world is created simply by " the thought of His mind ", that is, by an act of will. He " sees, hears and thinks as a whole ", that is, He has no need of special organs of sense-perception because He is all perception and all intellect. The other " gods " when examined by Xenophanes turn out to be natural phenomena: Iris, the messenger of Homer's gods, is the rainbow; the lights seen on the masts of ships are not, as seamen suppose, the twin gods Castor and Pollux, but " ignited clouds ". The sun and moon, whatever their composition, are not the property of Apollo and Artemis. There are no Titans, Centaurs, Giants or other monsters who are said by the poets to have made war on the gods. These stories are useless fiction, and must be discarded utterly.

Yet sometimes Xenophanes speaks as if there were a place for conventional religion. In a poem describing the orderly and decent ritual that is a fitting worship for the

gods, he gives a delightful picture of a Greek banquet in a private house. Before the feast begins, a libation of wine must be poured and a prayer uttered, as was the custom :

" For now, behold, the floor is clean, and so too the hands of all,
and the cups.
One attendant places woven garlands round our heads,
Another proffers sweet-scented myrrh in a saucer.
The mixing-bowl stands there full of good cheer,
And another wine is ready in the jar,
A wine that promises never to betray us,
Honeyed, smelling of flowers.
In our midst the frankincense gives forth its sacred perfume,
And there is cold water, sweet and pure.
Golden loaves lie to hand,
And the lordly table is laden with cheese and with honey.
The altar in the centre is decked with flowers all over,
And song and revelry fill the mansion.

It is proper for men who are enjoying themselves
First to praise God with decent stories and pure words.
And when they have poured a libation
And prayed for the power to do what is just
—For thus to pray is our foremost need—
It is no outrage to drink your fill,
So long as it is no more than will enable you
To reach home without a guide . . .

But the man whom one must praise is he who after drinking
Expresses thoughts that are noble,
As well as his memory allows,
Concerning virtue,
Not treating of the battles of the Titans or of the Giants,
Figments of our predecessors,
Nor of violent civil war,
In which tales there is nothing useful.
But always to have respect for the gods,
That is best."

Perhaps he here uses the language of polytheism to suit his audience, for he was a travelling bard and had to earn a living by his recitals; but it is possible that he himself believed that the One God "among gods and men the greatest" did delegate his powers to lesser divine powers, who were not omnipotent human beings like Apollo and Artemis but who existed in their spheres as immanent controlling forces. Xenophanes did not, so far as we can see, think out this matter to the end; he was content if he could purge the concept of divinity of all that was fallible, and also purify their worship of all gross and irrational elements.

Xenophanes' work, like that of Pythagoras, was carried out in the west of the Greek world, in Italy and Sicily. Meanwhile there had arisen on the eastern fringe a far greater thinker. Heracleitus was born at Ephesus and lived there all his life. This city-State, which lay only about fifty miles north of Miletus and less than twenty to the south of Xenophanes' native city-State of Colophon, was extremely prosperous in Heracleitus' time (the later sixth and early fifth centuries B.C.) and remained so. The original immigrants from Greece who founded Ephesus came under an Athenian prince as their leader, and selected a site already occupied by some non-Greeks who worshipped an Asiatic Nature-goddess. They took over this cult and renamed the goddess Artemis.

A temple to Artemis was built by the Greek settlers in the middle of the seventh century B.C. This was extended in the following century with the co-operation of a celebrated architect and inventor named Theodorus, from the island of Samos. Thus, like the Milesian philosophers, Heracleitus was brought up under the influence of one of the greatest cults of antiquity. Artemis of Ephesus became known all over the Greek world. In her home town she

was worshipped as " Highest-enthroned ", supreme in divine power and place, and the coins of the city-State were stamped with her emblems, especially the bee and the palm-tree and the half-stag, all symbols of fertility for which she stood.

Heracleitus displayed no open hostility to the local deity ; in fact he is said to have dedicated his book to her, and it is well known that in spite of some Asiatic elements the cult of Artemis goddess of the Ephesians was exceptionally pure. The sect of the Essenes who were attached to the Temple was bound by strict rules of celibacy and of austerity of diet. Whether Heracleitus criticised any aspect of her worship we do not know ; he cannot have approved of the idolatrous side of it. But he did accept other Greek religious beliefs. He spoke with profound admiration of Apollo's oracle at Delphi :

> " The Lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but indicates by signs."

He spoke with similar admiration of one of the Sibylline oracles, which of them is uncertain :

> " The Sibyl with raving mouth uttering her unlaughing, unadorned, unincensed words reaches out over a thousand years with her voice through the inspiration of the God (Apollo)."

He also spoke of the Furies as " ministers of Justice ". But all other religious cults—the so-called Mysteries of Orpheus and of Demeter and Persephone, the rites of the Bacchants, Maenads, wizards and other initiates, are, he says, unholy revelations, positively harmful when not merely foolish. They teach men to chatter to idols, to take part in obscenity, intemperance and all unrestraint. If the followers of Dionysus (the Bacchants and Maenads) knew the true Law

or Logos of the universe, they would realise that their god is another form of Hades (Death), for he teaches self-indulgence, which is death to the soul. Actually, he says, it is no god that so ordains: the Bacchants use the name of Dionysus to excuse things which would otherwise be considered utterly shameful, such as the obscene phallic hymn, when the male organ of generation, as a symbol of fertility, is carried in procession. The rites of purification likewise are a farce: the participants try to cleanse blood-guilt by defiling themselves with the blood of the sacrifice, as though a man were to wash himself by stepping into mud. Prayer when addressed to idols is like trying to hold a conversation with a house, and anyway, it is not good for men to get what they want, for they are ignorant of the true wisdom, and most of them live like cattle, caring for nothing except food and the procreation of children who will live as they have lived and die as they have died.

As for those who are considered wise, there are first of all the poets Homer and Hesiod, accepted by all the Greeks as their teachers, but unworthy of this honour, because they were as much deceived by appearances as the majority of men. Religious teachers like the Orphics know nothing of what they profess to know above all things, namely, the next world: there await men after death such things as they do not dream of. The philosophers, again, have accumulated much learning, but it does not amount to wisdom. Heracleitus expressly names Pythagoras and Xenophanes and Hecataeus the Milesian as teachers who have not attained to wisdom. A passage has come down to us under Heracleitus' name which calls the wisdom of Pythagoras "a mere accumulation of information, an art of deception".

What then was Heracleitus' own concept of God? He believed that God existed and could manifest Himself in oracular responses. Heracleitus in his book adopted an

oracular style, so much so that he was generally accused of obscurity and nicknamed *Skoteinos*, " the Dark ". He wrote this because he felt himself to be, like the Sibyl and the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, a vehicle through which the divine Word, the Logos, the Law by which our universe is created and governed, was revealed to mankind. The Logos is the supreme Ruler to whom the Greeks give the name of Zeus ; this name serves as well as another, and it does not matter, he says, by what title the Creator is known, so long as His true nature is realised. He is in fact not a personal god, certainly not the Zeus of mythology, but a creative Force, the intelligent Governor of an intelligible universe and the fount of all energy and all life. This Force is not capricious, like a human ruler : it is Law and rules according to Law, and all its works are " in measure ".

Heracleitus strives to express the loftiness of his concept : " The wisest of men when compared with God will seem an ape in wisdom, beauty and all other qualities." The Godhead transcends all : in its eyes everything is fair, good and just ; it is only human beings who find some things wrong, others right. Thus he conceives of God as all-embracing, and does not recognise a duality at the source of creation.

" God is day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, satiety-hunger." God did not create the conditions of existence : the universal order was, is and ever shall be. There is no moment of creation : there is an eternal cycle of change, in which universes come into being, pass away and come into being again everlastingly.

To Heracleitus as well as to Xenophanes God was the apotheosis of Creative Intelligence as well as the source of all things. The next great thinker, Parmenides of Elea on the west coast of Italy, seems to have felt no need for a deity in his logical system, because he completely rejected the

validity of the created universe, saying that the evidence of our senses is sheer illusion. The only reality is Pure Being, which is one, uncreated, eternal, unchanging, motionless and—he strangely adds—spherical. Parmenides, having studied all the known systems of science and philosophy in his youth, claimed to have had a revelation of Pure Being and to have henceforth turned his back on all sensory experience. His attention was then concentrated on logically proving this original doctrine, that there are no such things as separate objects which change, move, give out sounds, come into being, pass away, and so on.

His teachings were accepted with enthusiasm by a number of disciples, in particular by Zeno, who invented a number of puzzles in support of Parmenides' logic, and by Melissus who introduced life into the concept of Pure Being by saying that " Being does not feel pain ". But of course Being did not feel pleasure either: if Being has any sensation, it is changeless. In short, God has no place in the paradoxical world-theory of the Parmenidean school of thought; there is no room in it for anything except what they call " That-which-Is ". Melissus is reported to have said: " One must not make statements about the gods, because no knowledge about them exists." This purely logical structure of theirs could not be discussed except in terms of logic; if the universe of our experience is an illusion, there is no point in trying to understand it. If it is not created but simply *is*, somewhere outside our perception, there is no need to look for a creator or a ruler.

However cogent Parmenides' logic at first appeared,[1] the active Greek mind could not long endure this deadlock. The phenomena of our universe might be illusory, but they had an air of reality, or at least solidity, that no logic could

[1] For his arguments see my *Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* pp. 147–8.

dissipate, and they were above all endlessly interesting. This led subsequent thinkers to attempt some other explanation of the difficulties Parmenides had set up in the way of believing in the existence of what we perceive. Foremost among these was Empedocles of Acragas on the south coast of Sicily, one of the most remote but most prosperous city-States of the Greek world.

Empedocles' native city was devoted to the worship of the gods, both the Olympian gods and those whose realm was the underworld. The rulers of Acragas built huge temples on the city crag, without regard to the cost in material and in labour. As their material wealth increased and the Greek success in their war against Carthage brought them countless prisoners of war, so did they build more and more lavishly, temples to Zeus, Athene, Hera, Castor and Pollux, Hephaestus, Heracles, Aesculapius. Above all they were devoted to the worship of Demeter and Persephone, whose cult offered a revelation concerning the destiny of the human soul. This revelation had first been proclaimed to men, so it was said, by the prophet Orpheus; it had gained a powerful hold in Sicily and Italy, where its propagation had been greatly accelerated by the teachings of Pythagoras.

Empedocles, by vocation a physician, was interested in all natural phenomena. He wrote two great poems, one an attempt to explain the creation and working of the physical universe, the other religious, on the nature and duty of Man. In the former he eliminated the Olympian deities as such, though he used their names. He believed that there were four elements from which all other things are created by combination and separation; these elements are Fire, Earth, Air and Water, and to them he gives the titles, as poetical ornaments merely, of Zeus and Hera, Hades and (a local water-goddess) Nestis. The forces that bring

together and separate the elements are akin to biological attraction and repulsion, and he called them Love and Hate. The Olympian deities have no real existence. There was a time, he says, when the world was ruled by Love, whom mortals still worship under the name of Aphrodite. During the reign of Love, mortals had no God of War (Ares), no Battle-Fury, no Zeus the King, no Cronos, no Poseidon, but Aphrodite reigned as Queen. She was worshipped with bloodless sacrifices:

"Men sought to please her with pious gifts,
With pictures of animals and perfumes of cunningly-devised smell,
With sacrifice of pure myrrh and of fragrant incense,
And by pouring libations of honey on to the ground.
The altar was not drenched with the blood of bulls.
There was no more polluted deed among men
Than to devour the goodly limbs of animals
Whose life they had reft from them....

All creatures, both animals and birds, were tame and gentle towards Man,
And friendliness glowed between them."

In this exalted passage taken from his religious poem *Purifications*, Empedocles paints a nostalgic picture of a Golden Age of the world when Love united all things. Now, he says, we are living in the reign of Hate, and our dearest wish should be to escape from this life into the eternal blessedness that awaits those souls who are nearing the end of their cycle of existence. He believes that there is a supreme Deity, and describes Him thus:

"It is not possible to bring God near,
Within reach of our eyes,
Nor to grasp Him with our hands,

By which way the broadest road of Persuasion runs into the human mind.

He is not equipped with a human head on a body,
Nor from his back do two arms grow like branches.
He has no feet, no swift knees, no hairy genital organs.
He is Mind, holy and ineffable, and only Mind,
Which darts through the universe with its swift thoughts. . . .

The Law for all men extends continuously
Through the broad-ruling Air and through the boundless Light."

Yet in Empedocles' scheme this Deity seems to have no function. He is not a father of a family, like Zeus; but neither is he responsible for the creation and working of an intelligible universe. The creation of all things animate and inanimate is ascribed to Chance, which brings together and separates the elements until a combination is arrived at which has the power to survive; he even suggests that the gods, or our notions about them, come into being temporarily in the same way:

"From the Elements come all things that were and are and will be,
Trees spring up, and men and women,
And beasts and birds and water-nurtured fish,
And even the long-lived gods who are highest in honour.
The Elements alone exist,
But by running through one another they become different:
To such a degree does intermingling change them. . . .

Let not Deception compel your mind to believe that there is any other source for mortal existences,
As many as are to be seen in countless numbers . . .

On the Earth, many foreheads without necks sprang forth,
Arms wandered unattached, bereft of shoulders,
Eyes strayed alone, lacking brows,
Limbs wandered separate . . .
But as the two Forces, Love and Hate, became more and more entangled,
These things fell together as each chanced,
And many others also were continuously produced.

There were creatures with rolling gait and innumerable hands,
And many with a face and breast on both sides,
Offspring of cattle with the fronts of men,
And again offspring of men with heads of cattle,
Creatures part-man, part-woman,
Equipped with hairy limbs."

In this system there is no room for a creative or governing Deity. " God " is the Whole, as Parmenides had said:

" God is equal in all directions to Himself,
Altogether eternal,
A rounded sphere enjoying a circular solitude."

But according to Empedocles this " circular solitude " is only a stage in the cycle of creation. Hate grows up within the perfect Sphere and causes the Elements to separate so as to bring about the creation of a world like our own.

This is his view as a scientist. In his religious scheme there is room for divinities. Here his doctrine is orthodox Orphic. The soul after each incarnation must face the judges of the underworld, who assign to him his next lot in the world. In the end, if he obeys all the rules, above all the rule of abstinence from bloodshed and the eating of flesh and beans, the gods will allow him to join the company of the Blessed and live with them for ever. Each soul was

originally a divine being, but lost his place in heaven through sin. He is now adjudged pure and fit to be restored. Empedocles himself claimed to be near the end of his own cycle of existence; he has been, he says, in turn a boy, a girl, a plant, a bird and a fish. He addresses his fellow-citizens of Acragas with gratitude in return for the honour they have done him; he has benefited them in his capacity as physician and teacher, and now:

"I go about among you as an immortal god,
No longer a mortal,
Held in honour by all
As I seem to them to deserve.

When I come to them in their flourishing towns,
To men and women,
I am honoured.
They follow me in their thousands,
To inquire where is the path of advantage,
Some desiring oracles,
Others asking to hear a word of healing for their manifold diseases,
Because they have long been pierced with cruel pains.

But why do I lay stress on these things,
As if I were achieving something great
In that I surpass mortal men
Who are liable to many forms of destruction?"

The prophet, the poet, the physician and the prince are the highest order of mortals: they are near the end of their doleful journey on earth, that unfamiliar land, and are about to blossom forth as "gods, highest in honour". When they cross the border, they will live in company with the other immortals, sharing their hearth and table, freed from mortal ills.

Though Empedocles uses the language of poetry and

mythology to express his beliefs, his concept of apotheosis is one of purification and self-discipline. He believes himself to have attained to a true knowledge of divinity through the Orphic revelation and his own researches, and that this knowledge is of paramount importance to Man:

> " Blessed is he who has acquired the treasure of divine thoughts!
> Wretched is the man in whose mind dwells an obscure opinion about the gods! "

Anaxagoras, who came from Clazomenae in Asia Minor, some thirty miles to the north-west of Xenophanes' native city Colophon, migrated to Athens at some time in the middle of the fifth century B.C. on the invitation of Pericles. He spent thirty years there, and was a recluse, mixing only with the few. He wrote a book on the Nature of the Universe, and was impeached for his materialistic views, which were in direct opposition to the current religion. Whether there were, as was alleged, political motives behind the accusation, or whether at this time there was an anti-sacrilegious scare in Athens, as is very likely, Pericles did not allow his protégé to face an Athenian jury-court but shipped him away before the trial could take place. A charge of impiety at Athens was a serious offence punishable by death or exile; some thirty years later, Socrates suffered condemnation and death on this charge.

Anaxagoras was much influenced by his predecessors the Milesian scientists in the physical sphere, though he put forward an original theory of matter with which we are not here concerned. His views concerning orthodox religion seem to be like a development of those of Xenophanes. He said, for instance, that the moon is earth and the sun a red-hot mass, thus leaving no room for Artemis and Apollo. According to him, no divinity presided over the creation

of the universe either at the beginning or later; it was brought about by the action of a force which he called Nous, Mind or Intellect.

This force, equivalent in his system to Empedocles' two forces Love and Hate, existed in the beginning when all was yet chaos, and then, taking command, caused a revolution to start somewhere in the mass, so that the universe we know was evolved by the combination of like particles. The terms he uses to describe Mind show that to him it was the equivalent of God, and was in fact a development of Xenophanes' theory that God " sets everything in motion by the thought of his Mind ". Anaxagoras says:

" In everything there is a portion of everything, the exception being Mind; and some things contain Mind also.

"Other things all contain a part of everything, but Mind is infinite and self-ruling, and is mixed with no Thing, but is alone by itself. If it were not by itself, but were mixed with anything else, it would have had a share of all Things, if it were mixed with anything; for in everything there is a portion of everything, as I have said before. And the things mixed with Mind would have prevented it, so that it could not rule over any Thing in the same way as it can being alone by itself.

"For it is the finest of all Things and the purest, and has complete understanding of everything, and has the greatest power. All things which have life, both the greater and the less, are ruled by Mind.

"Mind took command of the universal revolution, so as to make things revolve at the outset. And at first things began to revolve from some small point, but now the revolution extends over a greater area, and will spread even further. And the things which were mixed together,

and separated off, and divided, were all understood by Mind. And whatever they were going to be, and whatever things were then in existence that are not now, and all things that now exist and whatever shall exist, all were arranged by Mind, as also the revolutions (orbits) now followed by the heavenly bodies, the sun and moon, and the Air and Aether that were separated off. It was this revolution which caused the separation-off.

"Dense separates from rare, hot from cold, bright from dark, dry from wet. There are many portions of many things. Nothing is absolutely separated off or divided from other things except Mind. Mind is all alike, the greater and the less."

Another trace of his acquaintance with Xenophanes' work is his reference to Iris, messenger of the gods in Homeric mythology:

" We give the name Iris to the reflection of the sun on the clouds."

Thus his concept of God was of an intellectual Force which created the world by initiating a revolution in space; this Force is to him completely without personality or any other quality than that of having supreme power to arrange matter according to a plan which can be at any rate partly understood by the human intellect which is a portion of the original Force. In Empedocles' scheme, Love, though a Force, was also good, and Hate was evil. Anaxagoras' Mind does not seem to be responsible for the universe it creates, once the process has begun; it stands aloof, as later philosophers, Socrates and Aristotle for instance, complained. Anaxagoras was trying to describe a ruling Power which was quite unlike a human being, and was immaterial, like thought in ourselves.

But Anaxagoras' real interest was in the Cosmos, the ordered universe itself, with its laws, forces and intelligible structure ; there was no place in his scheme for a personal God, so that to Christian writers, Irenaeus for instance, he seemed an atheist. He was concerned to remove the physical universe—the heavenly bodies and all natural phenomena—out of the realm of mythology and magic into that of science. He won the friendship and admiration of Pericles, Euripides and other Athenians for the sobriety of his life and especially for the steadfastness he showed in face of trouble such as bereavement, a characteristic which in modern times has become one of the popular meanings of " philosophical ". After his flight from Athens he took refuge in Lampsacus on the Dardanelles, and died there a few years later. He was so greatly honoured there that in later times the government of Lampsacus used his portrait-statue on their coins.

The theories of the scientific philosophers, being chiefly concerned with the creation of the visible universe, had tended more and more towards the elimination of the concept of God except as a Force responsible for the movement and ordered arrangement of material substances. Meanwhile, at Abdera on the coast of Thrace, there had arisen a school of thought which carried these theories to their logical conclusion. Leucippus and Democritus of Abdera constructed the universe of our perception out of the movements of atoms in space. Their physical system had no need of any God to begin or to direct it. Universes, they said, arise spontaneously out of circular eddies or revolutions of atoms in space, and no Force, either biological or intelligent, such as Empedocles' Love and Hate or Anaxagoras' Mind, is required. The power of initial motion seems to be inherent in the atoms themselves, and once they

begin to revolve, combinations and separations take place according to physical laws.

Such was the pure atomic theory, in which there was no place for any deity, and no doubt this was the work of the otherwise unknown Leucippus. But his pupil Democritus was a man of wide interest and lively curiosity. He could no more remain satisfied with this mechanical theory than Parmenides' successors could rest on the theory of Pure Being. The Greek mind was bound to explore and to speculate.

Democritus' curiosity was fed from another source also, that of Persian magic. Abdera, lying on the route from Asia into Greece along the north Aegean coast, was a meeting-place of travellers. In 480 B.C., when the Persian army under Xerxes attempted their invasion of Greece, Abdera was one of their stopping-places. With the King were always his official interpreters of omens, the Magi, a priestly caste descended from the Chaldees of Babylon, who claimed the "magic" powers still named after their sect: prophecy, transmutation of ordinary substances into gold, silver and precious stones, cures and incantations for disease in men and animals. Democritus was probably not born until about twenty years after the Persian invasion, but the tradition persisted and became part of his intellectual equipment. On the death of his father he spent his share of the patrimony on travels to Babylon and Egypt, and also to Athens where, he said, "no one knew me". He returned to Abdera and gathered round him a group of students, teaching and writing on every subject of interest to speculative thought.

Thus, though the basis of his system was a mechanistic determinism, he wrote at length on human concerns also: religion, ethics, psychology, political theory and education. His attitude towards religion was subversive: he wished to eliminate from men's minds all belief in the existence of

immortal gods, because this provokes fear, and fear is incompatible with the ideal state of mind, which he called Imperturbability, that is, philosophic calm, freedom from disturbance by the emotions. The origins of religious fear, he said, lie in the primitive terror caused by the elements, thunder, lightning, eclipses and other natural phenomena; when these are understood not to be the acts of angry or capricious gods but due to physical causes, fear will vanish. Tales about the next world, which also are a source of anxiety and fear in this life, are inventions: there is no after-life. This was a denial of the Orphic religion with its teachings of reincarnation, a judgement of the soul after death by the gods of the underworld, and punishment for sin. The soul being, like everything else, a combination of atoms, is dissipated on the death of the body and joins the other atoms.

Nevertheless, although he disbelieved in the gods as superintendents of the universe and dispensers of rewards and punishments in this life or after death, he knew that men saw visions of the gods, especially in dreams; and since to him every percept, even in a dream, had some physical cause, he suggested that these visions were combinations of atoms, real but not immortal, like our own souls, but not so easily or so soon dispersed. His views on the nature of divinity, however, were not fixed or consistent. This was seen even in antiquity, by Cicero for instance, who remarked that Democritus sometimes says that the gods are the visions we see, often deceptive or injurious, sometimes natural causes that produce these visions, sometimes the principle of Mind in the universe and in ourselves.

In his ethical writings Democritus suggests that the gods care about virtue: "The only men who are dear to the gods are those to whom crime is hateful." He also says that the gods are the source of good, not evil:

" The gods are the givers of all good things, both in the past and now. They are not the givers of things that are bad or harmful or non-beneficial, either in the past or now. Men themselves fall into these through blindness of mind and lack of sense."

Yet elsewhere he says:

" Of reasoning men a few, raising their hands thither to what we Greeks call Air nowadays, said: 'Zeus considers all things and he knows all and gives and takes away all and is king of all.' "

This clearly indicates that he thought these men mistaken in their view of a supreme deity who dispenses good and evil. He also said that prayer to the gods is useless when one prays for things like health. The power to keep or lose health lies in ourselves: we " sell our health to our desires ". The reason for pursuing virtue and wisdom is that they alone bring happiness, that is, well-being, serenity (not pleasure, which except in moderation brings disturbance). Virtue must be practised even when one is alone, not with a view to the judgement of the gods or of men, but in order to stand well with one's inner judge, one's conscience.

Thus on the whole it is clear that though sometimes Democritus spoke of " gods " in his writings, he did not really believe either in the gods of Greek mythology or in a supreme ruler or in any immaterial existence, but only in atoms and space. Denying as he did that there was any other life than this present one, he thought that it should be lived to the best advantage, that is, in the cultivation of wisdom and virtue which bring happiness. This doctrine, in his view, needs no divine sanction but is complete in itself.

Abdera also produced the most famous of those travelling teachers known as Sophists. The name usually meant "professional purveyor of knowledge" without any other implication, though the meaning "smart, clever" was also in use throughout the fifth century in the tragedians, and there was from the first a certain scorn on the part of Athenians, even those who attended the Sophists' lectures and admired their work, for men who took fees in return for "wisdom". Protagoras, born at Abdera in about 490 B.C., was thirty years older than Democritus, and may actually, as tradition believed, have received some instruction from the Magi who came there with Xerxes in 480 B.C. But there is no obvious trace of Persian doctrine in Protagoras' recorded teachings. He was also said to have studied under his junior, Democritus; but this is not possible, as Protagoras left Abdera at about the time when Democritus was born. Protagoras lived till the age of seventy, and presumably he returned home to Abdera from time to time, so that the two men may have met and exchanged views, but nothing is known of the relationship between their work and teachings, though it certainly existed.

Protagoras was the first to place the emphasis in his philosophical teaching on Man rather than on Nature. His chief work therefore claims consideration later[1] rather than here. But he wrote a book *On the Gods*, of which one sentence, the first, is preserved:

> "With regard to the gods, I cannot know whether they exist or do not exist, nor what they are like in appearance, because the factors preventing knowledge are many: the obscurity of the subject and the brevity of human life."

[1] See Chapter III, pp. 128–130.

This religious agnosticism accords with his view that there is no absolute truth or absolute virtue; there is therefore no need to suppose a source of truth or virtue or a dispenser of rewards and punishments. He did not say that the gods did not exist, but merely that knowledge of any kind on this subject was impossible.

Critias of Athens, nobleman, politician and leader of the oligarchic party in the last decade of the fifth century, went much further. He dabbled in philosophy and wrote much in verse and prose. In one of his plays, a character declares that religion was invented for the protection of society; Justice and Law arose first, but these could prevent only detectable crimes. In order to check the commission of secret crimes, somebody thought of suggesting divine retribution:

> "At that point, I believe, some shrewd and clever man invented fear of the gods for mortals, so that there might be some means of frightening the wicked, even if they do or say something or say or think it in secret. Hence he introduced the idea of the Divine, saying that there is a God flourishing with immortal life, hearing and seeing with his mind, and thinking of everything and caring about these things, and having divine nature, who will hear everything said among mortals, and will be able to see all that is done. And even if you plan anything evil in secret, you will not escape the gods in this, for they have surpassing intelligence.
>
> "In saying these words, he introduced the pleasantest of teachings, covering up the truth with a false theory. He said that the gods dwelt in the region where he could most frighten men by saying it, where he knew that fears exist for mortals and rewards for the hard life: in the upper sphere, where they saw lightnings

and heard the dread rumblings of thunder, and saw the starry-faced body of heaven, the beautiful embroidery of Time the skilled craftsman, whence come forth the bright mass of the sun and the wet shower upon the earth.

" With such fears did he surround mankind, through which he well established the Deity with his argument, and in a fitting place, and quenched lawlessness among men. . . .

" Thus, I think, for the first time did someone persuade mortals to believe in a race of deities."

Meanwhile at Athens Socrates, born in 469 B.C., was pursuing his independent path, applying scientific method to the analysis and definition of virtue. His ethical contribution will be discussed later.[1] Meanwhile, what did he think about " the gods " and God ?

The difficulty of disentangling the opinions of Socrates himself from the Socrates of Plato's dialogues is well known. This is not the place for its detailed examination. The answer depends on our assessment of the value of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, which purports to give a picture of the real Socrates in conversation with friends. In my opinion, Xenophon's picture is less like the reality than the dramatic portrait in the early dialogues of Plato, because Xenophon, though a sincere and truthful writer, did not know Socrates as intimately as Plato did, and was not capable of understanding the subtler sallies of Socrates' irony or the more profound implications of his thought. Plato was sometimes at pains to correct the picture drawn by Xenophon. One of these corrections concerns Socrates' beliefs about the gods.

We know both from Plato and from Xenophon that Socrates in his youth studied the theories, physical and biological, of all the scientific philosophers, but since

[1] See Chapter II, pp. 94–96.

he did not find there what he wished to know, he gave up this study and turned to that of human activity, its motives and purposes. But the two writers give different reasons for Socrates' rejection of science. Xenophon says that Socrates deprecated the study of geometry and astronomy, for example, except in so far as they are of practical use: the concept of knowledge for its own sake is mistaken. Moreover, Xenophon makes Socrates say, such things are not discoverable by Man, and it is not pleasing to the gods that Man should enquire into things they have not wished to make plain. The man who gives his thought to such matters is as mad as Anaxagoras! There follows a very naïve "proof" of Anaxagoras' folly in saying that the sun is a fiery stone.

If Socrates really said this, then he was a stupid obscurantist unworthy of a place in the history of Greek thought. But did he? Did not Xenophon misrepresent his hero in his eagerness to prove to the Athenian masses after the death of Socrates that they had wrongly and wickedly condemned him for impiety? There is little doubt that this is so. Plato in one of his dialogues[1] puts into the mouth of Socrates an exactly opposite assertion:

> "I should not be prepared to make any strong assertion on any point in the argument except this: if we believe we are bound to enquire into what we do not know, we show ourselves better and braver and less lazy than if we believe that we cannot discover and ought not to enquire into what we do not understand. This proposition I would fight for to the end, if I could, both in word and in deed."

The matter in question is Virtue, but the principle is plainly asserted, and in this very dialogue Socrates is

[1] *Meno*, 86B.

shown demonstrating the thesis that Knowledge is Recollection by questioning a slave-boy on a geometrical theorem. Thus Plato knew that Socrates did not believe in any divine limit imposed on the search for knowledge, and has corrected the wrong impression given by Xenophon.

If Socrates gave up the study of astronomy, it was not because of any superstitious theory that the gods objected to our studying the heavenly bodies, but for the reasons given in Plato's dialogue *Phaedo*. Here Socrates is shown explaining to his friends that he found the physical and mechanistic theories of the universe unsatisfactory because he failed to find therein any account of the part played by Design, even in writers like Anaxagoras who called his creative Force Mind, a name suggesting intelligent arrangement. Socrates gave up the study of mechanistic causation not for utilitarian and superstitious reasons but in order to seek for a deeper reality than that offered by science. Deliberately confining his enquiries to the sphere of human activity, he sought to define in general terms the nature of the virtues, by questioning all men whom he met and exposing the errors and confusions in their thinking.

He embarked on this quest, which eventually led to his condemnation for impiety, in the belief that it was a divine mission. We can accept Plato's *Apology* or Defence of Socrates as a substantially true though not *verbatim* report of what Socrates said at his trial. The following passage contains the essence of Socrates' character: irony and simplicity, complete independence and freedom from fear combined with complete obedience to a behest he regarded as sacred:

"My sort of wisdom—if it can be called wisdom—is attested to by no less a witness than the God of Delphi: I will show you how.

"You know Chaerophon, of course. He was a friend

of mine from youth, and a fellow-democrat with you, sharing in your exile and your return. You know the sort of man he was—how fanatical in all his undertakings. Well, one day he went to Delphi and had the impudence to ask the oracle (please don't shout me down, jurymen)—he asked if there were any man wiser than I. The reply that came from the Priestess of Apollo was that there was no one wiser . . .

" When I was told this, I thought: ' What on earth does the God mean ? What riddle is this he has uttered ? I am certainly unaware of being wise in anything, great or small. So what can he mean by saying that I am the wisest man ? He cannot be telling a lie: he is incapable of it.' For a long time I was puzzled, wondering what he could mean. At last, very reluctantly, I undertook a sort of enquiry into his meaning, in this way:

" I went to a man who had a reputation for wisdom, thinking that here if anywhere I should be able to prove the oracle mistaken and to demonstrate that ' this man is wiser than I, although you said I was the wisest.' So I examined him (I needn't give his name: he was a politician) and talked with him, and I formed the opinion that though he seemed wise to many and especially to himself, he was not so. Then I tried to show him that his opinion of himself was mistaken. This earned me the hostility of the man himself and of many of our audience. But as I went off, I thought to myself: ' I am wiser than this man. Probably neither of us knows anything remarkable, but he is ignorant and thinks he has knowledge, whereas I am aware of my ignorance. At any rate, I think I am wiser by just this trifling amount, that I don't think I know what I don't know.' "

Socrates describes how he went from this man to another

reputed wise, with the same result, so that he made more enemies. But he continued his quest, because he felt he must at all costs pursue the enquiry imposed on him by the God. He went from politicians to poets, from poets to craftsmen. All had the same deficiency: they were skilled in their own art, and they thought that this made them wise in matters of the highest moment. Thus Socrates, having no such confidence, was in that respect wiser than they, and the oracle was vindicated. He concludes:

> "To this day I am still going round searching and on the strength of what the God declared, examining anyone, native or foreigner, who I think is wise. And when I don't find him so, I demonstrate, as the God's ally, that this man is not wise. Because of this occupation I have had no time to give to public affairs nor to my own, and I am in the direst poverty because of my service to the God."

In Xenophon's Memoirs, Socrates is shown as believing that the gods should be served, in gratitude for their kindness to us; that they are concerned for Man's welfare is proved by natural phenomena designed for Man's benefit. No contrary instances of destructive natural forces are given, and the theory is put into Socrates' mouth that "clearly the animals are created and reared for the benefit of Man". Again, this is a rather crude misunderstanding by Xenophon, which Plato's portrait corrects. According to Plato, Socrates obeyed the oracle of Apollo not out of gratitude but in order to find out what was meant by it, and in his enquiries he was not seeking to prove that the world was designed for Man's convenience but that its design if examined would turn out to be best in a general sense. For instance, he was willing to believe that death,

thought by all to be the greatest evil, might turn out to be the greatest good.

In Xenophon's book, Socrates is depicted as saying that the gods should be consulted by means of divination on all matters that could not be learnt in any human way; to ask them what one could find out by other means was impious, but they would indicate by their oracles to those whom they favoured what could not otherwise be known. Plato's Socrates, on the other hand, does not consult the oracle at Delphi on his own account, and he would have prevented his friend and admirer Chaerephon from asking this particular question; but Chaerephon "had the impudence" to do so, and once the answer was received, Socrates accepted it. So too when Xenophon was invited to join the army of Prince Cyrus, and consulted Socrates, Socrates advised him to consult Delphi. But Xenophon, having already decided to go, asked the oracle which gods he should approach with sacrifice and supplication in order to prosper on the expedition. When Xenophon returned and told Socrates what question he had put to the oracle and which names it had given him, Socrates reproved him for having suppressed the original question whether it would be better for him to go or not; "but," said Socrates, "since you have put the question in this form, you must do as the God directs".

This story has the ring of truth, and it shows that Socrates believed in the consultation of oracles, at any rate of the oracle at Delphi. He did not think that oracular advice should be sought except on serious matters, but the answer once obtained must be scrupulously obeyed. He had within him his own private "divine voice" which always prohibited him from doing what would be to his hurt; it did not speak when he left the house to go to his trial, and he therefore assumed that the outcome would be

for his good, even if it were death. His allegiance was to what he knew by direct intuition to be honourable: obedience to the best, divine or human. We shall not go far wrong if we suppose that to Socrates God was the source of Good, the Commander, Guardian and Friend of the good man; that in life He indicates His will in various ways, through oracles and through a man's own intuition, and after death receives the soul of the man who has fulfilled his duty. Socrates' farewell words to those who voted for his acquittal were:

> "Be of good hope in the face of death. Believe for certain this one truth, that no evil can befall a good man either in life or in death, and that his fate is not a matter of indifference to the gods."

And to the whole jury:

> "Now the time has come when we must depart: I to my death, you to go on living. But which of us is going to the better fate is unknown to all except God."

Plato, born in 428 B.C., was forty years younger than Socrates, whom he did not meet until he was in his twentieth year, that is, less than a decade before Socrates' condemnation to death for impiety. Plato was present at the trial and was one of the four close friends of Socrates who offered to contribute the sum of thirty minae (about £1,000 or $3,000) proposed by the defendant as a counter-penalty. When Socrates drank the hemlock, Plato owing to illness was not among those who spent the last hours with him. After the death of Socrates, Plato devoted his life to the pursuit of philosophy and the vindication of Socrates. At first these two aims coincided; then gradually Plato's own thought drew away from that of Socrates and he created his own

system, embracing metaphysics, ethics, psychology, education and politics.

Plato's building up of his concept of God can, like that of his concept of education, be divided into two parts: the critical-preparatory and the constructive. First, in the *Republic*, he tells us what God is not; later, in the *Timaeus* especially, he endeavours to show what God is and does.

In the famous passage of the *Republic*[1] where Socrates (Plato) begins his discussion on education with a criticism of the stories told to children about the gods, he complains that Homer, Hesiod and the other poets have composed untrue tales about them. Many of the tales are not only false but ugly, attributing to the gods monstrous crimes, internecine fighting and quarrelling and so on. The purpose may be allegorical, he allows, but even so such tales must not be told to children, who are not able to distinguish between allegory and fact. The canon for poets must be to represent God as He really is.

This leads directly to an attempt to define the nature of God, or rather to exclude from the concept of God everything unworthy:

> God is wholly good, and not the cause of evil. He is not, therefore, the cause of all things that happen to men, but only of a few, since the good things we enjoy are fewer than the bad. The former must be attributed to God, the latter to " some other cause, not God ".
>
> If God causes suffering, this must be right and good; the suffering must be a punishment which benefits the sufferers, otherwise it is not from God.
>
> God does not assume different forms at different times like a magician; he remains steadfast in his own form.
>
> God cannot deceive or lie.

[1] 377A, *sqq.*

To sum up:

> "God is simple and true in word and deed, he does not change himself; nor does he delude others, either in phantasies or words, or by sending signs, whether in waking moments or in dreams."[1]

The attribution of weakness, meanness and other vices to demigods and heroes is also condemned: the poet must either cease to tell such stories or cease to say that the doers are the sons of gods. The description of the next world as a terrible place must also be forbidden, because it conduces to fear and cowardice.

In this set of canons we see the influence of Plato's predecessors. That God is the cause of good and not of evil is a repudiation of Heracleitus' view that good and bad, like the other opposite qualities, are the same in the eyes of God who is their source, whereas only men draw a distinction. Plato does not suggest a cause for evil—only that the cause is not God. He does not maintain that all suffering is good for us, but only that unless the suffering be beneficial it is not from God; he does not suggest a source for the kind of suffering that is not a punishment or a discipline.

The doctrine that God does not change His shape or His place is derived from Xenophanes and from Parmenides' logical concept of Pure Being. What is new is the detailed application of these canons to the poets from whom hitherto the education of Greece had been derived.

In several of his dialogues[2] Plato introduces a story embodying doctrines derived from the Orphics and Pythagoreans about the destiny of the soul: that it is immortal and was once exiled from bliss as a punishment for some sin. It is sent to earth, and after death has to come

[1] *Republic*, 382E (Lindsay's translation). [2] *Republic*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*.

up for judgement.[1] The blameless are sent to the Isles of the Blest. Those who have committed crimes on earth pay for these tenfold, and at the end of a thousand years are allowed to choose another life, which may be human or animal. The incurably wicked may be condemned to everlasting punishment. The cycle of expiation is usually ten thousand years, though certain souls, those of the true philosopher and the lover, may escape in a shorter time. But the point of Plato's version of these myths is that rewards and punishments are meted out in accordance with moral worth, not ritual purity; that our original entry into the world of mortality was due to some sin committed in the other world, the world of bliss, and forgotten; that after death rewards and punishments are meant to school and purify us so that we may be fit to choose our next life wisely; and that our progress towards our lost paradise is solely conditioned by our own will to learn and choose wisely, that is, with a view to virtue. In the *Republic* the Interpreter says to the souls who are about to choose a new life before returning to earth:

> "Virtue has no master. A man's share of her depends on the degree of honour or contempt he accords her. The responsibility is on him who has chosen. God is free from responsibility."[2]

Thus in the form of a story which he believed to embody the truth on some matter not explicable in terms of logic, Plato expanded his doctrine that God is the source of good and not of evil.[3] God through His servants offers the

[1] In *Republic* and *Phaedo* the judges are not named; in *Gorgias* they are said to be Rhadamanthys, Aeacus and Minos, rulers famed for their justice in life and now appointed by Zeus as judges of the dead.

[2] *Republic*, 617E.

[3] The question of the origin of evil was not fully discussed by Plato, so that it is difficult to know exactly what he thought. A modern writer (M. Meldrum in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. LXX (1950)) after examining various interpretations decides: "There is no entity that we can call 'Plato's theology.'" This is merely to say that Plato did not solve the so far insoluble problem of the origin of evil, though he made suggestions which he amended from time to time.

choice of good and evil; Man is free to choose wisely or foolishly. He is solely responsible both for his original fall from the regions of bliss into mortal life, for the rate of his return to bliss, and for the form in which he re-enters this world. This form is not meted out to him as a reward or punishment; he chooses it himself. Any suffering incurred by the choice is therefore his fault, not God's. Any suffering imposed by God in the other world are for the soul's own good. A man is not aware of the actions by which his soul has offended originally or in other lives; this is because it is ordained that he shall, before each mortal life, drink the waters of forgetfulness. No allowance whatever is made for him: he alone is guilty. God, it is understood, is perfect and cannot be blamed.

God, therefore, is Absolute Good and the source of all goodness. He is also the supreme Creator, the source of all reality. Plato, developing Socrates' search for the General Definitions of the virtues, applied this method and this canon of reality to all existence, and so arrived at his Theory of Ideas. This theory states that when we attempt to know and understand the objects of our sense-experience, we must isolate from the inconstant and inessential factors that which is constant and essential—what he called the Idea or essential Reality. This is done by taking all particular examples of any given class of objects and isolating what they have in common. The theory can best be demonstrated by means of mathematical figures: we can draw circles of many sizes, on many surfaces, with many instruments, but what they all have in common, namely, that each is the path traced by a point moving equidistantly from another fixed point, is the definition and the essential nature of a circle. Towards the end of the *Republic*,[1] Plato applies the theory to a manufactured object. He makes

[1] 596A.

Socrates state the theory as if it were already familiar to his hearers:

> " Shall we begin our enquiry according to our customary method? It is our custom, as you know, to postulate a Form: one Form for each group of many objects to which we give the same name. Do you understand?"
>
> " I do."

He goes on to remind his hearer Glaucon (whose part on the whole is merely to assent) that there are two sorts of existence: the Form or essential nature of a bed, for example, and the actual bed made by the craftsman. A third is now added: the bed as represented or " imitated " by a painter or draughtsman. Socrates continues:

> " So there are these three beds: first the bed which exists in nature, which we should say, I imagine, was made by God, shouldn't we?"
>
> " Undoubtedly."
>
> " Then shall we call God the ' Natural Maker ' of this thing, or something of that kind?"
>
> " Yes, that is correct, since He makes this and everything else by nature."

This theory, that for every class of objects we can name, there exists a pattern in nature, was worked out by Plato in considerable detail and with amendments in his later dialogues. It is not necessary here to pursue the course of these arguments; all that is here relevant is that if there exist, as Plato believes, certain original patterns in nature of existences we encounter in life and apprehend with our senses, these patterns are the creation of God. The picture of God as Creator is given in the *Timaeus*, which was written as a sequel to the *Republic*. Here, in the most

elaborate of Plato's myths, a "likely story" is told, embodying the best of his own thought and that of his predecessors. From this story it emerges that God is wholly good, and being free from envy, wished to create only what was like Himself. He therefore, on creating the universe, reasoned that it must have Intelligence, and that Intelligence cannot exist without Soul. Thus he fitted together three constituents, Intelligence in a Soul, and the Soul in a Body. The universe may be described as a living entity endowed with Soul and with true Intelligence, through the providence and goodness of God.

God creates this visible universe as a copy of what is eternal and changeless; this He does by imposing an order on Chaos, definition on the undefined and formless. God thinks in terms of mathematical Forms, and by limiting space within these Forms he creates the elementary forms of matter. He does not put together the mortal existences Himself, but delegates this task to lesser gods whom He creates for this purpose. This was how Man was made: the highest part of his soul, which is immortal, was supplied by God, the lower parts were added by the lesser gods, who completed the synthesis. The souls thus created were allowed to see the reality and the true structure of the universe before coming to earth. They were told that they would be born as men, and if they lived well they would return to the stars; otherwise transmigration must follow, a reincarnation possibly in the body of an animal instead of a man. The souls were then placed in the conditions of this world, in space and time, in bodies and among objects subject to change. But they preserved a subconscious memory of what they had seen before incarnation, and when they meet its likeness in this world, this memory is stirred. Knowledge is recognition of the Forms as embodied in matter.

It is seen that in this dialogue Plato abandons the Orphic theory of an original sin by which Man was exiled from bliss, and does not mention the choice of lives open to the souls before their several reincarnations. Wise souls will of course pursue knowledge, which is simply the discernment of the Form in matter. These will continue to return as men. But degenerate souls who prefer pleasure and power to the pursuit of knowledge will require and will receive lower forms of life to suit them. The myth ends with an emphatic restatement of the belief that this universe is " a living entity, visible, and containing visible objects, a divinity apprehensible by the senses, the greatest and best, the fairest and most perfect, one and only-begotten."[1]

In his last dialogue, the *Laws*, Plato causes the speaker (who is not Socrates but an anonymous Athenian) to set out the theology which must be prescribed by the Lawgiver in the Ideal State.[1] Three opinions are to be forbidden by law: that the gods do not exist; that they are indifferent to human conduct; and that though not indifferent, they can be placated by sacrifices and prayers. An attempt is then made to disprove these three beliefs. It is repeated that the evil in the world is not due to God, who is the " Best Soul ", but to bad and ill-affected souls (presumably those who have refused to work with the world-order established by God for the best). The three opposite principles are to be insisted upon not only because they are demonstrably true but because the contrary beliefs—that there are no gods, or that they are indifferent or that they can be bought off with sacrifice and prayer—lead to immoral conduct. Refusal to accept the true creed is to be punished by the State, the minimum penalty being five years' solitary confinement with death for a second conviction. Thus Plato

[1] *Timaeus* 92B.
[2] *Laws*, Book X.

introduces a theory of an official State creed to be upheld by criminal law.

It is customary to apologise for the repressive views outlined in the *Laws*, not only on this but on other matters, and to say that the work is a product of Plato's old age and disillusionment. This may be so, but it must be remembered that Plato here puts forward only those views which he believes himself to have proved by logic, not the " likely stories " and myths of the earlier dialogues ; therefore since he believes these views to be true as well as essential to moral conduct, and moral conduct to be essential to human well-being, he is entitled to insist that they shall be accepted and obeyed, since they are necessary for the spiritual health of the individual and the community—just as a modern State insists on the observance of certain rules of hygiene. The difference lies in our inability to believe that theological views are capable of final demonstration by the ordinary processes of reason. Plato never claims to have had a revelation: what he cannot demonstrate (" give account of " is his phrase) he puts forward only as a pictorial representation something like what must be the truth. Here, however, he believes himself to be on safe ground, and so justified in compelling the citizens of the Ideal State to conform.

Aristotle, born at Stageira, a small town in Macedonia, of good family—his father was Court physician to King Amyntas—came to Athens at the age of seventeen, in 367 B.C., and worked under or with Plato until Plato's death in 347 B.C. Aristotle was for this period naturally under the influence of his master, whom he never ceased to revere even when he felt compelled to disagree with his philosophical views. But after Plato's death he travelled and lived abroad, at Assus on the coast of Asia Minor opposite the

island of Lesbos, and then on Lesbos itself. He also lived for a time at the Macedonian Court as tutor to King Philip II's son Alexander, later called The Great. When Alexander succeeded his father as King, Aristotle returned to Athens, where he lived for twelve years, teaching and writing as Plato had done, but developing his own philosophy, which was based rather on biological than on mathematical considerations.

Aristotle's concept of God was a logical corollary to his metaphysical theory. Plato had claimed no revelation, but he had allowed himself to conjecture in the myths what the nature of the Creator must be, and his outlook was coloured by his own strong feeling that God must be thought of as wholly good and pure—in fact, by the same indignation against harmful concepts as that which had first been expressed by Xenophanes. Plato's indignation was due to his concern for Man's improvement, and his belief that a right concept of God is the most important factor in the training of the young and the establishment of a sound society. Aristotle's view is much cooler and more remote. He is content to establish a sound metaphysical system which will give scientists and thinkers grounds for believing that truth exists, that it can be known, and where and how it is to be sought. His idea of God is that He is the head and fount of creation, and that what He creates is in accordance with an intelligent and intelligible plan.

According to Aristotle, creation (*genesis*, becoming) is not the imposition of some already-existing Form or pattern on matter, but the development or realisation of an existing potentiality. Everything created has a goal, *telos*, which it must attain in order to reach full development and perfection, to fulfil itself. This development he calls movement, and that which causes the development he calls "the source of movement". God is therefore the primary

" source of movement ". God is continuous energy, perfect, with no further possibilities of development. At the other end of the scale of creation is that which is completely undeveloped and formless, waiting to be " moved " or acted upon, like the shapeless piece of marble awaiting the sculptor's chisel. This completely unformed entity is the " Chaos " of mythology, and now, in Aristotle's scheme, the unrealised possibilities of matter. Creatures that have life have a goal innate in them towards which they grow; inanimate substances have to be " moved " by living entities or by other forces in order to realise their potentialities. The oak-tree's goal is implicit in the acorn; but the lump of marble remains shapeless unless it is carved by the sculptor and made to resemble the idea he has in his mind.

God is pure, unadulterated Life and Mind. All living things share in the Life, but Man alone shares in Mind, so that this is the most divine part in Man which he must cultivate in order to become complete. It is clear that such a Deity is the object of intellectual contemplation only; He is impersonal and cannot be propitiated by gifts and prayer; but the wise man will not regard Him as indifferent, because it is essential to the working out of the divine Plan that Man, endowed as he is with the necessary tool, his intelligence, shall strive to understand that Plan and his own place in it, and to fulfil himself by reaching his own goal or *telos*.

This concept of God as pure Intellect and Energy—as Aristotle in one place calls Him, " the primary unmoved Movent "—however satisfying to a philosopher, is too far removed from the thoughts and feelings of ordinary men to be of much help. It was therefore natural that when the Greek city-States, including Athens, lost their independence to Macedonian rulers, something more in accordance with human needs should be sought for both by philosophers and by conventional, unthinking citizens whose humanised

gods had been discredited as their protectors by events, and as their superiors, deserving of worship, by the attacks of the philosophers. Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C. and his death caused a momentary revival of hope in Athens that she might regain her independence. An anti-Macedonian rising seemed likely. Aristotle, a Macedonian, had to flee across the narrow channel to Chalcis in Euboea, his mother's native city, where he died the following year aged sixty-two. Meanwhile, Alexander's general Antipater returned and crushed all insurrection in Greece. Thus Aristotle's death coincided with the final destruction of the city-State system in Greece, and philosophy took a new turn, towards the study of Man and his place in the universe, and away from science and metaphysics.

The next Athenian school of philosophy to establish itself was that of Epicurus, whose views on the gods are those of Democritus: that the gods do not exist, and that we must discard belief in them because they induce fear and disturbance in the mind which should be tranquil. Epicurus' concern was solely to establish a communal way of life which should bring its individual members the maximum of happiness possible. There was no place in his scheme for worship, and in fact he regarded religion as the greatest enemy to that tranquillity which it was the Epicureans' highest wish to achieve. In a life in which happiness means freedom from unpleasantness, release from fear ranks high; and as Democritus had said, there is no greater source of fear than belief in the gods and tales of the next world. The Epicureans studied science not in order to find out the truth, which they considered unattainable, but in order to dispel fear. Science, Epicurus taught, would show them that all phenomena have natural causes: that no God or gods created the universe, that there is no design in its

creation, and no intelligent or moral purpose in its development.

Epicurus, following Democritus, believed that all percepts have an objective cause. Therefore, since men see visions of gods, there do exist certain divinities from which these images are derived, but they are completely detached and indifferent to human concerns. They do nothing, feel nothing, and are not to be moved by prayers or offended by our wrongdoing. We therefore need not fear their anger in this life; no after-life exists, because the soul is immediately dissipated at death.

What Epicurus offered his disciples was a tolerable and even pleasant way of life during their brief span, an oasis of contentment and friendship in a world full of violence and change. His Society of the Garden will be discussed later; for the present, it is enough to say that he repudiated all that Plato had taught about God, and tried as far as possible to eliminate the need for a god or gods from men's minds. But he refused to accept scientific determinism as a substitute. He wrote to a pupil:

> "It would be better to follow the legends about the gods than to become a slave to the determinism of the natural scientists; the legends do suggest that there is some hope of getting round the gods by acts of worship; but science involves a law of necessity, and there is no getting round that by any means."

The leaders of the next great philosophical movement, the Stoic, came from the outskirts of the Greek world, which had been greatly extended by the conquests of Alexander. Zeno, the founder (340 to 265 B.C.) was a native of Cyprus and of partly Semitic origin. The later heads of the Athenian school were born outside Greece Proper, as well as most of its lesser lights. Zeno came to Athens in about

320 B.C. and studied at the various philosophic schools still flourishing there; having found no satisfactory way of life in any of them he gradually worked out a system of his own, and after many years set up himself as a teacher, delivering lectures at the Painted Porch (*Stoa Poikilê*, from which the name "Stoic" is derived.) His successor was Cleanthes, who came to Athens from Assus in Asia Minor, where Aristotle had once lived. Cleanthes was followed by Chrysippus from Soli in Cilicia. These three men laid the foundations of the Stoic doctrine; but unfortunately their writings have perished except for quotations in later, mostly Roman Stoics', writing, between three and four centuries afterwards, when many additions and alterations had been made in the original teachings. It is therefore not possible to isolate the work of the different teachers, even of the founder. The doctrines have to be taken more or less as a whole, though separate trends and differences of opinion can be discerned here and there.

The whole purpose of Stoic philosophy is to ascertain what is the correct conduct for Man. The Stoics are not concerned with science, metaphysics or even theology except in so far as these subjects serve an ethical end. The Stoics believed that Man's function is to pursue Virtue, and that to do so he must find out what virtue is; but apart from this they were not interested in the search for truth or the nature of reality or all the speculations that had originally interested the Greek thinkers. They did not therefore pursue any original enquiry or research, or collect any observations. They theorized, accepting from previous thinkers what suited their purpose, but altering these views in accordance with the general Stoic theory. Their concept of God, therefore, like everything else, is strictly related to the practical necessity of finding a basis for human conduct. Briefly their views were these:

God is the original source from which the created universe is derived. He is also the universe itself, since this universe and all its parts are God manifesting Himself, and God is present in all these parts. God is sometimes spoken of as the Reason, Mind or Soul of the world, by means of which it lives and moves; He is also spoken of as a material substance, Fire, Aether, Air or Breath. Other names for Him are Universal Law, Nature, Destiny, Providence, because it is clear that the universe is a harmonious whole and is designed, linked together and governed by Reason.

The proof of the existence of God, they say, is the universal worship men offer to a supreme Being; the existence of consciousness in Man, which must be derived from a consciousness in the universe; and the existence of works beyond human power, which shows that there is a higher Power at work. But God is not apart from the world; God *is* the world, or rather the world is God in one of His manifestations. He is therefore not to be thought of as Spirit or Reason set over against Matter: He is Matter and the Law residing in Matter, the totality of existence, inherent in everything, good and bad, ugly as well as beautiful. God is not, as Plato and Aristotle said, non-material, active Purpose acting on a passive substance different from and opposed to Him. He is material even in his manifestation as Law or Reason: He is, in fact, Fire or Air-in-motion,[1] the finest possible kind of substance, like Anaxagoras' Mind. But unlike the latter, this entity, the Stoic Breath, is not separate or apart. It exists only as a constituent of matter, and is that aspect of God which gives life and motion to the less fine forms of matter. But all are God: everything comes from God in the sense that every-

[1] The word *Pneuma*, which in Christian theology means "Spirit", in Greek means "Breath" or "Air-current."

thing is a manifestation of Him, and everything will return to Him, that is to say, the manifestations will be again absorbed into the original source, which is Fiery-Air.

This doctrine, materialistic in that it recognises no existence except what is material, is mystical in that it has no foundation in any observation but is an attempt to explain the universe in terms of the emotional needs of its devotees. They needed a scheme by which they would live " according to nature ", with willing acceptance of the conditions of this world instead of vain resistance to or escape from them. Therefore Nature as it is had to be for the best. If the universe was the best possible, then it was a manifestation of God, that is, God in another form, and infused with God, Who is Soul, Reason, Law, Destiny, Providence. Any logical or metaphysical considerations such as Plato and Aristotle had put forward—for instance, that a perfect Being cannot change except for the worse—were brushed aside in the interests of the Stoic way of life and the desire to justify the actual universe as absolutely perfect and the work of Providence. This of course does violence to observation, so that the Stoics, unlike the early Greek thinkers, did not freely observe ; they reasoned from certain premisses, and then asserted. For instance, the Stoics had to reconcile the observed fact of " evil " with their theory of the perfection of the universe. They therefore divided evil into three kinds : physical evil, moral evil, and the lack of correspondence between virtue and good fortune. Their reasoning on these points is typical :

Physical evil they denied was evil at all ; it was a consequence of natural causes which have some purpose; sometimes this purpose was correction or punishment for sin.

Moral evil they quite inconsistently attributed to the wickedness of Man. They could not attribute it to God

because God must be perfect, so they were obliged to make Man responsible. But owing to their theory that all Nature (including Man) is God, they were of course necessarily attributing evil to God. They were therefore sometimes driven into arguing that the existence of evil is necessary as a counterpart to good, or that God will in the long run turn evil into good.

The fact that the virtuous man often suffers misfortune, which is an evil, was explained by saying that the misfortune is apparent only: no real evil can happen to the good, no real good fortune to the wicked.

The Stoics, while maintaining that the Supreme Deity was a creative material Force, nevertheless were not prepared to follow earlier philosophers in denying the existence of the traditional gods. Their attitude seems to have been based on practical considerations: they were afraid that scepticism would lead to moral licence. They therefore explained the gods of mythology as being manifestations of the Supreme Power, and strove to purify these concepts of their worst crudities. They also believed that God is served best by a pure life; but they did not wish to abolish traditional worship, because this helped, they thought, to maintain good behaviour. They accepted divination by means of oracles and augury as having objective value, and explained it by saying that Providence does not refuse to let mankind have glimpses of His scheme. Prayer, however, could not really be defended, since this perfect scheme could not and ought not to be altered to suit the wishes of men. The Stoics knew that much in popular belief was absurd and untenable; but they shrank from the consequences of an abolition of popular faith.

Some members of the school, in order to reconcile this expediency with their philosophic principles, worked to find

symbolic or naturalistic meanings in the popular concepts of the gods, and a vast amount of allegorical and etymological research was done, most of it worthless. But the practical attitude of the Stoics led to a disregard for truth and a constant effort to fit phenomena to their theory. This is contrary to the whole spirit of Greek philosophy. The consequences varied according to the intellectual calibre and honesty of the particular Stoic writer, and there were many; but the general trend of Stoicism was a downward path from truth towards a resuscitation of superstition, and nothing that they achieved towards establishing a moral ideal for men can compensate for this loss of integrity.

The doctrines of Stoicism found ready acceptance in Rome, after an initial distrust at their foreign origin. Stoicism suited the Roman temperament, which was uninterested in speculation and cared for practical results only. And it found able exponents. Under the Republic, Cicero wrote on Stoicism as on other philosophical systems. The only complete works by Stoic writers still extant are by men who lived under the Roman Empire. The chief of these are, in the first century A.D., Seneca the younger, a native of Cordova in Spain, who wrote much on Stoic ethics but whose practice was often at variance with his precepts, so much so that a recent writer has diagnosed a "neurotic maladjustment" and "paranoiac abnormality";[1] and Epictetus, a Greek freedman in Rome, who preached the Stoic doctrine of divine Providence and the practice of independence of human ills in a simple form suited to the ordinary man. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Emperor of Rome from A.D. 161 to 180, composed many of his Stoic *Meditations* while on his campaigns; these precepts and thoughts are concerned with Man, not with God, and show a kindly nature with a strong sense of duty

[1] E. Phillips Barker on *Seneca* in the Oxford Classical Dictionary (1949).

striving to preserve his ideal of conduct amid the stresses of his responsible position. His attitude to God was of resignation towards His will; sometimes he prays to be rid of the burden of life in order to depart to God. It is as if Stoicism were a consolation and a refuge to the man who though conscientious in his public and military duties, was not altogether fitted for them.

Marcus Aurelius' strongest emotion, however, was a yearning towards his fellow-men. He accepted the Stoic doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man; theoretically at any rate his love of humanity transcended nationality, as his love of nature transcended place. One of his most famous utterances admirably expresses this:

> "The poets say, 'Dear city of Cecrops!' and wilt thou not say, 'Dear city of Zeus!'?"[1]

That is, the fervour of love felt by the Athenian poet for the City of Cecrops (Athens) should be transferred by the philosopher to the whole universe. But such an attitude ill accorded with the life of a Roman Emperor, especially one frequently engaged in wars; hence the sadness which pervaded his writings.

After the second century, Stoicism died out rapidly except as an influence incorporated in other movements. Its unsound theoretical basis and its increasing insistence on practical aims unsupported by evidence, as well as its lack of warmth and hope, caused it to yield before the greater attractions of Neoplatonism and Christianity. Yet in its early stages it had a fervour and devotion of its own, the best expression of which is the Hymn of Cleanthes, written by the second head of the Athenian Stoic School:

> "Most glorious of immortals,
> O Zeus of many names,

[1] *Meditations*, IV, 23.

Almighty and everlasting,
Sovereign of Nature,
Directing all in accordance with Law,
Thee it is fitting that all mortals should address. . . .

Thee all this universe
As it rolls circling round the earth,
Obeys wheresoever Thou dost guide,
And gladly owns thy sway,
Such a minister Thou holdest in Thy hands invincible,
The two-edged, fiery, everliving thunderbolt,
Under whose stroke all Nature shudders.

No work upon earth is wrought apart from Thee,
Lord,
Nor through the divine ethereal sphere,
Nor upon the sea.
Save only whatsoever deeds wicked men do in their own foolishness.
Nay, Thou knowest how to make even the rough smooth,
And to bring order out of disorder,
And things not friendly are friendly in Thy sight.
For so hast Thou fitted all things together,
The good with the evil,
That there might be one eternal Law over all. . . .

Deliver men from dire ignorance!
Banish it, Father, from their soul,
And grant them to obtain wisdom,
Whereon relying Thou rulest all things with justice!"[1]

This Hymn, written in the first half of the third century B.C., is always admired for its religious and devotional exaltation; but it also shows a return to the belief in a Deity who "wields the thunderbolt". True, He governs nature "in accordance with Law", and the prayer is an

[1] Translation (slightly altered) by R. D. Hicks, who comments that it is "evidence how far natural religion could go in providing satisfaction for the cravings of the religious temper".

appeal for Wisdom and Justice among men. But the emotional and religious content of Stoicism eventually gained the mastery, only to give way before the more inspired concept of a God of Love.

Neoplatonism, which succeeded Stoicism, gathered into its system a number of doctrines and wove them together into a new pattern in which the emphasis was on God.

The founder of the School, Plotinus, came from Egypt to Rome in the middle of the third century A.D. Here he taught and wrote. His essays were published after his death by his pupil Porphyry, who classified them in six groups of nine essays (*Enneads*) according to subject.

Plotinus thought of God as a single non-material impersonal Force, which he identified with the Pure Being of Parmenides and the wholly Good of Plato's *Republic*. Out of this One Being all existence comes, losing something of goodness as it is articulated and separated from the One. There is no absolute Evil, but Evil is merely Not-Good, in so far as things come out of the One and leave it, falling away from the original perfection. All created things long to return to perfection, and it is given to Man at certain moments, as a result of asceticism and prolonged contemplation, to achieve a unification with God. This means the complete abandonment of individuality. The initiate (mystic) who has had the experience of reunion with God will care for no lesser goods or beauties. The experience of coming into direct contact with God is the true end of the soul. All thought, desire and activity are lost in this ecstasy, as a lesser light is swallowed up in a brighter.

This way of thought of course leads to the abandonment of the rational search for truth, as not worth while. Neoplatonism flourished for three centuries, down to the closing of the schools of philosophy by Justinian in 529 and the

complete victory of Christianity; but it gradually degenerated into a mass of superstitious beliefs in which the world was filled with non-human forces and in which the means of understanding and controlling Nature were not scientific observation and experiment but divination, astrology and magic. The wheel has come full circle. " God " has come to stand again for the transcendent in the sense of the completely unknowable, about which we can predict nothing, not even that " It is ". This transcendent entity is therefore not to be sought by Intellect, but only by the shedding of all attempt to know, in an effort to attain to the state of inspiration in which men feel that there is " something great in themselves, though they do not know what it is ".[1]

The intellect is to be cultivated assiduously in preparation for the final leap; the goal is not, as in Plato, the contemplation of Absolute Good, Beauty and the rest, but the merging of personality, intellect and even feeling in the Absolute. There is no prescription for the attainment of this self-annihilation; it comes very rarely, and leads nowhere, but is productive of ineffable joy. The One is " Light above Light ", and fusion with it is a drowning in light.

In the first articulation away from the perfect One, Plotinus has a Trinity. There is now:

The One (which he usually refers to as It, not He). This is above all reality that can be thought, and " regarding It there is more truth in silence than in any words whatsoever ".

Divine Intelligence, engendered by the One in the act of seeing Itself. We can know it in ourselves if we forget the body.

Soul, offspring of Divine Intelligence, Creator of the visible world. Soul generates its own image, which is the world of sense-perception and Nature.

[1] Plotinus, V. 3. 14.

Plotinus did not think the visible world evil. It is beautiful—he had a strong sense of beauty—and full of blessed spirits, though less good than the intellectual world. Matter has no independent reality but is created by Soul. When the individual soul leaves the body, it must be prepared for purification by reincarnation if it has sinned.

The happiness felt by the mystics at this experience of union with the One cannot be discussed except by those who have undergone it; but their descriptions suggest self-hypnosis or even auto-intoxication,[1] and there is undoubtedly a strong element of eroticism. It is unlikely that any direct knowledge or experience of God or the Absolute is thus obtained. When consciousness returns, no new truth emerges: nothing is brought back except the subject's own conviction that he has been in touch with the Divine, and the feeling of rapture this gives him, which cannot be communicated.

There will always be a difference of opinion on this matter, between those to whom a loss of consciousness is a disaster and those to whom it is desirable and full of joy. Neither can hope to understand the other except by a kind of mutual courtesy and acceptance of the other's sincerity. To me the Plotinian theory of union with the One was harmful and the wrong way for human beings to orientate their thoughts and purposes. Certainly it was a complete negation of that for which Greek philosophy originally stood and of the spirit that gave it birth.

[1] The opposite view will be found in a number of recent writers, whose views are well expressed by A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, p. 183: "Whether Plotinus's mystical experience was genuinely supernatural or was a very high form of 'natural' contemplation is a much debated question. But I do not think that anyone who really studies the *Enneads* without prejudices or preconceptions can deny that it was genuine and that it was good and valuable, and not a pathological state or a psychological aberration." But Armstrong starts with a set of fixed "prejudices and preconceptions", namely, the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

II

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

GREEK philosophic thought on the nature of Man and his place in the universe, like that on the nature of God, must first be considered in relation to the outlook of the ordinary Greek.

The Greeks were a happy, not a gloomy race. They enjoyed life to the full when it could be enjoyed, and saw no reason why they should do otherwise. The quest for happiness became an integral part of Greek philosophy, and we shall see what the later philosophers believed happiness to be.

The ordinary Greek did not find this a problem. To him, happiness was to be young, healthy, free and in the company of one's friends; without arduous physical toil, and with no need to worry about money. As he grew older, he wanted children (a wife was an unfortunate necessity) who would care for him in his old age, see that he was buried correctly, perform the prescribed rites at his tomb, inherit his property and continue his line. Old age was a disaster, because of the loss of physical strength and the power to enjoy life, especially the pleasures of sex; there is much lamentation about the disabilities of old age in some of the poets, for example Mimnermus and Anacreon. The worst disasters were disease, bereavement (especially loss of sons), loss of property or of citizen-status, banishment. Some of these could be averted by

human means, but others befell even the good and prudent man, apparently without cause, so that it was necessary to propitiate the gods with sacrifice and prayer in order if possible to win their favour and protection.

After death the soul left the body and for a time haunted the spot where the body lay; then it took flight to a shadowy place underground, where it had only a thin and twilight existence, dependent to some extent on the care bestowed by the children or other relatives on the tomb. Some Greeks adopted Orphic theories of an underworld where judgement awaits the soul, and a return to a new life; but on the whole the Greek lived his life in the present. Life to him was a strip of brilliant sunlight between two dark shadows, before birth and after death. Man was a "creature of a day" (*ephemeros*) or like the leaves that fall in autumn and are seen no more but are replaced by others.

The cardinal virtues are piety, self-control, courage, justice. Probably to the ordinary Greek the greatest of these was courage. The emotion nearest to religious fervour that he felt was for his city-State and for the deity who was its protector. Athena protected Athens, and so to the Athenian she was great; but she demanded, not a pure life, but service, that is, willingness to devote one's life to the safety and welfare of one's native city. It is no accident that the Greek word for Virtue (*aretê*) was also used to mean Courage.

Life to the Greek was very good while its pleasures could be enjoyed; but he was continually aware of the shortness of life and the precariousness of all human well-being. In spite of all his energy and his delight in activities of every sort, he could never forget what lay in wait for him: old age and death, if he managed to survive earlier misfortune. It is against this background that we must envisage the work of the philosophers on the

nature and destiny of Man; to the ordinary Greek, life had no purpose beyond the natural human urge to enjoy oneself and to succeed, and no discernible meaning whatsoever. The philosophers not only analysed Man's nature into component parts; they tried to show him how these could best be used, what was his place in the universe, and what was the right way for him to live.

The Milesian School, so far as we know, had little to say about Man except as a physical entity, a part of the world of natural phenomena which was their primary interest. To them, the soul appears to be identical with life, the principle of motion. Anaximenes said:

> "Just as our soul, being air, holds us together, so do breath and air surround the whole universe."

But even in this, it is the universe, not Man, in which he is interested.

His teacher Anaximander, however, was interested in the origin of Man as a species, and in fact in the origin of all life on the earth. He said that when the world was created, all living creatures arose from the moist element as it was evaporated by the sun. These primitive creatures, having come into being in the moist element, were covered with prickly wrappings; but as they grew older they climbed out on to the drier part, their wrappings broke off, and they survived for only a short time. Mankind, therefore, was originally like a fish, or to put it differently, these fish-like creatures contained within themselves human beings, to which they gave birth by bursting asunder. The reason for thinking that Man was originally born from creatures of a different species is that whereas other animals soon find food for themselves, Man is the only one that requires a long period of suckling, so that if he had been so made

originally he would not have survived; another creature must have nurtured the human infant until it was old enough to look after itself.

This is a brilliant intuition based on observation, but it remained almost unnoticed and quite undeveloped until it attracted the attention of Aristotle, whose marine biological observations no doubt tended to confirm it. Aristotle himself did not develop a theory of evolution, but his biological thought was tending that way, and some modern biologists have thought that he might have reached something of the kind if he had lived a few years longer.[1] As it was, general biological thought ceased with Aristotle and his pupil Theophrastus, if we except Galen (A.D. 129–199) whose interests were medical. Anaximander's suggestion was not taken up until the nineteenth century. The idea that Man has evolved physiologically from another species is quite contrary to the general trend of Greek philosophy, and attention was no doubt entirely diverted from it by the interest in Orphic theories of reincarnation which soon began to preoccupy thinkers.

These theories were popularised by Pythagoras, who taught them at his philosophic school at Croton. The Pythagorean School believed that all existing things could be classified according to a table of opposites: Finite or Infinite, Odd or Even, Single or Plural, Right or Left, Male or Female, Stationary or Moving, Straight or Curved, Light or Dark, Good or Bad, Square or Oblong. Most of these categories apply to objects, not to Man; but the soul of Man has a harmony which if it is attained to is its virtue. The whole aim of Pythagorean teaching and discipline was to help the soul to keep or acquire its proper harmony. This

[1] Charles Singer, "Biology" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, fourteenth edition, Vol. III, p. 610).

is best achieved by developing the intellect through the study of mathematics and music, which show harmony, proportion and definition, that is, order at work throughout the universe. The body must be completely subject to the mind.

Pythagoras did not preach asceticism or celibacy, but self-discipline: obedience to certain rules, silence and listening. Pythagoreans took a great interest in medicine, and much medical research was done at Croton; the body too has its harmony which can be maintained by the correct diet, rest and medicines, in which they specialised. They were well aware of the effect of the body on the mind and of the mind on the body. They recommended music[1] and poetry-readings as an aid to health. A balance or harmony must also be preserved in the emotional sphere: the right temperament is uniformly cheerful, not sometimes elated, sometimes depressed. So too the body must be kept in a uniform condition, not sometimes fat and sometimes thin.

Thus to the Pythagorean, Man is composed of two entities, soul and body. The soul is immortal, and Man exists entirely for its training and cultivation. The body, like the soul, can be healthy and useful if looked after; the aim for both is harmony, and the preservation of a stable condition of balance between opposites, which is health. The body requires strict attention and control so that it shall serve and not hinder the work of the soul.

The soul after death will return to the underworld to be judged. It will then, after a period of rehabilitation, return to the earth in another body, which may be non-human. Most men are made to forget each previous life when they return, but certain men—Pythagoras himself claimed to be one—are allowed to remember their previous incarnations;

[1] Music is a catharsis of the soul as medicine is of the body.

perhaps he was the only one so privileged. All his incarnations had been, they said, in human form, but the soul could enter the body of any animal.

The Pythagoreans believed that Man should take his place as a member of society and fulfil the ordinary duties of this life: there was no encouragement for the recluse. The original School lived as a brotherhood, a community devoted to the same ideals; they married, and their wives and daughters were admitted to the teaching. They took an active part in the political affairs of their city-State while this was allowed, and were the governing class at Croton until the rising in which they were massacred or expelled. They also went abroad when called upon, to lend their services: Dêmocêdês, one of the most eminent members of the Crotonian medical school, went to Athens, Aegina, Samos and finally to the Court of Dareios King of Persia, where he attended both the King and the Queen.

Pythagoreans were forbidden to commit suicide. They were taught to consider themselves appointed to their post in this world as a frontier guard in a watch-tower, so that it was ignoble to take flight before the order of release. Other metaphors called the body a prison or even a tomb. The real life lay on the other side of death, when the soul would discard the body like a garment; but nevertheless the fullest use must be made of this life for the development of all the powers and for the practice of the virtues.

The later Pythagoreans assigned a special number (four) to the soul; the major virtues and certain other abstract qualities and states (Health, Marriage, Justice, Courage, Choice of Opportunity, and some others) also were assigned their own numbers and a special place in the universe. This was no doubt a cruder development of Pythagoras' great theory that all existence can be explained by numerical ratios.

Pythagoreanism lasted for nearly two centuries after the Master's own day, and was resuscitated for a while in the first century A.D. The Pythagorean disciples who carried the doctrines abroad on the flight from Croton impressed those who met them with their steadfastness and their firm belief in reward for virtue and punishment for sin. A number of Pythagoreans appear in Plato's dialogue *Phaedo*. It was to Echecrates, a Pythagorean of Phlius in the north-east of the Peloponnese, that Phaedo carried the news of Socrates' last hours. Simmias and Cebes of Thebes, two disciples of Philolaus the Pythagorean, were among those who were with Socrates when he died and who pressed him to enlarge upon his belief in the immortality of the soul.

To sum up, one can say that the Pythagoreans believed Man in this life to be living a sort of campaign for self-improvement, and therefore it is necessary for him to cultivate all his faculties, especially intellect by the study of mathematics, to discipline the emotions, and so to care for the body that its natural needs but not its desire for pleasure are satisfied. The whole object is so to live that when one departs one shall be fit for a higher existence than that which one is leaving, and finally for reinstatement in the other world among the spirits of the blest. But while Man is in the body, he must take an active part in the life around him: in the family, in social and political affairs, and if he is capable, in an attempt to understand the universe and its harmonies.

Heracleitus on the other hand had an entirely different point of view about the nature of Man. He believed that Man was composed of two elements, the fiery dry element or soul, and the cold, wet element, the body and its desires. The desires are at war with the fiery element, which is part of the divine Fire, the vital and intellectual Force that

governs the universe. The fire in Man is ever striving upward to reach its source, but the body and its desires are always trying to quench the flame. In so far as Man opposes his desires, he will achieve purification and finally union with the divine Fire (God). This is to be done by the cultivation of the reasoning faculty or intellect (Logos), of which all men have a share ; with this faculty we can search for and discover in all things the One Wisdom, the only knowledge worth having, that is, the Logos or Law of their being. The Logos or Law tells us that all things exist because they are a balance of opposites (a tension, as in the bow and the lyre). This balance while it lasts gives a harmony which can be understood. Mere accumulation of facts is valueless ; only the knowledge of the Law is of any use.

Man must also abstain from all self-indulgence, and from religious cults such as the Bacchic which encourage licence. Drunkenness is one of the worst of the vices because it quenches the vital flame of the intelligence. But all excess is death to the soul, and will be paid for in loss of vital force.

Man compared with God is like a child compared with a man, or a man compared with a monkey. Most men care nothing for anything except to stuff themselves like cattle and reproduce their species. They are " children of their fathers ", that is, blind followers of tradition who do not even desire progress. But if they will listen to Heracleitus instead of to the false teachers—or rather, not to him but to the Logos which speaks through him—they will realise that they have in themselves a part of the divine Fire which can understand the Logos residing in everything. The divine fire or soul in us must keep in contact with the Logos or Intelligence that surrounds us, otherwise our soul will go dead, like a coal taken away from the fire.

Man must not trust his senses, though some are more to be heeded than others. Sight and hearing are the chief; sight is more accurate than hearing, but sight also is liable to error. Neither is of any use " if the soul be barbarian ", that is, ignorant and untrained. The senses are merely " paths " by which we get our impressions of particular things; these things are constantly changing, are in a state of flux, so that we cannot grasp them, but there is a Logos or Law governing their changes, and this we can apprehend by the mind. Not that we can know all wisdom; but we can touch upon it if we always try to lay hold of the Logos as exhibited in our limited environment. We can find the Logos of our own being too if we search into ourselves. We must always search, like men who turn over much earth to find a little gold.

Such are Man's greatest possibilities. He can strive upward, cultivating the intellect, or he can lapse into pleasure and laziness and intellectual death, or he can remain indifferent, content with the life of an animal. Heracleitus had a low opinion of mankind in general. Only the few are good, the majority bad. Wisdom, though there for all to see, is not recognised, and men do not readily accept the truth when they hear it. The common herd live like men asleep, on the side nearer death, not on the side nearer life. Even those who can and ought to learn are hampered by incredulity and a reluctance to accept a new idea, like dogs who bark at strangers. They prefer mere opinions, " children's toys ", to the truth, and therefore readily trust false teachers, of whom there are many. Most men are willing to accept as their teachers the mob and those who appeal to the mob, for they have no intelligence with which to distinguish the few good from the many bad.

Heracleitus believed that Man is free to choose between the upward and the downward paths, the cultivation of

the best in himself, the vital Intelligence, or the indulgence of the lower part. " Character for a human being", he wrote, " is destiny."

As for the fate of the soul after death, he entirely rejected the beliefs of the mystic religions, but he appears to have believed in the soul's continued existence because he speaks of rewards and punishments. Death in battle, for instance, will be rewarded. If the soul joins the divine Fire from which it sprang, it evidently retains personality. The body, of course, when the soul has left it, is of no account: " more fit to be cast out than dung", so that any further attention to it such as the burial rites, offerings at the tomb and the like practised so assiduously by the Greeks are a waste of time.

Nothing certain is known of Heracleitus' own life. All the stories told of him emphasise his " pride ", that is, his low opinion of his fellowmen. These stories all suggest a life of withdrawal from society and of contempt for others both at home and abroad. But he was not himself guilty of conceit, which he abhorred; he acted thus because he could not get men to listen to his unique message. His claim to have such a message was not a glorification of his own wisdom but a belief that he was a mouthpiece of a higher wisdom, the divine Logos.

The emphasis in Heracleitus' teaching for Man is effort: courage in battle, strenuous opposition to pleasure, intellectual search for the truth. The best man, he says, chooses above all things immortal fame among men; this is contrasted with the majority, who are satisfied like cattle. He does not think that mortals can find out the whole truth: the most wise-seeing man knows and preserves the knowledge of what *seems* only, not what *is*, though many pretend to greater knowledge; but they are fabricators of lies, and retribution will seize them. This inability to know the

whole truth must not discourage us in our search: men who love wisdom must enquire into very many things indeed. But we must always remember that it is *wisdom* we are seeking, that is, knowledge of the Logos; mere learning will not make us intelligent. He names Hesiod and Pythagoras, Xenophanes and Hecataeus the Milesian historian, as men who have much learning and no intelligence. Human nature in itself has no power of understanding; only the divine nature has it, and Man in so far as he makes contact with the divine.

When we are awake, we perceive one ordered universe which is the same for all of us; when we are asleep, each man turns away from this world into a world of his own where there is no consistency. It is true that while we are asleep we are still workers, sharing in the activities of the universe; but we forget what we have seen in our sleep as soon as we awaken. Most men even when awake are like men asleep: they are active, but they neither understand nor remember what they see. We must not speak and act like men asleep.

The soul of Man has its own Law or Logos, and it will grow in power if we cultivate it according to our needs. The Logos of the soul is so deep that "one cannot find the limits of it though one travels every way". But we must try to grasp the law of our own soul as well as of everything else. He says: "I searched into *myself*," that is, practised introspection.

Effort, therefore, will help us to reach upward like a flame to the Intelligence of the universe. The danger is always from desire, which leads to excess:

> "Moderation is the greatest virtue, and wisdom is to speak the truth and pay careful heed to the law of Nature, and act accordingly. The rational faculty is common to

all. All have the capacity of knowing themselves and of acting with moderation."

"It is delight, or rather death, to souls to become wet," but "the dry, austere soul is the wisest and best".

The duty of Man is to try to understand the Logos of the universe by means of the Logos within him; all else is of no account:

"Wisdom is one: to understand the reasoned Purpose which is the guiding principle of Change."

Xenophanes, as we have seen, was mainly concerned to purify the ordinary man's concept of God and the gods: if men would worship the gods with decency and reverence, and cease to believe the scandalous stories about them told by the poets, moral improvement in their own lives would follow. But Xenophanes was concerned rather with Man as a member of society than with Man as an individual, and his contribution can best be considered later. He has nothing to say, so far as we know, about the individual soul and its nature, except to warn us that we cannot ever attain to certainty: no man has ever seen Truth or ever will, because even if he fully succeeded in saying what was true, he himself would be unaware of it. We are fated to conjecture only, but our conjecture may be *like* reality.

The problem of knowledge was now coming to the fore. It was agreed by all these thinkers that Man should above all things seek to know the truth; but there was a persistent doubt whether he could, even with his best efforts, succeed. The sense-perceptions are clearly liable to error, and the objects we perceive are always changing. Where shall we look for a criterion?

This uncertainty led to a consideration of our tools, the sense-organs which give us our only contact with the outer world—for it was not yet disputed that there was an outer world communicating with us through our senses. Outstanding in this field was Alcmaeon, physician of Croton at the time when Pythagoras lived there; he was probably a member of the School. He began a detailed examination of our physical equipment. He studied the structure of the eye, the ear and the other organs. He was the first to recognise that the seat of the co-ordination of percepts is the brain, not the heart or the blood as some thought. Here in the brain percepts are "fitted together", and so we get knowledge first, then memory. Man, he thought, differs from animals in that he alone can "fit things together", that is, understand; animals perceive but do not understand. He also studied the nature of health, which he said was a balance or harmony of opposites in the body, and he investigated the processes of reproduction. He, too, believed that only conjecture was possible for Man, though the gods have certainty.

The next great name is that of Parmenides of Elea, who in his anxiety to show that Reality exists and Change is an illusion, denied the validity of all sense-perception. He describes how after much study on orthodox lines of all previous existing theories about the universe, it was suddenly revealed to him that all we see, hear, feel, is a complete illusion and does not exist. Reality is something that can only be apprehended by the mind, and logic tells us that there is no such thing as colour or movement or shape or sound or texture or taste or anything else we seem to experience. This view he put forward clearly and vehemently in the second part of his poem, which he called *The Way of Truth.* He warned his pupil Zeno, to whom

the poem is addressed, not to accept the evidence of eye, ear and tongue. The universe was never created, does not change, and will not perish. It is exactly as it is for all time, or rather eternally, for time does not exist either. In the third part of the poem, called *The Way of Opinion*, he gave his pupil an account of the views held by other scientists on the nature and origin of the universe; but this knowledge, he warned him, is really a deception, a mere appearance. But the pupil must know about it in order not to be intellectually outstripped by others.

Parmenides' theory had momentous results in philosophical thought; but since Man, like all individual existence, is reduced by it logically to an illusion, it contributes nothing to an understanding of human nature and destiny. Yet it found devoted adherents. Parmenides gathered pupils round him at Elea; he also travelled and met other thinkers. In particular he went with Zeno to Athens, where he met Socrates and read his poem aloud to an interested audience, as Plato describes in the dialogue *Parmenides*. Others who may not have met Parmenides read his book and were struck with his logical proof that all sense-experience is an illusion. The puzzles invented by Zeno in support of the theory that there is no such thing as motion exercised the minds of those interested in philosophic speculation. Henceforth philosophers had to prove first that there existed anything to know except a motionless, undifferentiated Whole outside the reach of the senses and only to be grasped by abstract thought.

These views were combated by Empedocles of Acragas, who while accepting Parmenides' logic, nevertheless refused to admit that there was nothing for Man to do but accept this static theory and give up investigating the universe. Empedocles suggested that Man, like everything

else, came into being in the cyclic process of mixing and separating of opposite elements brought about by Love and Hate. Man as a physical being is the product of Chance, like all the other animals, and not of design: Nature created many monsters which did not survive, until eventually human beings arose in the form we know. He thought that intelligence, of which all living things, even plants, have a share, is connected in Man with the blood and with breathing.

But Man has also a soul. Empedocles on the spiritual side was a thorough-going Orphic, surpassing the Pythagoreans in his insistence on purity of life. Believing as he did that the world we now live in is the product of the rule of Hate, he thought that we should leave it as soon as possible, not of course by suicide which would be sinful, but by a life of obedience to ascetic rules: celibacy, strict vegetarianism and abstinence from every sort of bloodshed. Certain vegetables even, such as beans, are debarred, and sins of diet must be purged by confession and ritual ablution. Man's soul is immortal and was once divine; but owing to some offence it was expelled from the company of the gods and sent on to the earth to inhabit a physical body, human, animal or vegetable. Man's pilgrimage takes thirty thousand years. But if he practises all the rules and lives a pure, good life, he will finally be received into the company of the blessed gods from which he has been exiled, henceforth to be a god with them for ever, freed from mortal troubles.

This belief in reincarnation of course must condition Man's entire existence. Empedocles suggests that there was a time when this world too was governed by Love, when there was no war, and no bloodshed even of animals—when the animals loved Man and did not fear him. But this phase passed according to a decree of Necessity, and the reverse régime prevails. However, the reign of Love must

inevitably return, and so on alternately for ever. To be born into a Hate-cycle as we are is a misfortune, and the human child wails at the sight of the " alien land " into which he has come. The best lives for a man are those of prophet, poet, physician and prince. These lives if well lived are the stage preceding apotheosis and an eternity of bliss.

In this world, we must do all we can to learn the truth. We must observe by every means, giving equal value to the percepts of sight, hearing and taste ; in this he opposed Heracleitus who put sight first in dependability. The human intellect cannot attain to the whole truth because our sense-organs are limited in scope and because many distracting cares press in upon us and blunt our thoughts. Moreover, each individual sees only a small part of existence during his life, and is doomed to perish swiftly and be carried away like smoke, so that men believe only what they chance to hit upon as they wander in all directions. Nevertheless every man preens himself on knowing the whole. Empedocles promises his pupil only what the human intellect can attain ; to claim more is impious madness, and we must not be led away by " the flowers of honour paid to fame by mortals " into saying more than is right. But what we can attain to if we try is tremendous. He displays before the diligent student the marvellous powers of science :

" If you press these truths deep into your firm mind
And contemplate them with good will and a studious care that is pure,
These things will assuredly remain with you throughout your life,
And you will obtain many other things from them,
For these things of themselves cause each element to increase in the character,
According to the way of each man's nature.

But if you intend to grasp after different things such as dwell
among men in countless numbers and blunt their
thoughts,
Miserable trifles,
Certainly these things will quickly desert you in the course
of time,
Longing to return to their own original kind.
For all things, be assured, have intelligence and a portion
of Thought. . . .

You shall learn all the drugs that exist as a defence against
illness and old age;
For you alone I will accomplish all this.
You shall check the force of the unwearying winds which
rush upon the earth with their blasts and lay waste
the cultivated fields.
And again, if you wish, you shall conduct the breezes back
again.
You shall create a seasonable dryness after the dark rain for
mankind,
And again, after summer drought, the streams that nourish
the trees.
And you shall bring out of Hades a dead man restored to
strength."

These promises were later interpreted to mean that Empedocles had claimed divine powers and had even controlled the weather and raised the dead. This, of course, is a complete misunderstanding. Empedocles was not claiming to be able to perform miracles as the Magi did. He was claiming that knowledge, even that partial knowledge which is all that Man with his best efforts can achieve, gives control over Nature, a control that to the uninstructed might seem miraculous. His is the first recorded expression of faith in the power of science, and it is notable that this is coupled with a warning against claiming too much and

against being led into exaggeration by the lure of popular acclaim. Empedocles was a great and good man. His disciples deified him, but he himself would not have approved of this excess. His prayer was:

" Ye gods, avert madness from my tongue,
And guide forth from my reverent lips a pure stream !
I beseech thee also, Maiden Muse,
Grant me such knowledge as divine Law allows us transient mortals to hear ! "

Anaxagoras, coming to Athens from Asia Minor, brought with him much knowledge of physical geography and speculation of the kind pursued at the outset in Miletus, But he had also arrived at a theory of the nature of the universe which seems to have been transferred by him from the nature of Man. Heracleitus had envisaged a universe in which the governing force was Fire, and had transferred this to the nature of Man, regarding Man's soul as a portion of Fire. Anaxagoras, believing that Mind, the rational faculty, was the highest part of Man's nature, transferred this to the universe and envisaged Mind as the cause which started a movement by which a Cosmos was evolved from Chaos.

This suggested to those who read Anaxagoras' book that he believed that the universe, like Man, was moved by an intelligent will or purpose; but he did not in any way amplify the idea or explain where this principle was to be found in the actual processes he described, such as the evolution of the heavenly bodies, the earth, and the various phenomena of the changing world, including the genesis of animal and plant life. Thus it was left for others to work out the implications of the theory of Mind, or to reject them. Anaxagoras bequeathed the whole legacy of teleology which was to be so powerful a factor in the

thought of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, or in other words he started in philosophy that trend which demands that the universe shall satisfy the needs of Man's nature instead of ignoring him. Man is no longer to be a dweller among natural phenomena and processes which he may try to understand but which are often opposed to his wishes and purposes; he is the creature for which the universe exists, because the universe is on a large scale what Man is on a small scale, with an intelligence and a moral purpose like his own. The macrocosm cannot be less than the microcosm, or lack anything that the microcosm has.

Anaxagoras greatly influenced Athenian society by his character and life. He became for the Athenians the type of the philosophic man: austere, retiring, in complete control of his emotions. Hostile opinion called him a misfit. Many anecdotes were told of him, mostly illustrating his calm in the face of misfortune. His absorption in the study of astronomy set him above the sufferings of personal bereavement or exile, and he said that happiness is derived from scientific studies and the freedom these bring. He put forward a method, called Pre-acclimatization, by which all could attain to philosophic calm and self-control. This method was to envisage in the imagination all possible ills that could occur to one; then if they actually happened, one would be prepared and would know how to meet them. Euripides, who must have heard the theory from Anaxagoras himself, described it in one of his lost plays.

At Abdera, Leucippus and Democritus at the same time were setting the seal on Greek physical studies by their theory that the universe originated through the collision of atoms in space. Leucippus is not known except as the father of the Atomic Theory; but his pupil Democritus covered the whole range of human thought. He regarded

Man's nature as a synthesis of body and soul, the soul being, like everything else, a fortuitous coagulation of atoms which are dissipated at death. Thus he had nothing to say on the future of the soul, but he set forth a system of ethics which had great influence.

He said that since the only realities are the atoms, which are imperceptible to us, we cannot know how anything really is; but we have sensations through our various organs, and these give us what he called a " bastard " knowledge. Sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, cannot perceive minutely or accurately, because they cannot perceive atomic structure; their percepts exist only " by convention ", that is, we speak of colour for example, but colour does not exist in itself, it is a name for some atomic change or arrangement which cannot be apprehended by sight. To penetrate beyond perception to atomic structure by means of thought—that alone is knowledge. Everything else is appearance.

He then laid down a theory of right living for Man. Man's proper end is to seek happiness; this is, like unhappiness, a property of the soul. Happiness does not dwell in flocks of cattle or in gold; the soul is the dwelling-place of the good and evil genius of Man. Body and soul are in opposition. He wrote:

" He who chooses the advantages of the soul chooses things more divine, but he who chooses those of the body chooses things human."

" It is right that men should value the soul rather than the body, for perfection of soul corrects the inferiority of the body, but physical strength without intelligence does nothing to improve the mind."

" If the body brought a lawsuit against the soul, for all the pains it had endured throughout life, and the

ill-treatment, and I were to be the judge of the suit, I would gladly condemn the soul, in that it had partly ruined the body by its neglect and dissolved it with bouts of drunkenness, and partly destroyed it and torn it to pieces with its passion for pleasure—as if, when a tool or a vessel were in bad condition, I blamed the man who was using it carelessly."

In this, Democritus is in agreement with his predecessors. But he proceeded to define a new standard of choice:

"The criterion of the advantageous and disadvantageous is enjoyment and lack of enjoyment."

"The best way for a man to lead his life is to have been as cheerful as possible and to have suffered as little as possible. This could happen if one did not seek one's pleasures in mortal things."

Happiness, however, can never be achieved by a succession of pleasurable sensations:

"Cheerfulness is created for men through moderation of enjoyment and harmoniousness of life. Things that are in excess or lacking are apt to change and cause great disturbance in the soul. Souls which are stirred by great divergences are neither stable nor cheerful. Therefore one must keep one's mind on what is attainable, and be content with what one has, paying little heed to things envied and admired, and not dwelling on them in one's mind. Rather must you consider the lives of those in distress, reflecting on their intense sufferings, in order that your own possessions and condition may seem great and enviable, and you may, by ceasing to desire more, cease to suffer in your soul. For he who admires those who have, and who are called happy by

other mortals, and who dwells on them in his mind every hour, is constantly compelled to undertake something new and to run the risk, through his desire, of doing something irretrievable among those things which the law prohibits. Hence one must not strive after the good fortune of others, but must be content with one's own moderate fortune, comparing one's own life with that of those in worse case, and must consider oneself fortunate, reflecting on their sufferings, in being so much better off than they. If you keep to this way of thinking, you will live more serenely, and will expel those not-negligible curses in life, envy, ambition and spite."

Virtue and moderation are to be practised because their opposites bring fear and an aftermath of pain. Ambition, an excessive desire for wealth, food, love and the rest must all be crushed because of their various unpleasant results. He sums up:

"Imperturbable wisdom is everything."

Excessive desire is not due to the body, the needs of which can easily be satisfied:

"The things needed by the body are available to all without toil or trouble. But the things which require toil and trouble and which make life disagreeable are not desired by the body but by the ill-constitution of the mind."

However, the other extreme, asceticism, is also a mistake:

"The life without festival is a long road without an inn."

The whole secret lies in "right measure" and "right time". If either is overstepped, the most pleasurable things

become most unpleasant, and what is worse, the desire is no sooner satisfied than it recurs. There are many things which are not bad in themselves but which become so because we do not know how to use them aright: for instance, deep water:

> " Deep water is useful for many purposes, and yet again harmful, for there is danger of being drowned. A technique has therefore been invented: instruction in swimming."

Hard work, study, reasonable recreation; a love of the beautiful; avoidance of all excess, and of anything in the nature of crime: these are the rules for a life of well-being.

Virtue is to be practised not for the sake of rewards and punishments in another life, which does not exist, but for its own sake. We must strive to stand well in our own judgement and before our own conscience.

Democritus had in many ways a typically Greek outlook. He was well aware of the brevity of human life, and of the sadness of the passing of youth:

> " One should realise that human life is feeble and brief and mixed with many cares and difficulties, so that one may care only for moderate possessions, and measure hardship by the standard of one's needs."

> " Old age is a general mutilation. It has all the limbs and organs, but they each lack something."

But he strove to offer the consolation of a doctrine that could make life while it lasts as good as possible, and to him " good " meant " enjoyable ". The watchword was moderation, right choice in everything. Even in study he would not have a man try too much lest he achieve nothing.

The restriction of desires and needs is in itself a recipe for contentment. If disasters occur, such as bereavement, suffering must be neutralised by an effort of the mind. Old age, too, has its compensations, which the wise man will accept:

> "It is unreasonableness not to submit to the necessary conditions of life."

> "The good things of youth are strength and beauty, but the flower of age is moderation."

> "The old man has been young, but the young man cannot know if he will reach old age. Thus the perfected good is better than the uncertain future."

The worst folly is to frighten oneself with tales of a life after death.

Democritus' ideal man, though his goal was philosophic calm, was not a recluse, but lived in society; nor is there anything selfish in his doctrine, though it was so interpreted by later thinkers. He has much to say on the duty of a man to his neighbours, as we shall see when we come to consider his views on society. He was himself a much-travelled man, and on his return to Abdera he gathered round him many disciples. He believed in travel:

> "Life in a foreign country teaches self-sufficiency; bread and bed are the sweetest cures for hunger and fatigue."

> "To a wise man, the whole earth is open; the native land of a good soul is the whole earth."

But though he visited Athens, his doctrines do not seem to have reached there until the time of Aristotle, who studied

and analysed his views both physical and ethical. These were taken over entire and without acknowledgement by Epicurus, and so passed into Roman thought through the poem of Lucretius. But the doctrine that the goal of human life is happiness was not fully understood by Democritus' successors; the Romans saw it only as hedonism, and were more attracted, at any rate in theory and for others, by the doctrines of the Stoic School.

The pre-Socratic philosophers were primarily interested in the universe as a whole; but Socrates gave philosophy a new direction by turning his attention on to the nature of Man. In Plato's dialogue *Phaedo*, Socrates is shown explaining how he began by studying the physical scientists, especially Anaxagoras whose book he bought for a drachma in the Athenian market-place. He was attracted to the book because he had heard of the theory of Mind, which he hoped meant that the author believed in a rational explanation of the universe; but on reading it he was disappointed to find that no use was made of the Intelligent Principle except to start off the process by which the physical universe was evolved out of the original mixture. Socrates wanted to know not merely how things happened but why; above all he wanted to be shown how it was for the best that they should be as they are (not necessarily best for Man, but best in the final analysis). In short, he wanted to find not only a rational explanation of phenomena, but an intelligent Purpose at work in the world, such as he observed in himself when he took a decision. From then onwards, therefore, he turned his attention to the study of Man, and in particular of the virtues, in an attempt to find out what was the best life for Man.

Socrates came to two chief conclusions: that Virtue is Knowledge, and that No Man Sins Willingly. He assumes

that every man is seeking what he believes to be for his advantage and welfare; but he is often mistaken in his choice of action, and does wrong in the belief that he is getting something good for himself. If he knew the truth, he would realise that in making a wrong choice—committing a sin for the sake of some immediate apparent advantage like pleasure or power—he is really doing himself not good but harm. If he could see further, he would reject the immediate wish because of the harmful consequences to himself. Thus, all virtue consists in recognising what is truly for our good, all sin in mistaking something harmful for something good. If we have the necessary knowledge, we are bound to choose correctly, for no one but a lunatic would willingly choose what is to his hurt. The wrong choice, or sin, is always to our hurt; the right choice, or virtue, is always to our advantage.

Socrates thus eliminated the will, making it automatically dependent on the reasoning faculty. Man, to him, is a creature with intelligence which can be developed by enquiry and search until it recognises the good. His goal is happiness, and this is achieved when his intelligence by recognising the good enables him to choose it. Therefore he will do well to let nothing interfere with his study of the good. Bodily desires must be controlled, the pursuit of wisdom must be set before any worldly advantage, and he must devote his life, in company with his friends, to the elimination of ignorance about the nature of the virtues and virtue as a whole.

Socrates exemplified this doctrine in his own life, from the time when he undertook his mission until the day when he chose to accept the verdict of an Athenian jurycourt rather than renounce the quest for virtue and the preaching of that quest to others. He was not an ascetic: we see him constantly enjoying himself with his friends. But he had a

nature which could not be deflected from duty, whether that of the ordinary citizen or that of the philosopher, by any weakness. He possessed in himself to perfection the four cardinal virtues of the Greeks—piety, courage, moderation and justice. He preached the overriding supremacy of knowledge attained to by reason; but he also left a place for special knowledge directly or intuitively received, believing as he did in revelation as embodied in the Delphic oracle, and also in his own inner voice or divine sign.

Socrates had a number of disciples who interpreted his theory in different, even antithetical ways. Apart from Plato, there were others of importance, each of whom started his own intellectual movement. One, Eucleides of Megara, was concerned chiefly with Socrates' methods of refuting his opponents in argument, and does not concern us here. The other two were directly opposed: Antisthenes, founder of the Cynic School, and Aristippus, founder of the Hedonist School.

Antisthenes, while preaching the rule of reason over the passions, overemphasised this side of Socrates' teaching to an extreme asceticism: "Give me insanity rather than pleasure!" The passion of love came in for the bitterest hostility: "If I could catch Aphrodite, I would shoot her." Antisthenes became the head of a brotherhood who practised the simple life and the return to nature; this led to a preference for unconventionality of behaviour. Antisthenes' most famous pupil was Diogenes of Sinopê, he of the tub, whose rudeness of life and manner gave rise to a number of amusing anecdotes. Much of the Cynic teaching was later incorporated into Stoic thought.

The opposite School, the Hedonists of Cyrene, took hold of Socrates' doctrine that pleasure is a good, and isolated it from the rest of his teaching by trying to work out a

scheme of pleasures that add up to happiness. They considered the important question of the reaction after pleasure, and laid it down that one must enjoy pleasures without being mastered by them. Aristippus believed that we can know nothing beyond our own sensations and the pleasure-pain tone that accompanies them and that depends on their intensity. Hence his study of pleasure and pain. His analysis of Man as a creature of sensation is not only a curious contradiction of what Socrates said, but was part of a frivolous way of life that is reflected in some of the aphorisms attributed to him, such as his reference to the famous courtesan: "I possess Lais—but I am not possessed." But Epicurus took over his doctrines among others, and welded them into a more consistent and comprehensive theory of life.

Meanwhile, during the fifth century, the Sophists were travelling about Greece and offering to instruct those who came to them, in return for a fee. They had diverse views on the kind of instruction useful to the young, but all claimed to be educators, and it is as such that they can best be considered.[1] It is sufficient to mention here that they agreed in thinking that absolute knowledge was impossible for Man. As Protagoras expressed it:

"Man is the measure of all things,"

that is, every man's precepts are true for him. Protagoras went so far as to say that the soul does not exist apart from the perceptions, and things do not exist except when someone is perceiving them. His ideal of conduct was the "imperturbability" of Democritus, derived from absence of suffering and not from emotions of pleasure. He regarded Man primarily as a social being with a moral sense which

[1] See pp. 178 *sqq.*

could be developed by the right kind of instruction in youth.

Gorgias professed nothing except the ability to make his pupils skilled speakers. He never professed to know what virtue was, and laughed at those who did. And so with the other Sophists: they were concerned primarily with instruction in the art of public speaking and with Man as a citizen, not as a complex creature with a nature peculiar to himself as a human being, apart from his relationship to the State.

It was one of the tasks of Socrates' greatest disciple to analyse the nature of Man with a view to discerning his proper place and function in the universe. Using the dialogue to convey the extent and purport of his enquiries, Plato first set forth the Socratic doctrine about virtue, that it is knowledge, and then proceeded to outline his own psychological theory in the *Republic*. The nature of Man is threefold: intellect, will, appetites. He compares these three with the three classes in the State, the " best " class (Intellect or Reason) who must rule in virtue of superior wisdom; the military class (the will, which takes its directions from the Reason); and the workers (the appetites, which must be forced by the will into obedience to the dictates of Reason if they do not do so voluntarily).

Man must practise virtue at all costs, because if he does not he will be doing harm to his most precious possession, his own soul. This is the meaning of *Dikaiosunê*, Justice or Righteousness, and this is why it should be practised without regard to apparent advantage or disadvantage. The worst type of human being is the tyrannical man, whose appetites and caprices are his own law; he is also the most wretched of men. The best type is the lover of wisdom, in whom Reason and Intellect rule, and he is also the happiest,

no matter what his circumstances or his fate. In the *Republic*, Plato eloquently describes the man whose life is ruled by the principle of Justice:

> "Justice, actually, is concerned not with one's external affairs but with the conduct of one's inner life—a real preoccupation with oneself and one's own, that is, a refusal to let each faculty do anything else but its own work or to let the several faculties of the soul intermeddle in each other's business. Justice is in truth a right organisation of one's own powers, an establishment of self-mastery, of order and inner friendship and harmony of the three parts within, so that like three notes in a musical scale—upper, lower and middle and any that are intermediate—they are combined in a complete unity, making out of several notes one single melody, well-tempered and harmonious.
>
> "This is how the just man acts, no matter whether his activity is concerned with commerce or bodily health or any negotiation public or private: in all these he both considers and calls just and honourable conduct that which preserves and helps to create such a condition of harmony, and he calls wisdom that knowledge which governs such conduct; but any act that tends to nullify it he calls unjust, and the opinion that governs it he calls ignorance."[1]

In later life Plato came to believe that Man was less susceptible to training and persuasion than he had at first believed, and that threats and compulsion must be used more extensively; but his view of the component parts of Man's nature and their proper relationship did not change. The proper function of Man is to seek Absolute Good and

[1] *Republic*, 443C *sqq.*

Absolute Reality, which are found only in imperfect copies in this world. The perfect models, the Ideas, exist in another sphere and can only be apprehended in part here by Man's highest faculty, his intellect. Man must therefore cultivate this faculty by devoting himself to the right kind of learning, and by rejecting all pleasures that interfere. The love that he feels for beautiful things and beautiful persons must be expressed in the search for reality behind the changing phenomena, that is, for Beauty itself, and must not be dissipated in physical pleasure and in a desire to possess the particular. When he sees Absolute Beauty with the vision of his soul, he will realise how far it surpasses any of the earthly copies to which he has been attracted.

In this world we cannot escape from imperfection. Therefore the good man will long to escape from it, and while here will try to imitate the divine. Plato makes Socrates say to Theodorus in the *Theaetêtus*:

> "It is not possible, Theodorus, that evil should be destroyed—for there must always be something opposed to the good; nor is it possible that it should have its seat in heaven. But it must inevitably haunt human life and prowl about this earth. That is why a man should make all haste to escape from earth to heaven; and escape means becoming as like God as possible. A man becomes like God when he attains to a goodness and purity that is not without understanding. But it is not at all easy, my friend, to persuade men that it is not for the reasons commonly alleged that one should try to escape from wickedness and pursue virtue. It is not in order to escape a bad reputation and obtain a good one that virtue should be practised and not vice; that, it seems to me, is only what men call 'old wives' talk'.

Let us try to put the truth in this way:

In God there is no sort of wrong whatsoever; He is supremely righteous, and the thing most like Him is the man who has become as righteous as it lies in human nature to be. And it is here that we see whether a man is truly able, or truly a weakling and a nonentity; for it is the realisation of this that is genuine wisdom and goodness, while the failure to realise it is manifest folly and wickedness. Everything else that passes for ability and wisdom has a sort of commonness—in those who wield political power a poor cheap show, in the manual workers a matter of mechanical routine. If therefore one meets a man who practises injustice and is blasphemous in his talk or in his life, the best thing for him by far is that one should never grant that there is any sort of ability about his unscrupulousness; such men are ready enough to glory in the reproach, and think that it means, not that they are mere rubbish, cumbering the ground to no purpose, but that they have the kind of qualities that are necessary for survival in the community. We must therefore tell them the truth—that their very ignorance of their true state fixes them the more firmly therein. For they do not know what is the penalty of injustice, which is the last thing of which a man should be ignorant. It is not what they suppose—scourging and death—things which they may entirely evade in spite of their wrong-doing. It is a penalty from which there is no escape.

Theodorus: And what is that?

Socrates: My friend, there are two patterns set up in the world. One is divine and blessed beyond comparison; the other has nothing of God in it, and is the pattern of the deepest unhappiness. This truth the evil-doer does

not see; blinded by folly and utter lack of understanding, he fails to perceive that the effect of his unjust practices is to make him grow more and more like the one, and less and less like the other. For this he pays the penalty of living the life that corresponds to the pattern he is coming to resemble. And if we tell him that unless he is delivered from this 'ability' of his, when he dies the place that is pure of all evil will not receive him; that he will for ever go on living in this world a life after his own likeness—a bad man tied to bad company: he will but think, 'This is the way fools talk to a clever rascal like me.'"[1]

Socrates, while hoping for an afterlife in which he would meet and converse with the good and the great, was willing to consider the possibility of the annihilation of the individual at death, and to believe that this too would be for the best. He is shown by Plato as saying at his trial:

"To be dead is one of two things: either it is virtual annihilation, a complete lack of consciousness, or as the stories go, it is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. If it is loss of consciousness, like a sleep in which one sees not even a dream, death must be a marvellous gain, since the whole of time seems no more than a single night. . . . But if on the contrary, death is a migration from here elsewhere, and the tale that all the dead are gathered there is true, what greater joy could there be than this?"[2]

Nevertheless he is depicted in the *Phaedo* as spending his last hours trying to prove to his sorrowing friends that the soul can continue to exist without the body; and Plato

[1] *Theaetêtus*, 176A *sqq.* [2] *Apology*, 40C.

himself held out the prospect of an afterlife of rewards and punishments on the Pythagorean and Orphic model, for those who controlled their desires and pursued virtue or the reverse. Plato depicts such a life in several myths, and there is no doubt that to him the reward for the cultivation of Man's highest nature was admission to the realm of the real, the good, the true. This life was for him a preparation for such a heaven, where the disembodied soul would behold in their dazzling perfection the Ideas of which it had caught glimpses here. The soul had existed before it entered its body and had seen these Ideas before; thus it recognised them and was stimulated by the recollection in this life. The nature of knowledge is recollection, the awakening of a memory, not the taking in of a new impression on to a blank tablet. Sensations are deceptive, giving as they do only particular objects which change continuously; the only changeless factor is the essence of each object, and this can be apprehended only by the mind.

This life, therefore, is nothing but a training-ground for the soul or mind, where it learns to ignore all else but the pursuit of reality, and so to fit itself for the world where only reality exists. Plato uses the methods of logic when arguing about his theories; but when he speaks of the Ideas, he rises to lyrical heights and seems to soar into the empyrean. Nothing matters to him except that part of the soul which can perceive reality: this we must at all costs cultivate and this alone will survive.

Aristotle disagreed with his master on metaphysical questions, but his ethical theory is largely taken from Plato, though it is very differently expressed. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he undertakes a systematic review of the whole subject, involving an analysis of the nature of Man in order to show what the best life for Man must be.

There are three possible ways of life, he says: the life of enjoyment, the life of action, and the life of thought. The majority of mankind put pleasure first and so choose the life of enjoyment, but this is a slavish, animal point of view, though it has been held by many men in high places. Men of a finer type put honour first, and choose a life of action, particularly in public affairs. But in Aristotle's view it is the third life, the life of thought, that is the best, and this he undertakes to prove.

First, while dismissing Plato's theory that there is any absolute or universal Good, he accepts Plato's theory of happiness set out in the *Philêbus*, namely, that happiness must be complete, self-sufficient and more worth having than anything else; also the view that the Good Life or happiness or well-being of anything is identical with the performance of its proper function, as Plato says in the *Republic*. Therefore we ask, what is the proper function for Man? The answer is, Aristotle asserts, the activity of the mind, the only function Man does not share with the animals.

Happiness is therefore an activity of the rational part of the soul, the intellect. It does, however, depend on certain material conditions; Aristotle will not agree with Plato that the rightly-constituted man is happy even in the midst of misfortunes. The "good" man has an element of stability, and will bear changes of fortune most nobly; yet commonsense must make us admit that great and repeated successes render life more blissful, not only for their own sakes but because of the chance they give one to do good; whereas great and frequent failures spoil our happiness not only because they give us pain but because they hinder us in many of our activities. Material conditions and happenings may be likened to the setting of a play: the actors and scenery are not part of the play, yet the play

depends on them for its perfect representation. We may therefore call that man happy who realises complete goodness in action and is adequately equipped with external goods.

In the Second Book of the *Ethics* Aristotle proceeds to outline his psychology. The soul of Man is divided into the rational and the non-rational: that which can give an account of itself and that which cannot. There is also a part which while not able to give an account of itself can understand and obey orders: either a lower part of the rational or a higher part of the non-rational. There are therefore two sorts of goodness: intellectual (*Dianoêtikê*) and moral (*êthikê*); the latter cannot be taught, as it is not pure knowledge; it must be inculcated by habit. Ethical goodness is a Mean between extremes.

The Third Book describes the Will. A good act must be voluntary. What is meant by "voluntary"? What is the Will? Aristotle does not agree that a good act follows automatically on our knowing that it is good; that is, he does not accept Socrates' view that Virtue is Knowledge. There are voluntary and involuntary actions, which the student of ethics must know how to distinguish, because only the former are open to praise or blame.

Throughout the discussion that follows, Aristotle insists on the existence of moral responsibility when the agent has any part in the deed; he will not, for instance, allow us to call "compulsory" acts done for the sake of pleasure, whether good or bad; that, he says, would be to make every action compulsory, and so relieve us of all responsibility. We cannot blame external things; we must blame ourselves for falling victims to their attractions. We must not take the credit for our noble deeds to ourselves while putting the blame for our disgraceful ones upon the temptations of pleasure. An action is compulsory only when its origin

is from outside, the person compelled contributing nothing to it. Virtue in the last analysis depends on ourselves and so does vice. We are in a sense the cause of our own moral dispositions; repeated wrong choice will in the end make it impossible for us to choose rightly. We can help the first step, but not necessarily the later ones, in vice. As for innate moral disposition, he dismisses this notion on the ground that this destroys credit for good actions as well as blame for bad, which, he thinks, nobody would be willing to concede. The Will he defines as a union of an appetitive element with an intellectual element (Deliberation).

The rest of this Book and the next four deal with the various types of "ethic" goodness and attempt to define them. He begins with Courage and Self-control; passes on to minor qualities such as Generosity and Meanness, Good Breeding and Vulgarity and the like, in order to show that the definition applies to all things great and small. Book Five is given up to a discussion of Justice in the widest sense: not merely that of the law courts, which he terms Corrective Justice, but the whole duty of Man to his neighbours and to society. This closes the discussion of the moral virtues.

Book Six deals with Intellectual Virtue, the virtue of the rational part of the soul, which in Aristotle's view is the highest and the specifically human part. The special and highest activity of this part of the soul is the search for scientific knowledge (*Epistêmê*), that is, inductive reasoning, the apprehension of definitions of classes of objects. Aristotle describes the essential nature of scientific thought, and distinguishes it from thought applied to practical ends, either personal or for the community (politics), and sets the scientific kind higher than the practical. The virtues co-operate and cannot exist apart, but the highest is that which is concerned with absolute knowledge. To take an analogy

from Medicine: there is the science of medicine which enquires into the nature of health and disease; there is the practice of medicine which applies such knowledge; and there is the moral character of the physician, brave, self-controlled, upright and so forth. Important as are the latter two, their functioning depends on the first: no physician with the best will in the world can cure disease unless he first knows how.

The Seventh Book deals with faults of will—the inability to carry out the dictates of deliberation; these are traced to desire for pleasure. Is all pleasure therefore bad?

The next two books are a digression on friendship and its part in happiness. The Tenth and last Book considers pleasure and desire, and the relation of pleasure to happiness. The highest Good for Man is then finally summed up:

Man's good, like that of everything else, consists in the discharge of his appropriate function, and is therefore to be found in the energizing of his soul towards its proper end. Man's soul or vital function, differs from that of other living things in having an intellectual faculty as well as the nutritive (found in plants) and the sensitive, appetitive and motive (found in animals). The moral virtues correspond to the appetites and emotions, and come into being when that part is subservient to the rational part; they are attained to by cultivation which is habitual. The intellectual virtues are: practical wisdom (*Phronêsis*), corresponding to that part of the rational which controls the appetitive-emotional, and speculative wisdom (*Sophia*) corresponding to that part which seeks pure knowledge. This is the highest virtue for Man; this, being an activity, an exercise of energy, brings pleasure; being the highest kind of activity it brings the highest kind of pleasure, the most continuous and satisfying, and the least subject to any

aftermath of pain or any other disagreeable consequences. Material welfare is a condition of such functioning, and therefore necessary, but not for its own sake, and not in any superfluity—only in so far as it makes right functioning possible. Amusement and recreation are to be pursued in order to fit ourselves for further work, not for their own sakes: Amusement for its own sake is proper only to children, not to grown men.

In a final description of the Good Life, Aristotle rises for a moment to an unusual eloquence:

> ". . . It follows that it is the activity of the intellect that constitutes complete human happiness, provided that it be granted a complete span of life; for nothing that belongs to happiness can be incomplete.
>
> "Such a life as this, however, will be higher than the human level: not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine; and by as much as this something is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the exercise of the other forms of virtue. If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life. Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought so far as possible to practise immortality, and do all that man may do to live in accordance with the highest thing in him; for though this be small in bulk, in power and value it far surpasses all the rest."[1]

The *Ethics* ends with a transition from the question of the nature and purpose of Man in himself to that of his

[1] *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177B *sqq.* H. Rackham's translation (Loeb, 1934).

functioning as a member of society: the *Politics*. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

The great virtues of the Greek concept of Man down to and including Aristotle were the following articles of belief, which they did not merely assert and did not pretend to derive from any authoritative source or supernatural inspiration, but which they tried to set on a firm foundation of proof:

Man is not only a free individual but a responsible member of society.

The highest part of Man's nature is the rational faculty or intellect or mind, which is a part of the divine and creative Intelligence which governs the universe. This means that the universe is intelligible and that Man has the power to understand it. He must exercise this faculty rather than the will to pleasure.

Virtue must be pursued for its own sake, not for rewards, because the practice of virtue means the well-being or health of the soul, our most precious possession.

Increase of true knowledge (as opposed to accumulation of learning) through education rightly conceived will bring increase of virtue.

Man can live best in a rightly-constituted society, with government by the wisest and best, and with the best possible system of laws.

The fall of Athens as an independent State and the death of Aristotle in 322 B C. marks the end of the great scientific and creative period of Greek philosophy. From now onward men are concerned to adapt themselves to a difficult and uncertain world rather than to evolve new scientific theories either on the universe or on Man. The contribution of Epicurus is best considered under the heading of

Man in relation to society. The Stoics saw the individual as part of the universe. He is a rational being and so related to all other rational beings. His ideal of conduct is to fit himself to universal law, not that of any State. He must accept with courage the conditions in which he finds himself, but he is justified in abstaining from the ordinary life of action and even in certain circumstances in leaving life by suicide. He must try as far as possible to control emotion, even benevolent feeling, by means of reason. These were the basic rules of conduct of a system which, it must be remembered, endured for over five centuries and passed from Athens to Rome and so all over the civilised world. But the Stoics also are best considered in relation to God and in relation to society.

The contribution of the Neoplatonists has already been dealt with under the heading of the concept of God, since to them Man's greatest happiness was to merge himself with the divine, losing his individuality.

III

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY IN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

HOWEVER much the philosophers thought about Man as a separate being, they were more interested in him as a member of society; in fact, it sometimes seems as if their studies of the individual were really a means to the imaginary construction of an ideal society.

This outlook was natural to a Greek. The life of a recluse, or even a life devoted to personal concerns only, was not highly thought of. It was the general ambition of men, in these small independent communities, to wish to take as much part as their ability and means allowed in the public affairs of the city. In Greek, the word for "honour" (*Timê*) is also that for "official position".

There was little or no severance between the life of the writer or thinker and that of the citizen. Poetry, even lyric poetry, was rarely a vehicle for the expression of personal feeling, and might be used to celebrate important events, such as festivals to the gods and victories in the Great Games; it was meant to be sung, often in chorus, to an audience large or small. It might be used for exhortation or propaganda, as Solon defended his political reforms to the Athenian public. Pindar says that the function of poetry is to commemorate great men and noble deeds, which would otherwise be forgotten.

Poets therefore were not living in a world apart, looking inward, but were active members of society whose works

were written to be heard and were often commissioned by rich men for public performance. Aeschylus fought in the battle of Salamis and then incorporated a description of it in a play. So too with philosophers: they were not usually severed from the community, living in the study: in that climate, the study did not exist. Much more time was spent out of doors in the market-place or the gymnasia or at the public gatherings of the assemblies or festivals, in the company of one's fellowmen, than in one's own house and alone. Even when the philosopher retired from the world of ordinary men, he was apt to do so in company with others of the same mind. The Greeks did not like to live alone; anyone who did so was considered an oddity, a " misfit ".

It is therefore natural that the Greek thinkers should have spent much of their time considering what was the best kind of community in which a man could live and develop. Much of what they said was conditioned by the actual societies in which they found themselves. The Greek city-States were small communities—thirty thousand adult males was considered the ideal number, with a corresponding number of women, children and slaves—and their governments varied.

Apparently most of them began as hereditary monarchies. Then, when the ruling family had failed to produce men of the right quality, the leaders of the chief families divided up the power between them. When these families, owing to a too long continued tenure of power, developed oppressive tendencies, there was often a popular movement against oligarchical rule. In some city-States this resulted in a crushing of revolt and a retention of power by the aristocratic families or the wealthy or both, as at Miletus. In others there might arise a leader, drawn from the upper class, who used popular unrest to seat himself in power,

and then ruled as dictator or "tyrant" as the Greeks called such a ruler; this happened in Corinth, Athens, some of the Aegean islands, some of the Sicilian cities and elsewhere.

Few of the dictators managed to found a dynasty. If their sons succeeded them, these were usually overthrown, and there was a return to oligarchy or a move towards democracy. Athens, whence most of the speculation on the ideal State proceeded, developed a form of democracy which within the orbit of adult male citizenship was almost complete. On the axiom that all citizens are equal, all officials were appointed annually by lot. The only elected authorities were the ten Generals, and they too were responsible, like all others entrusted by the State with power, to the sovereign People; when they evacuated office at the end of the civil year they had to pass a scrutiny of their official actions before the Council, which consisted of five hundred men chosen by lot. The Assembly of the People, whose decision on all questions of State policy was final, consisted of the whole body of male citizens over thirty years of age. So too the jury-courts and the magistrates who presided over them were chosen by lot; any citizen could bring an indictment against any other citizens (with certain exceptions) before these courts, and in all cases the responsibility for prosecution lay with the individual citizen; the State did not prosecute except for offences against itself, such as tax evasion and maladversion of public funds, and even these were generally brought to light by private informers.

Such, briefly, was the Athenian constitution in the days when Plato and Aristotle were writing, and it is against this background that we must regard their strictures on democracy. The Greek word *dêmokratia* does not mean "representative government". It means literally rule by the whole

people, and it was the small size of the ancient city-State that made this possible.

But before considering the views of the Athenian philosophers in detail, let us see whether anything of importance was said before them on this subject.

The Milesians were physical scientists, not political philosophers, but it is notable that Thales took an active part in the affairs of his time. It is said that he wanted the twelve Greek city-States of Ionia, the territory in Asia Minor of which Miletus was the chief in importance, to give up some of their independence and found a federal State with headquarters at Teôs on the other side of the Gulf opposite Miletus, in order to increase their strength and give more security. He failed to persuade them, and later when attacked by the Persians they fell one by one, Miletus being the chief sufferer. Apart from this desire for union with neighbouring Greek cities, we know nothing of Thales' political opinions. Miletus during the period of its greatest prosperity was governed by an oligarchy of landed proprietors and wealthy merchants, with the priests of Apollo holding the highest offices; but we have no record of the attitude of the Milesian scientists towards the government. It cannot have been markedly hostile, since their school flourished for a century, until the city's capture and destruction by the Persians in 494 B.C.

On the other hand, we know something of Heracleitus' attitude to his native city-State Ephesus. He castigated his fellow-citizens for their wanton lives, due to over-prosperity:

> "May wealth not fail you, men of Ephesus, so that you may be convicted of your wickedness!"

He also reproached them for rejecting their best citizens:

> " The Ephesians would do well to hang themselves, every adult man, and bequeath their city-State to adolescents, since they have expelled Hermodôrus, the most valuable man among them, saying: ' Let us not have even one valuable man; but if we do, let him go elsewhere and live among others! ' "

Nobody knows who this Hermodôrus was; he stands for all time as the type of a man expelled by ignorant prejudice.

From everything we hear of Heracleitus it is clear that he had a low opinion of his fellowmen and despaired of reforming them. He was himself of aristocratic birth, but withdrew from the office of Priest-King, which was hereditary in his family, and retired, first to the Temple of Artemis, then to the mountains, where—his enemies contended—he lived by eating herbs, and died of dropsy. He refused an invitation to the Court of King Dareios of Persia, and would not visit Athens. He disapproved of the Ephesians' luxurious way of living and preached simplicity; once in wartime he appeared before the public Assembly and silently prepared a bowl of gruel, thus convincing them without a word of the necessity for austerity. These stories, though probably invented, do depict a man at odds with the community in which he lived.

We have a few of his own sayings preserved, which show, first, that he abhorred despotism:

> " One should quench arrogance rather than a conflagration."

Second, that he was willing to accept monarchy if the right man could be found:

> " One man to me is worth ten thousand, if he be the best."

> " To obey the will of one man is also Law."

Third, that like all the best Greek thinkers, he believed that the real ruler of the State should be the law. Human laws, however imperfect, draw their life from the one divine Law, the Logos, and therefore:

> "The people should fight for the Law as if for their city-wall."

Pythagoras and his disciples believed in communal life. But the Pythagorean brotherhood at Croton took an active part in politics. Pythagoras was hostile to dictatorship: he left his native island Samos to escape from the rule of the dictator Polycrates. He must however have favoured aristocracy: he first attained to power in Croton by advising the government to protect some exiles from Sybaris thrown out by the democratic party. The people of Croton had been unwilling to take the risk of war with Sybaris, but on Pythagoras' advice they admitted the refugees, accepted battle with the Sybarites and were victorious. This success placed Pythagoras and his party in power. But the Crotoniates after a while found the rule of the philosophers too exacting, and under the leadership of a rich noble whom Pythagoras had offended, they expelled some and murdered others. After that, little is heard of Pythagorean political theory, though some of the disciples acquired great influence in the cities where they settled—and they spread all over the Greek world. But they must be regarded rather as little communities studying science, practising self-discipline and revering the memory of the Master.

Their only authority for their beliefs, as Pythagoras left no writings, was oral tradition (*ipse dixit*) and in later generations, books written by members. They were unique in admitting women to their membership. They laid down precepts for the correct ordering of family life and the

rearing of children. Marriage must have as its object the procreation of children, not pleasure; but this must be undertaken only by those who have lived and are living a healthy life. Every forethought must be shown by the future parents for the welfare of the child that is to be; most people have children in the reckless, improvident way that animals do, and our lack of care in this respect is the chief cause of human badness. The dog-breeder and bird-fancier take more care to get the right conditions; only human beings leave this important matter to chance. Thus the family is the basis of a healthy civic life.

The Pythagorean view of the State is conservative: nothing is worse than anarchy; therefore custom should not be lightly set aside, even for the sake of reform. But government must be by consent; only voluntary effort reaches its goal. Rulers must be humane as well as expert, so that subjects can be obedient as well as devoted. Nothing can be right if the ruling factor is wrong. The ruling factor must always be some one person or thing, namely, that most worthy of honour, whether in thought or action, in the household, the State or the army. Man must serve God, and under God, his parents and the law.[1]

Xenophanes, like Pythagoras, was an exile, driven out by the capture of his native city Colophon by the Persians in 545 B.C.; but he did not settle anywhere. He was "tossed about Greece" for sixty-seven years, from the age of twenty-five to ninety-two. His travels were in Sicily and Italy, so that he had the opportunity of observing the flourishing Greek communities on the coast there: Messina, Catania and Syracuse in Sicily, Elea on the coast of Italy, and no doubt other places. He spent the latter part of his life at Syracuse, where in 485 B.C. a dictator

[1] Precepts from the Pythagorean writings of Aristoxenus, fourth century B.C., embodying genuine Pythagorean tradition.

Gelon quelled a democratic revolt and restored the land-owning class to power. Xenophanes lived on into the following reign, that of Hieron the brother of Gelon, under whom Syracuse reached the height of its prosperity. Hieron invited famous writers to his Court and commissioned Pindar and Simonides to compose their magnificent Odes in honour of his victories in the Great Games. Xenophanes' views on the right ordering of social life were formed by observation of these rich city-States so typically Greek in their love of splendour and enjoyment, and their worship of success.

Xenophanes, however, took a soberer view. He had come from a city-State in Asia Minor where luxury had led to the neglect of military duty and to defeat by the Persians:

"The men of Colophon,
Having learnt useless forms of luxury from the Lydians,
While they were free from hateful tyranny
Used to go to the place of Assembly wearing all-purple robes,
Not less than a thousand of them in all:
Haughty, adorned with well-dressed hair,
Steeped in the scent of skilfully-prepared unguents."

This was the lesson he had learnt in his youth, when the dreaded Persian armies conquered the city-States of Ionia one by one. And now in Sicily he sees a society in which false values prevail. The city-States of Sicily are filled with pride at their defeat of the Carthaginian power under Gelon in 480 B.C. and the prosperity which resulted. A victory in the Olympic Games, in the foot-race, in boxing, wrestling, chariot-racing and other forms of prowess, bring honour and rewards far in excess of their merits:

"If anyone wins a victory with fleetness of foot . . .
To the citizens he is more glorious to look upon,
And is given a conspicuous seat of honour,

And his maintenance is provided out of the public funds by
the State,
As well as a grant for him to put aside for the future.
So too if he wins a prize with his horses,
He obtains all these rewards,
Though not deserving of them as *I* am,
For my art is better than the strength of men and of horses.
Yet opinion is altogether confused in this matter:
It is not right to prefer physical strength to noble Wisdom.
The good boxer or wrestler,
Or even the winner of races
Will not give the city-State a better constitution.

These things do not enrich the treasury of the State."

This is the message of the philosopher-bard to his adopted city: it is wrong to value physical prowess above wisdom. We need men who will govern well and give good counsel, not athletes. The poet sees with some bitterness the adulation heaped upon the successful competitor at the Games rather than on himself and his art, which are so much more valuable to the community.

Empedocles of Acragas, also a philosopher-bard, lived on excellent terms with his fellow-citizens, to whom he dedicated his religious poem *Purifications*. He was of noble birth, but tradition credited him with democratic leanings. He himself was said to have been offered the rulership of Acragas and to have detected and thwarted a movement on the part of a fellow-citizen to make himself tyrant. He was also credited with the distribution of some of his wealth among the poorer families by giving their daughters dowries.

Actually during his lifetime Acragas was extremely prosperous. The people had expelled an inefficient and cruel tyrant in 472 B.C. and had settled down to enjoy unprecedented wealth for over sixty years until their

unexpected overthrow and the destruction of their city by the Carthaginians. We do not know what constitution Acragas had at that time; there is no record. There was probably a government of the richest citizens, in which considerable power was held by the priesthood—for even when in later times the ruined city was recolonised from elsewhere, the Chief Magistrate bore the title of Sacrificial Priest as well as President of the Council, showing that the old tradition prevailed. But during the fifth century Acragas was so prosperous that there was no place for popular discontent. The enormous wealth which accrued to her from her olive-groves and vineyards, and her overseas trade with Carthage, kept almost all the citizens free from want, and the hard labour, agricultural and domestic, was done by slaves, the prisoners of war allotted to Acragas after the victory over the Carthaginians in 480 B.C. The frequently-recurring festivals, the spectacles, the pleasant social life,[1] provided the ordinary man with all the distractions he wanted, and all accounts show that the Acragantines were a friendly, sociable and hospitable people. Their only fault was a neglect of military training.

There was thus no great scope for the political theorist at Acragas, and there is no evidence that Empedocles took any active part in politics. In his dedicatory address to his fellow-citizens he thanks them for the honour they pay him, and praises them highly:

"Friends who dwell in the great town on the city's heights,
Looking down on yellow Acragas,
You who are occupied with good deeds,
Who are harbours of refuge,
Treating strangers with respect,
And who are unacquainted with wickedness,
Greeting!"

[1] For a description of life at Acragas see my *Greek City-States*, pp. 60 *sqq.*

Nevertheless, like all Greeks, in the midst of this prosperity he was assailed with deep misgivings: this life is not good, it is the reign of Hate. There is sin, especially the sin of bloodshed, the sacrifice of animals. The wise man will not busy himself with "miserable trifles, such as dwell among men in countless profusion and blunt their thoughts", but will strive after truth and purity, in order that he may regain his lost bliss in another world.

Still, Empedocles did all possible good while he lived. He travelled to other cities to give medical and other advice to those who wished to consult him. He did not always find credence, but this did not make him scornful of the people as Heracleitus was. The basis of his thought was that this phase of existence in our world is a reversal of an older existence where there was no war, bloodshed, animal sacrifice or sin. This is his ideal society, a golden age unattainable except in another life.

Thinkers like Parmenides and Anaxagoras were completely uninterested in worldly things and therefore contributed nothing to social theory. But Democritus, who was interested in everything, had much to say on politics as well as on ethics and education.

In the first place, he was a great upholder of law. The aim of law is to create unity of outlook and aims within the State; all the great undertakings of a State, including war, depend for their success on internal unity. The well-run State is the strongest protection for its members: if it is lost, all is lost. Therefore the good of the community must be placed first; private quarrels and power-seeking must not be allowed to interfere.[1]

Next, Democritus speaks strongly on the right use of

[1] Thucydides attributes similar sentiments to Pericles: "A man may be personally well off, yet if his country is ruined he must be ruined with it. . . . Therefore it is the duty of everyone to be zealous in her defence." Book II, Ch. 60.

wealth. In general, he says, poverty and wealth are relative terms: poverty means shortage, wealth means superfluity, so that if one moderates one's desires, a little will seem much. Small requirements make poverty equivalent to wealth. But there are those who fall below the line of tolerable poverty. These should be helped by the more fortunate. Generosity in the form of helping the poor is one of the easiest ways of using money, and is most beneficial to the community. It is quite different from prodigality, the indiscriminate maintenance of a crowd of dependants; this is to property what canker is to the body. But if the rich and influential can bring themselves to lend money to the poor and help them:

> " Herein at last lies pity, an end to isolation, friendliness, mutual aid, unity among the citizens, and other blessings such as no man can enumerate."

In other words, voluntary assistance of the poor by the rich will solve the greatest problem of the Greek city-State, that of internal conflict. Nevertheless, he adds, poverty in a democratic State is as preferable to so-called prosperity under autocracy as freedom is to slavery.

He was not in favour of communally-held property, even within the family; he thought that fathers should divide their property among their children in order to stimulate thrift, industry and free competition. The income from communally-held property, he says, gives less pleasure, and the expenditure thereof less pain than that from property individually owned. If voluntary aid can be combined with the control of excessive personal desires and ambitions, the good of the community will best be served. He quotes a proverb: " The shared fish has no bones," which means that if one man takes the upper half and the other the lower of the fish, the bones are left behind. Amicable sharing does away with friction over " mine " and " thine ".

Within the State, the family is the most important unit. Democritus gives directions for its right regulation, the management of its property, the education of the children. While recognising that the founding of a family is a natural instinct with most men, he believed that the philosopher would do better to avoid it; so too, while recognising to the full the importance of the State, he envisaged for the philosopher a wider horizon. The philosopher should travel abroad: the hardships thus encountered teach self-reliance, and " the native land of a good soul is the whole earth ".

The system of government he advocates is democracy, with election of magistrates and strict obedience to the law. Freedom of speech is the sign of freedom, but there is a danger if it is used at the wrong moment. Truth, not volubility, should be the rule. Eloquence cannot obscure bad actions, any more than good actions can be vitiated by malevolent words. Right judgement, right appraisal of worth and its opposite, are very important; it is easy to praise what is bad and to vilify what is good, but this is the mark of a corrupt character. Right conduct for the citizen is to fulfil his duties; wrong conduct is to neglect or postpone them. Oaths must be faithfully kept: only bad men break oaths made in time of difficulty. Loyalty based on good will, not flattery based on fear, should be encouraged. The greatest disaster is civil war, " because both the conquerors and the conquered suffer the same damage ". Concord means strength and serenity.

He accepted the institution of slavery, saying:

> " Use slaves as parts of the body: each to his own function."

Finally, he thought that all good citizens should take part in public affairs; they would certainly incur reproach

if they did not. But one should not neglect one's private affairs either. He praised the art of statesmanship as the greatest of all. He urged that it should be thoroughly learnt and its labours pursued, because it is the source of great and glorious blessings to mankind.

Democritus was the only one of the great philosophers of Greece who praised democratic government. Most of them advocate a " moderate " constitution rather than the extreme equalitarianism practised at Athens. It is possible that democracy at Abdera meant something other than the Athenian type.

During the latter half of the fifth century, when Abdera was commercially prosperous, she was a member-State of the Athenian Empire; but her position degenerated, like that of the other members, into that of subject-ally. By the time the Athenian war with Sparta broke out in 431 B.C., when Democritus was about thirty years of age, the people of Abdera were beginning to resent Athenian domination. After several Athenian acts of interference, Abdera revolted and joined the Spartan side. It is not known whether Democritus took any active part in these affairs or what he thought of them, but it appears likely, from his praise of democracy, that he admired what he knew of the Athenian constitution, just as the Athenian philosophers admired what they knew of the Spartan régime, it being easier to extol these constitutions in theory than in practice. At the end of the war, in 405 B.C., when Democritus was about fifty-five, friendly relations with Athens were resumed, and an Athenian general Chabrias did Abdera a good turn by repelling an attack from Thracian barbarians.

Abdera thus became a member of the new Athenian Confederacy, founded on freedom and equality for its members. Democritus and his disciples, including those

who came from other parts of Greece, were able to carry on their studies and writing in tranquillity throughout the fourth century, even after the city fell to the Macedonians. A philosopher of the Abderite School was one of the party which accompanied Alexander on his campaigns; this man, whose name was Anaxarchus, taught Alexander the Democritean theory that there are many other worlds in space; Alexander, it is said, wept because he had not yet conquered this one.

The Sophists, travelling all over Greece in the pursuit of their profession, must have observed many different kinds of constitution in the Greek city-States, and it is a pity that they did not see fit to record their observations, which would have been more interesting to us than their generalisations on society, its laws, and the rôle of the citizen. Since they earned their living by teaching, and sometimes amassed great fortunes, they had to be able to attract audiences of the rich and influential men wherever they sojourned. Their subjects therefore had to appeal to this class and to be useful to them.

During the fifth century, there was one subject which was essential to the ambitious young man under whatever type of government he lived, and this was oratory. Now that monarchy and its unconstitutional counterpart tyranny had mostly passed away, the Greek city-States were ruled by some form either of oligarchy or of democracy, that is, government by a privileged class or government by the people. The constitutions varied in the proportion of power assigned to the two classes. Even in democratic Athens, where officials were annually chosen by lot, there was a panel of ten generals who were elected. Even in oligarchically-ruled States like Corinth, some cognizance had to be taken of popular feeling. The most remarkable feature

of the Greek city-State, one which is not sufficiently realised or emphasised, is that these constitutions did not allow for a change of the party in power. In Athens, the annual ballot merely changed the individuals; there was no choice between the parties. The constitution was democratic, and any attempt to overthrow it was treason. So in oligarchies also: a change-over to popular government could only be secured by revolution and bloodshed. These revolutions were usually assisted from outside and even carried through with the help of foreign arms. For instance, democracy at Corinth in the early half of the fourth century was kept in power only by the force of an Athenian garrison, and the oligarchic exiles were only restored to power by Spartan aid. Athens remained firmly democratic for more than a century and a half, with only two brief periods of oligarchy, brought about by foreign interference and much bloodshed. It is because of this inelasticity that revolution was always so much dreaded in the Greek city-States; this is why poets, historians and philosophers combine to execrate *Stasis*, party-strife leading to civil war, and why they unceasingly preach internal unity, *Homonoia*, Concord.

But whatever the constitution of any particular city-State, there was always a generation of young men who looked forward to a life of activity in public affairs. Nobody if he could help it took part in commerce or even in a profession; these were resorted to by men of good family only if their income failed. In Athens, a professional life was hardly possible for a young man of good family, even if he had desired it. Theoretically all State offices were open to all citizens and were filled by the random choice of the lot. There was no legal profession: the Athenian law-courts had no judges, only chairmen who presided in virtue of one of the annual magistracies. Advocacy was not allowed, each litigant being legally obliged to address the

jury in person. A litigant could get someone to write the speech for him to deliver, but the profession of speech-writer was not held in high esteem, though it was undertaken perforce by such skilled orators as Antiphon, Lysias and Demosthenes. Medical practice at Athens was held in little regard, and certainly could not have been touched by a "gentleman"; the practitioners often travelled about Greece, setting up for short periods in the cities and giving consultations, as is frequently done today in countries like Spain, for example, where communications are difficult. If an epidemic broke out, help was sought from abroad; Hippocrates of Côs is said to have visited Athens in 429 B.C. at the time of the Plague, and his pupils are found elsewhere in Greece as itinerant consultants. Teaching too was barred. Schools were private, and their status varied; but school-teachers as a class were looked down upon. Even specialised teachers of high attainment, including the most famous of the Sophists, were despised by men of independent means because they took fees. Demosthenes' sneer at his rival Aeschines is typical: "I was attending one of the best schools while you were teaching in an elementary school." It shows that the schools of Athens differed widely in status, but not even the most exclusive school offered a profession to an Athenian of the upper class. Only politics or a military and naval career could do that. The highest priesthoods were hereditary, while most other important religious duties were part of the duties of the State magistrates.

Thus in every city-State the young men of the best families needed the kind of education that would fit them for public life. In a democratic State they needed to understand politics and to be able to speak in a way that would convince the popular Assembly; in an oligarchic State, they still needed to learn the art of persuading the ruling

deliberative body or Council. Therefore those who offered this instruction were eagerly sought after on their peregrinations. The greatest of these was Protagoras of Abdera.

According to Plato's portrait of him, Protagoras did not instruct in any branch of knowledge, and in fact thought such instruction of little worth. What he claimed to be able to impart to his hearers was wise management of their domestic affairs and also of the affairs of the State. In politics he could increase their ability both to speak and to act, he said. Socrates in Plato's dialogue interprets this to mean that Protagoras claims to be able to teach " the art of citizenship—in fact, to be able to make men good citizens ". They are thus at cross purposes from the start, for Protagoras' claim was really to make men *able*, that is, successful in public and private life, not to make them good, for as subsequently appears, he has no idea what is meant by " goodness " in any general or absolute sense, but recognises only skill, or ability in achieving one's aim, so that he and Socrates (Plato) can never agree.

After this declaration of the purpose of his teaching, Protagoras in Plato's dialogue is exhibited as giving an elegant demonstration of his powers of exposition, in the form of a story. In order to explain to Socrates that " virtue can be taught ", Protagoras gives a mythical account of the origins of civilised society. Man, unlike the other animals, was ill-equipped with the means of self-preservation, defence or flight. He was therefore endowed by Prometheus with the divine gift of fire, and the craftsmanship that goes with it; he thus became able to provide himself with the necessaries of life. This gift from heaven made him alone of the animals believe in gods, and he set up altars and statues. Next he learnt to give names to objects, and to make houses, clothes, shoes, coverlets, and

to grow the crops of the earth. At this stage men still lived scattered, but as their arts were not sufficient to protect them from wild beasts, they came together and founded cities for the sake of defence. But they still had no "art of citizenship", so that they injured one another and were forced to scatter again.

Zeus then, fearing the total destruction of the human race, sent his messenger Hermes bearing a final gift to mankind: the sense of justice, which all were to share. The fact that this communal virtue is potentially in all of us and not confined, like the arts and crafts, to a few specially gifted men, makes democracy possible, and allows any man to utter an opinion on State policy and be listened to by the people in assembly, when this would not be so if he spoke on any of the crafts like carpentry. Society expects every one of its members to possess this virtue; if anyone does not, he is punished, and if he is incorrigible he is expelled or put to death, whereas society does not blame and punish a man who has no talent for music. The art of good citizenship is therefore potentially in all men.

It must, however, be taught also. Lack of physical beauty is not blamed but pitied; lack of justice, the virtue of communal life, is punished, and training from infancy enforces it. The laws exist rather for the sake of education than for retribution. If famous statesmen have not produced equally valuable sons, this is not because the virtue is unteachable; it is because in a State where all are instructed and trained in social virtue some stand out as having a greater gift for it than others. Those less gifted are still better than the uninstructed savage, and would shine out as such in a savage community. They have learnt something, however little, though they may not be as good as their fathers—and there is hope for the young, anyway.

This, though written by one who is in fundamental

disagreement with Protagoras' views and methods, gives a good idea of what he professed to do for his clients. He tried to show that the basis of communal life was what he called "justice", a mutual agreement among members of the community not to injure one another; that this "justice" is an innate human faculty without which no community can survive; and that it can be improved by suitable instruction of the kind offered by himself.

He did not, however, believe in any absolute standard of justice; in fact, he claimed that all beliefs were equally true or real, though some were more desirable than others, more sound or healthy. The work of the teacher or orator is to instil into the individual or the community the sound instead of the unsound opinions. The statesman's "wisdom" is like that of the doctor, who does not think that health is more "real" than illness, but who knows it to be better. Thus Protagoras did not claim to teach what was true or real, but only what was sound, and also to train men to influence the opinions of others by means of the art of persuasion, rhetoric, the use of words.

This study had another, less worthy side. If all opinions are equally "true", the art of words can teach one how to convince one's hearers of a weak case, or even an unsound one. Protagoras, in order to train his pupils in debate, especially forensic and political argument, wrote rhetorical exercises on set themes, showing that two contradictory propositions can be defended. He might himself be concerned for the welfare of the community, but those who paid him fees learnt only the tricks in his repertoire and applied these to the defence of whatever cause, good or bad, they wished to uphold.

Only a few sentences of his writings have survived, in spite of their popularity at the time, and none of these concerns his views on the social structure.

Another popular orator, Gorgias, coming from Sicily, had strong views on current politics, in which, unlike Protagoras, he was directly engaged. He preached the need for unity among the Greeks, and delivered an oration on that theme at the Olympic Games. The object that was to unite the Greeks was to be war with Persia, and the prizes of this war would be, not each other's cities, but the territory of the " barbarians ", as all non-Greeks were called by the Greeks. This suggestion had a great and disastrous influence during the following century, when theorists like Isocrates wasted their eloquence in proposing aggression against a country that no longer menaced Greece, and failed to see the growing danger from Macedonia; in fact, they gave Philip of Macedon the opening he wanted, by enabling him to pose as the leader of united Greece against Persia, thereby masking his designs on the freedom of the Greek city-States.

Long extracts from three of Gorgias' rhetorical compositions survive: a flamboyant Funeral Oration delivered at Athens, and two exercises, an Encomium on Helen of Troy and a Defence of Palamêdês, one of the heroes of the Trojan War. These reveal nothing of Gorgias' views on society except his passionate belief in the power of words and the art of Persuasion:

> " Speech is a great power, which achieves the most divine works by means of the smallest and least visible means; for it can put a stop to fear, allay grief, create joy, and increase pity."

Speech, he says, is like medicine: the right kind can cure disease, the wrong kind can drug and bemuse the soul. In the Funeral Oration he praises the Athenians as possessing all four cardinal virtues, but he sets courage highest. The Encomium on Helen begins:

> " The glory of a city is courage, of a body, beauty, of a soul, wisdom, of action, virtue, of speech, truth. It is right in all circumstances to praise what is praiseworthy and blame what is blameworthy."

But this was mere rhetoric. Gorgias was not concerned with the content of a speech but only with its diction and construction; he claimed that an orator could speak well on all subjects. The good orator will of course use his power for good, but he can " make big look small and small look big ", and it is his function to be able to glorify something by praise and attack it again with vituperation, swaying his audience as he pleases. This art was to be learnt by practice, and Gorgias composed his eulogies and denunciations as examples for the guidance of his pupils. He claimed, like Protagoras, to be able to say a thing in the fewest possible words and also to be able to talk about it at any length. He despised forensic oratory because speakers were allotted a certain length of time, or as he put it, had to " croak to the clock ". He was thus not a serious student of society but only one of those who earned a living by displaying and teaching an art necessary to advancement in the Greek city-States of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

Gorgias had no belief in the reality of any of the virtues, individual or social; he thought they were necessary and convenient, but not inherent in human nature or in society. His pupil Lycophron, called by Aristotle " the Sophist " to distinguish him from others of the same name, put forward the view that Law is merely a covenant, a " guarantee of social justice " between men. Aristotle attacked this doctrine, saying that law ought to be a moral education, a means of making the citizens good and just, as well as being an expedient arrangement among them not to injure one another. Unless a society regards its laws as an educational

force, it is merely an alliance of individuals, and the only difference between one State and another will be their location. This point of view is put forward in Plato's *Republic* by Glaucon (Plato's brother) who suggests that law is a social compact " not to harm or be harmed ".

Lycophron did not believe in caste. He said:

> " The beauty of high birth is uncertain, its dignity a matter of words."

That is, its status is only a matter of opinion, and actually the low-born are no different from the high-born in natural characteristics.

Thrasymachus of Calchêdon on the Bosphorus opposite Byzantium, also appears as a character in Plato's *Republic*. If that portrait is correct, he was a man of violent opinions and temperament, a formidable debater who took a much stronger line about justice and the social contract than did the other Sophists. He maintained that Justice is " the advantage of the stronger ". Governments impose laws on their subjects because it is to the advantage of the rulers to keep them quiet and content; the subject has to obey because this contributes to the well-being of the ruler, not his own. To act justly, says Thrasymachus, always means that you get the worse in any transaction. The just man pays more taxes than the unjust, and if there is a share-out, the just man gets nothing, the unjust man a good deal. " Men vilify injustice not because they fear to do it but because they fear to experience it." The greater the injustice, the greater the rewards. Small crimes like pilfering are punished, but the complete criminal who holds nothing sacred gets away with everything and is the luckiest of mortals. " Injustice, when great enough, is mightier and finer and more masterly than justice; justice is to the advantage of

the stronger, but injustice is profitable and advantageous to oneself."

Whether Thrasymachus really believed this or was defending a thesis for the sake of effect, cannot be determined. In the *Republic*, the argument that follows shows Thrasymachus making further statements that he obviously does not believe, in his attempt to wriggle out of Socrates' inexorable chain of reasoning. But the general notion that Law was not firmly based on some necessity arising out of the gregarious nature of Man was at that time much in vogue, as opposed to the doctrine that human law was an imperfect copy of the law of the universe. Therefore one can assume that Thrasymachus believed society to be held together by nothing stronger than convenience and mutual advantage. This view he shared with Gorgias, Lycophron and others (Protagoras, believing that the sense of justice was innate, does not belong to the class that believed law to be a pure convention). Thrasymachus however went further than any of the Sophists in thinking that the strong man (the precursor of the Superman) would disregard law himself and impose it on others, and that all masterly men would do so if they could, and rightly. A ruler worthy of the name, Thrasymachus thinks, regards his subjects as sheep to be fattened for his advantage, not to be looked after and protected. Nevertheless, he could write in praise of Justice when he chose. A Christian writer quotes him as saying:

> "The gods do not see human affairs; otherwise they would not have overlooked the greatest of all blessings among mankind, Justice—for we see mankind not using this virtue."

Thrasymachus was primarily a rhetorician and teacher of rhetoric, particularly of the art of appealing to the emo-

tions of his audience. The only long extract that has survived from his writings is a speech written for a young Athenian of oligarchic views, who would like Athens to turn from extreme democracy back to the more moderate or "mixed" constitution of his ancestors. Another brief sentence suggests that Thrasymachus regarded Macedonia, not Persia, as the true enemy of the Greeks, and urged the latter to unite against this menace. If this embodies Thrasymachus' own view, he was more far-sighted than others of his time.

Hippias of Elis in the Peloponnese was a Sophist who specialised in the sciences, especially astronomy and mathematics. Grammar and history also interested him, and he was a practical craftsman, liking to show that he was self-sufficient and could make everything he wore. In Plato's *Protagoras*, Hippias is portrayed as staying in the same house in Athens, and during the discussion on social ethics, Hippias is shown strongly supporting the theory that Law and Nature are opposed: Law is a tyrant that forces Man to act in many ways contrary to his nature. But in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Hippias is depicted as agreeing that the distinction between Justice and Law does not exist. Again we have the impression of a man without fixed beliefs, apart from a sceptical attitude towards the virtues, including the social virtue of Justice.

But the most interesting declaration of this kind is found in a papyrus discovered at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt in 1916. This is from a lost work called *Truth*, written by an Athenian named Antiphon and called "the Sophist" to distinguish him from the famous politician and writer of forensic speeches in murder cases. This passage deals with the foundation of human society.

After a discussion on the nature of Law, Antiphon goes on to say that the most important factor in society is Concord: the welding together of all classes in the State into internal unity. The theme of Concord also was much in vogue at the end of the fifth and beginning of the fourth centuries. Both parties, oligarchic and democratic, claimed Concord as their aim and as the product of the kind of constitution they favoured. Antiphon writes of Concord in the State, in the private life of an individual, and in a man's own soul. In the State, the chief cause of dissension is inequality of wealth; therefore the rich must be induced to assist their neighbours, that is, grant them loans. Miserliness is a mistake: unless money is used, one might as well bury it or not possess it at all. Nothing, he argues, is worse for mankind than anarchy; therefore to teach Concord, internal and external, is the chief business of education.

The total effect of the Sophists' teaching, therefore, much as it varied in detail, was to give the impression that Society is an artificial association of individuals bound together by convenience and the wish to preserve themselves. Emphasis was not on the welfare of society and its members but on the success or protection of the man embarking on a political career; the ordinary citizen has to be persuaded or deceived.

This tendency to regard politics as a means of self-advancement and self-aggrandizement was powerfully combated by Plato. In his view politics should not be a career open to all, especially to those with the gift of oratory, but a profession for which the candidates must be carefully selected with a view to character and carefully trained. If those most suited to govern are not willing to take office, they must be compelled, and punished if they resist. There is nothing worse than to be ruled by one's inferiors. The good man is reluctant to undertake a

political career, but he will do so because it is his duty and in order to keep bad men out of power.

The object of the State, according to Plato, is the same as that of the individual, namely, virtue. In the *Republic* Plato sets out to found an imaginary city in which all the necessary principles shall be found at work. There will be three classes: rulers, soldiers and workers. Each will receive the training proper to their function. The four cardinal virtues will be present: wisdom will belong to the ruling class because they have the knowledge which makes them guardians of the community. Courage will belong to the soldiers: they will have a firmer opinion, not to be shaken by pleasure, pain or fear, that it is their duty to safeguard the community. *Sôphrosynê*, which in a man is self-control, that is, the control of the lower nature by the higher, means in a city the control of the inferior by the superior, and as the superior are always few, the rule of the majority by the superior minority and the acceptance of that rule by the majority. In this way the desired concord will be achieved, and in no other. Justice, the last and greatest of the virtues, is found to be the principle that each individual should pursue the work for which his nature is fitted, each man keeping to his own work, and each class likewise.

This point of view is extremely unpopular nowadays, but much of its unpopularity is due to misunderstanding —to a confusion of Plato's aristocracy with that based on birth and wealth, and a detestation of the word "class". But it must be remembered that Plato's State is based on three principles: first, that the best should rule, and by "the best" he means not the high-born or the rich, but the man whose talents and training best suit him for the job; second, that by rulership he means not domination but guardianship, the use of authority not for one's own

advantage but for the security and well-being of the community; third, that the rulers' authority rests on its voluntary acceptance by the rest of the community; the military arm is there for the defence of the community from outside enemies, not for the coercion of the citizens by the government, and it is so to be manned and trained. If these facts are remembered, Plato's general scheme cannot be gainsaid. It can perfectly well be applied to the representational system which has been evolved in the modern so-called democratic States: the rule of a few by the consent of the majority. What Plato called "democracy" was what nowadays would be called "ochlocracy"—government by the mob.

The scheme is of course open to grave criticism in detail, as Aristotle and others immediately saw. From a modern point of view, the least acceptable features are:

(1) that the rulers are established for life, or at any rate as long as their strength allows, once they have passed through the long training and probation-period. This might easily lead to abuse of power, though Plato tries to obviate this by not allowing them any private property.

(2) that they will form a dynastic group, generation succeeding generation within a narrow circle.

(3) that there is very little chance of passage from group to group, though this is envisaged.

(4) that the State rests on slave-labour.

(5) that no provision is made for the expression of popular opinion and especially of popular discontent.

This last point shows that life in Athens had so much impressed him with the dangers of rhetoric which can sway popular assemblies that he went too far and practically abolished that freedom of speech which was the pride of

Greek political life—without which there would have been no outlet for the citizens' lively and exuberant feelings. The danger of suppression, though Plato did not seem to see it, is greater than that of the influence of misguided views.

Plato's scheme is undeniably too static. Having devised what he considers to be perfection, he naturally wishes it to remain unchanged, and this in human conditions is impossible. He was aware that change is inevitable, but thought that it must necessarily be a decline from the best. The desire for stability is not peculiar to the philosopher; it has been felt by many practical lawgivers, Solon for instance, and others. At Athens and elsewhere there were penalties attached to attempts to overthrow the existing régime. The Greeks lived in constant dread of revolution, and their volatile temperament saw in changelessness an ideal of internal peace and security. The Spartan constitution, where the classes remained always distinct and the laws unalterable, seemed to many Athenians a desirable antithesis to their own régime, just as the enforced orderliness of Fascist or Communist States has seemed desirable to some citizens living under a system where freedom for the individual is permitted and encouraged. In the modern State, the constitution, not the government, is regarded as unchangeable.

The *Republic* is a fascinating and provocative book, written in a spirit of gaiety in spite of its underlying seriousness. Many of its details directly flouted public opinion in his own day, and they still stimulate even while they irritate the modern reader. They were meant to arouse discussion, and they do so to this day. Here are some of the main features of Plato's ideally organised society:

The rulers are to be true guardians. They are not to hold any private property; they are to live like the Spartans,

receiving a year's maintenance and no more as their reward. Their houses are to be open to all, not private residences. They must not even handle or be under the same roof with gold and silver:

> "This will be their salvation and the salvation of the city-State. If at any time they acquire land of their own, and houses, and money, they will become engrossed in private business and property-management instead of being guardians, and then they will hate and be hated, plot and be plotted against, and so pass the whole of their lives, in much greater fear of internal than external enemies—the detested masters rather than the allies of the other citizens, until they bring themselves and the rest of the State to the brink of destruction."[1]

Adeimantus here objects that Socrates is not making his rulers happy: if they are to have nothing of their own, they are like mercenaries or a garrison. Socrates replies that they may be extremely happy even in such circumstances; but even if they are not, the purpose of founding this ideal State is not to make any one class in it outstandingly happy, but to make the community as a whole as happy as possible.

The ideal State, Plato thinks, cannot come into existence if we have to begin with the present generation of adults. We must turn out of the city all those over ten years of age, in order to get the children away from the moral influence of their parents and bring them up according to the new beliefs and laws. They will then be examined for their natural aptitude and divided into the three groups: rulers, soldiers, workers. Thereafter the generations will be propagated by careful breeding. The famous Fifth Book lays down rules for the production of a healthy and intelligent race:

[1] *Republic*, 417A.

(1) Women must be physically trained and educated in the same way as men and must enjoy equal rights, that is, they must do the work for which they have the capacity. Then, if able, they will share in the government also. There is no activity proper to women as such except child-bearing. All occupations are naturally suited to them, though on the whole they are weaker and less able than men. They will even go to war with men, and will take their full share in everything.

(2) Marriage in the sense of the private cohabitation of one man with one woman is to be abolished. The ruling class will propagate according to a plan by which the best man will mate with the best woman. In the guardian-class both sexes will live together, with common houses and common meals, no one possessing any private property, associating with one another in all their daily life. The Legislator will at the outset select the suitable men and women who are to live this communal life. They will then be naturally attracted to one another (as Glaucon laughingly says, " not by mathematical law but by the compulsion of love, which has perhaps the greater power to persuade and attract most men ".) When a number of pairs have fallen in love, the rulers will arrange " marriages " at set times.

Brides and bridegrooms are to come together at a fixed festival. The number of marriages is to be controlled, in order to keep the population at the same level with due regard to wastage by war and disease. Only these State marriages are legal. Promiscuous unions are to be forbidden. The right ages of marriage are for a women twenty to forty, for a man thirty to fifty-five.

(3) The children will be at once taken from the mother and given into the charge of officials appointed for the purpose (men and women). The mothers will

come to the crèche to suckle the babies, but every precaution is to be taken to prevent them from knowing their own children. Incest will be prevented by careful regard to the dates of marriage and birth. The city will thus become one large family, in which everyone has many " parents " and " brothers " and " sisters ".

The object of all these provisions, like that of the others, is to promote internal unity or concord.

Socrates is then made to propound, at the end of this highly controversial Fifth Book, an even greater paradox than that of the communal marriage. He admits that it will probably " drown him in a roar of laughter and ridicule, like a wave breaking over him ". This paradox is that unless philosophers become rulers, or rulers become philosophers, and unless those who make either politics or philosophy exclusively their profession as at present are prevented from doing so, there will be no cessation of ills either for States or for the human race. There follows a recapitulation of the virtues of the philosophic character, and of the axiom that " the most gifted natures, if they have a bad upbringing, become outstandingly bad, and great crimes and unalloyed wickedness come from a strong character corrupted by early nurture ". The rest of Book Six and Book Seven then give the system of education advocated by Plato for those who are to hold power.[1]

The Eighth Book describes existing constitutions, of which there are four basic forms worth mentioning, corresponding to four different types of human being. These are all faulty, Plato thinks, since he has already described the perfect form; but their mistakes should be noticed and avoided. They are classified as the Spartan type, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny.

[1] See Chapter IV, p. 190 sqq.

The faults of the Spartan type are a preference for war rather than peace, secret avarice, an education based on compulsion rather than persuasion, a neglect of the arts, music, reason and philosophy for physical training. This régime corresponds to the type of man who is hard, cruel to slaves (" not having the properly educated man's contempt for them "), obedient to his rulers, ambitious, claiming power for military prowess. He will be devoted to physical training and hunting.

The next falling-away will be to oligarchy, in which the rich rule and the poor are debarred from office. The mark of such a régime is the worship of money rather than knowledge and skill, so that all offices are given according to a property-qualification, and its great defect is that it is disunited: two cities, rich and poor, instead of one, and with each class always plotting against the other. In such a State, crime is rife.

The third stage in the decline is democracy, which arises when the poor, hardened by work, realise their advantage and rise against the rich, who are weakened by their enjoyment of luxury. Democracy is defined as that constitution in which citizenship and all offices are shared out to all on equal terms, that is, one in which on the whole office is held by lot. In it there is complete liberty of action for the individual and no responsibility:

> " In this State, you needn't take office even if you are fitted for it, or let anyone else rule you if you don't wish; you needn't be at war because the rest of the city is, and when it is at peace, you needn't keep the peace if you don't choose. If there is a law forbidding you to hold a magistracy or sit on a jury, that is no reason why you shouldn't do both if you like. Isn't that a marvellous and delightful existence—for the moment? "[1]

[1] *Republic*, 557E.

This is, of course, a rather bitter description of the conditions prevailing in Athens in Plato's day. Its attractiveness was undeniable:

> "This is perhaps the loveliest of all the constitutions. Like a garment embroidered with every sort of flower, this constitution likewise, bedecked with every sort of character, will appear the loveliest. It may be that, just as children and women like to look at many-coloured objects, many people will judge this constitution the loveliest of all."[1]

But the pleasure is dangerous and short-lived in a community where no one recognises any duty and no standard of worth is expected or demanded of those in public life. It will be seen from this description how far removed is the "democracy" described and condemned by Plato from that to which we give the name today. But Plato's description of the type of man corresponding to the State, the man to whom all pleasures are equal and all to be gratified as they come along, contains a warning for all times, and certainly for the present.

The last stage in the downward path is tyranny or dictatorship, an extreme reaction from excessive liberty to excessive slavery. The mob chooses a leader, who after various manœuvres persuades them to give him armed protection. He is then complete master. In the early stage he denies he is seeking absolute power and is full of promises to the individual and to the public. When he is firmly in the saddle he arranges wars, to keep the populace busy and make them need him as leader. He purges the State of the best who might oppose him, and in the end, when the people realise what a monster they have begotten, they find also that they cannot get rid of him, because they have

[1] *Republic*, 557C.

made him strong and themselves powerless. Socrates proceeds to show that the tyrannical man, who seems the freest, is enslaved to his desires, and that the life of a dictator is like that of the prison-house.

The Ninth Book ends with a likening of the Ideal State to those other Forms which Plato believed to be the reality over against the imperfect creations of this world:

Glaucon: "The State we have just finished establishing exists in words only, and nowhere on earth, I imagine."

Socrates: "Yes. But perhaps it exists in heaven as a model for anyone who wishes to see it, and seeing it, to found a city in himself. It does not matter whether it exists or ever will exist, since he will act as a citizen of that city alone and no other."

Plato, after the death of Socrates by the vote of the Athenian democracy, travelled abroad, visiting Megara, Cyrene, Egypt and possibly Phoenicia. His travels lasted over ten years. In 388 and 387 B.C. he was in southern Italy and Sicily. In all these places he met leading thinkers and statesmen, and they contributed much to the development of his thought. His most momentous visit was to Syracuse, where a dictator, Dionysius I, was in power. Here he met Dion, Dionysius' brother-in-law, a young man of twenty who eagerly imbibed Plato's teachings. But Plato displeased the dictator himself, and did not escape without danger; some say that he was sold as a slave, and bought and freed by a friend. He then returned to Athens and set up his philosophical School near the precinct of Acadêmus, an obscure local hero, after whom the School derived its name.

The Academy had great practical influence in the Greek city-States. Many young men whose position in their own

cities qualified them for a public life came to Athens, to study under Plato. But Plato's views could not be put into effect at Athens: they were too alien from the existing régime. Plato, however, always wished for a chance to apply his theories, and an opportunity seemed to offer itself in 367 B.C. when he was sixty years of age. In that year the dictator of Syracuse died and was succeeded by his son Dionysius II. At once Dion, Plato's old pupil, sent a message asking Plato to come and try to influence the new ruler, who was twenty-eight years old.

Plato's experiences are told in the Seventh Letter.[1] After many misgivings he accepted the invitation, feeling himself bound to take all possible risks for the sake of proving that he was not merely a political doctrinaire but that his doctrines were workable. The visit was unfortunate. Dionysius II was a man of unbridled self-indulgence, and though Plato's arrival was enthusiastically welcomed, the attempt to educate Dionysius in the severer studies was a failure. Moreover, opponents of Dion managed to persuade the dictator that Plato's advent was part of a plot to depose Dionysius and set up Dion as ruler. Dionysius dismissed Dion and sent him into exile. But Dionysius kept Plato at his Court, ostensibly as a guest, actually as a prisoner, though he did his best to win Plato's approval. At last he agreed to let Plato go, and Plato left for Athens, where Dion was already a member of the Academy.

Five years later, in 362 B.C., Dionysius invited Plato to return. Plato at first refused, but in the end he agreed, hoping among other things to effect a reconciliation be-

[1] This letter, addressed to the relatives and supporters of Dion after Dion's death, purports to be Plato's defence of his actions in this connection. Modern scholars generally accept it as a genuine letter of Plato's; I am one of the minority who believe it to be an exercise by another writer, built up out of Plato's known views and the Academic tradition. But genuine or not, it certainly embodies many of the facts. See the excellent translation by R. S. Bluck, *Plato's Life and Thought* (1949).

tween Dionysius and Dion and secure Dion's return. He therefore set out in the spring of 361 B.C. The visit was an even greater failure than before. Plato failed to influence the tyrant towards constitutional government, and his efforts on behalf of Dion resulted in the confiscation of Dion's property. Again Plato was in danger, until Dionysius agreed to let him go on the representations of Archytas, ruler of Tarentum, Plato's friend. So Plato returned to Athens for the third time, disillusioned. The final act of this drama was when Dion deposed Dionysius by force of arms, but was himself murdered in 354 B.C. Plato died in 347 B.C., aged eighty.

Besides the *Republic*, which, serious as it is, coruscates with wit, Plato wrote two other dialogues primarily concerned with politics: *The Statesman* and *The Laws*. It is generally agreed that *The Statesman* is a later work, perhaps begun before Plato left for his last visit to Syracuse in 361 B.C. and finished after it. The dialogue attempts a definition of the true statesman; a myth is narrated showing that the universe is subject to an alternation of rule, by God and then without God, a golden age and the reverse (the present time); finally the forms of government are once again examined. If the perfect ruler (that is, the perfectly expert in statecraft, as the scientist is expert in his science) could be found, the rule of one man would be best, and we could leave him free from control either by public opinion or by a code of law. But since this paragon cannot be found, the next best thing is a code of law as good as possible, put together by experts, to which governments can conform. Then the best governments will be in descending order, monarchy, aristocracy, and responsible democracy. If governments are lawless, the order of merit is reversed: irresponsible democracy, oligarchy, tyranny. The object is still unity: the weaving together of all the elements in

the State into an ordered whole, with a common aim based on a common creed.

The Laws is probably Plato's last work. It is very long, very detailed, very severe. Plato is still convinced that the best State is that in which the wise man is ruler, but since this is unattainable, the second-best State must be described. He puts forward a scheme in which land is State-owned and apportioned in equal lots to the citizens (who number only five thousand and forty). A limit is set to riches and poverty. There are to be four property-classes, an elected Council of three hundred and sixty, and a public Assembly open to all citizens. Law and education are to be entrusted to special officials. Officials are to be chosen partly by election, partly by lot. The constitution, once laid down, is to be inviolable and unalterable, except for minor adjustments. The highest authority is to be vested in a Nocturnal Council, composed of senior officials past and present, certain priests, and (an interesting point) overseas inspectors who travel abroad and report on anything interesting they may have seen. Each member is to bring with him a man chosen by himself, between thirty and forty years old. This Council is to discuss law and the welfare of the State, and to be (like the old Areopagus Council at Athens) the anchor of the State. Education and religious belief are to be superintended and tendencies deleterious to the public welfare are to be repressed by punishment.

Plato ended his life without any hope that even the second-best constitution could be put into operation; but he was still convinced that the whole object of statesmanship was to create a constitution in which men and women should function according to their various aptitudes; that government was a science for which men and women of suitable ability and character must be trained; that the chief object

of government was to secure and preserve concord, the harmonious working of the parts; and that the object of communal life was to create the conditions necessary for the good life,[1] in which every individual should become as good as his equipment enabled him to be.

Aristotle wrote voluminously on politics. His views were the fruit of considerable observation and research. He began by writing dialogues in imitation of Plato, while he was still studying under Plato at the Academy. These dialogues are lost except for quotations in other writers' books, but we know from their titles that they followed Plato's line of thought closely, and some even bore the same titles: *The Statesman*, for instance, and *The Sophist*. Aristotle also wrote a dialogue on Justice which appears to correspond to Plato's *Republic*.

These works would have been interesting only as revealing the very different character of Aristotle from that of his teacher, a difference which must have come out even in his imitative works. But after Plato's death, Aristotle not only was able to develop independently, but he also travelled and observed. Among the material then accumulated, which formed the basis of his later writings, was a collection of one hundred and fifty-eight Constitutions, gathered by observation and enquiry from the Greek city-States. It is the greatest pity that this collection has not survived except

[1] Bertrand Russell in his *History of Western Philosophy* writes: "When we ask: what will Plato's Republic achieve? the answer is rather humdrum. It will achieve success in wars against roughly equal populations, and it will secure a livelihood for a certain small number of people. It will almost certainly produce no art or science, because of its rigidity; in this respect, as in others, it will be like Sparta. In spite of all the fine talk, skill in war and enough to eat is all that will be achieved. Plato had lived through famine and defeat in Athens; perhaps, subconsciously, he thought the avoidance of these evils the best that statesmanship could accomplish." This is misleading. Plato stated over and over again that his object was to provide the conditions in which the virtues could flourish. He thought that art and science should serve this end. He may be mistaken, but his object is clear. He does not want art that does not serve a moral purpose, and he does not believe in any scientific truth that does not correspond with the Good.

for the interesting *Constitution of Athens*, a complete manuscript of which was not discovered until 1890, when it was retrieved from an Egyptian collection.

This material was the basis for his political writings, and examples from it are used to illustrate his general theory of society and the best constitution, which is the subject of the *Politics*.[1] This book is a sequel to his *Ethics*, which describes the best life for the individual. The *Politics* describes the best form for a community.

The *Politics* alienates the modern reader at the outset by its discussion of the family as the first natural association out of which the State is formed. Nobody nowadays would accept Aristotle's definition of the necessary parts of the family and their relationship: the head of the family (husband, father, master), his wife (with her own duties but subject to her husband), children, and slaves. Aristotle states categorically that " the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the adult the child ", though in different ways, and that these distinctions are fixed in nature, because the right to rule is conferred on men by the deliberative reasoning faculty of their souls, which can only be possessed in its completeness by the free adult male: " The slave does not possess the deliberative part of the soul at all, the female possesses it but not as the ruling faculty in her, and the child possesses it but not fully developed."

This rigid division is to modern civilised opinion extremely distasteful as well as untrue, especially as it concerns slaves. Aristotle defends at length the existence and position of the slave, as belonging wholly to a master and having no other function except to be useful to him. The slave is " a living tool ", like a domestic animal, and

[1] " *Politics* " (*Ta Politika*) in Greek does not mean the same as the English word " politics ". It designates a treatise " Concerning the Polis or City-State ", which was the independent unit of communal life developed by the Greeks and considered by them essential to the highest civilisation.

his only virtues can be those which prevent him from failing in his tasks. There is a class of men who are natural slaves: it is right and proper that they should belong entirely to a master. The institution of slavery is therefore not only expedient but just.

This argument, which takes up considerable space in the First Book of the *Politics*, is developed obviously in view of opposing opinion. Already in the fifth century B.C., and earlier no doubt, there were thinkers who said that it was not right that certain men should belong to others for life merely by the law of superior force; some, for instance, were prisoners of war, and might be better than their masters. Aristotle, while admitting the truth of this argument, attempts to save his case by drawing a distinction between legal and " natural " slavery. It is true, he says, that some men are unjustly enslaved, but there are others whose natural equipment makes them fit for nothing else, just as some men are born to rule, others to be subjects. But Aristotle's argument cannot of course screen his refusal to admit that a slave is a human being and has human rights —that slaves who were not prisoners of war were born into their position without hope of improvement except by the capricious will of a master. There is no such thing as a " natural " slave. As a contemporary dramatist wrote:

> " Even though a man may be a slave, my master,
> This does not make him any less a man."[1]

The truth is that Aristotle's attitude to the family as a unit is partly due to a reaction from the extreme views of communal life given by Plato in the *Republic*, and partly to the Greek hatred of and contempt for manual and domestic work. It is amusing to find Aristotle mentioning with an astonished repugnance that there was once a

[1] The elder Philêmon.

"professor" living at Syracuse who used to give lessons to domestic servants on their routine duties.[1]

However, we can accept Aristotle's definition of the family as arising naturally from the need to continue the species, and forming itself into a household for the procuring of the necessaries of life. He has views about the duties and education of each element in the household, so that it may function well. But the book as a whole concerns the right type of constitution.

Beginning with the best-known types of constitution, theoretical and actual, he criticises Plato's Ideal State in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, and the "equalitarian" constitutions suggested by other thinkers. Then he turns to the historic constitutions of Sparta, Crete and Carthage, and those laid down for Athens by Solon and for other States by other lawgivers.

In his Third Book he asks: what is the nature of the State? What is citizenship? It involves membership of the judiciary and of the Assembly, and therefore requires some property and leisure. Manual work and trade are incompatible with the necessary mental qualities. He proceeds to classify governments into three normal constitutions (royalty, aristocracy, constitutional government) and three deviations (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy). The best qualification for rulership is virtue (in the widest sense, including capability) and education; after that, wealth, birth, numbers. The many should elect and control the highest officers, but not hold them. These six forms with their advantages and disadvantages are analysed in Book Four, and a whole book, the Fifth, is given up to the causes and prevention of revolutions. Then follows a close analysis of the different types of democracy, government by the majority, and oligarchy, government by a minority: their

[1] *Politics*, 1255b.

claims, their best and worst forms. Finally Aristotle puts forward his own view regarding the best constitution.

He reaffirms that the best State gives the best life, and that the best life depends on virtue and wisdom, not on excessive wealth, because it is virtue and wisdom that bring happiness:

> "External goods have a limit. Useful is useful *for something*. Therefore an excessive amount of them must do harm, or do no good, to the possessor. But with any of the goods of the soul, the greater the abundance, the more useful it must be."[1]

The good of the State, all are agreed, is the same as for the individual. Those who think that the individual is made happy by wealth, also believe that the happiest State is the one which rules the greatest Empire. Those who think that virtue brings happiness to the individual also believe that the State which is morally the better is also the happier. Aristotle condemns imperialism in nations as he condemns bellicosity and the worship of the warrier among individuals. War must never be pursued for the sake of mastery but only as a means to some necessary end. Power must be wielded only with a view to doing good. Even so, the internal activity of the community is more important than its external relations, for its well-being and happiness. That is, if a community is well run internally, the rest will follow.

The rules he now gives concern the small Greek *Polis* or city-State, not the nation. Exact regulations for external conditions, size of population, site, extent and nature of surrounding territory, ease of communication, are laid down. The ideal character of the citizens is a natural blend of courage and intelligence which is peculiar to the Greeks.

[1] *Politics*, 1323b.

Character depends on climate: the people of northern Europe are full of courage but they lack intelligence and skill, so that they remain comparatively free but lack the ability to live a civilised life and to rule their neighbours. The Asiatics are intelligent and quick but lack courage, and so are continuously ruled and enslaved. The Greek race, living in an intermediate position, has both virtues, courage and intelligence, and so continues to be free.[1] They would be capable of ruling all mankind if they could achieve a single constitution.

Aristotle does not like Plato's Guardians, especially that section of them in which "spirit" is to be dominant (the military arm). Plato says they are to be kind to their friends, fierce towards strangers; but Aristotle says that they should not be fierce or cruel even toward strangers: it is not right to be cruel towards anybody. Magnanimous men are never fierce except towards wrongdoers, and their anger is if anything stronger towards their friends when these do wrong than towards their enemies, because "the greater the love, the greater the hate", and "cruel is the war between brothers".

Aristotle divides his community into six groups, corresponding to six necessary functions. First, the farmers to produce food; second, the craftsmen to produce tools; third, the military class; fourth, the merchants and traders to produce money; fifth (of primary importance) priests for the conduct of religion; sixth (most necessary of all) the deliberative body, for the conduct of State affairs. Each caste is to do its own work; he disapproves of the democratic State in which all the people participate in all the

[1] This is interesting in view of the fact that in 338 B.C. Philip of Macedon deprived the Greeks who lived in City-States of constitutional freedom, and in 323, a year before Aristotle's death, this domination by Macedon was confirmed. The Macedonians were Greeks, though by no means typical of Greek civilization. It is possible, however, that such teaching by Aristotle inspired his pupil Alexander with dreams of conquest.

functions. No part in government is to be allowed to the tillers of the soil or the artisans, or even to the traders, as all these pursuits, he says, are ignoble and hostile to virtue, and councillors need leisure. The tillers of the soil must be serfs or aliens. The artisans and traders must be excluded from citizen rights. Citizenship will be granted only to the military and deliberative classes and they must own all the property. The military and deliberative duties will be performed by the same men, the military when they are young, the deliberative when they are older and wiser. Priests will be appointed from this same group when they reach the age of retirement from active life. After a number of detailed regulations for the workings of this "ideal" community, Aristotle passes on to the question of education.

It will be seen that in contrast to Plato's extreme experimentalism in the *Republic*, Aristotle presents the very narrow, rigidly conservative, even reactionary point of view of the Greek "gentleman" who considered that only a life of leisure—that is, complete freedom from menial work and financial cares—makes a man fit to rule. This is in one sense true: when modern democracies choose representatives, they try to create for their highest officials such conditions as these, so that they may give their whole minds to public affairs. But where, to the modern mind, Aristotle goes wrong is in his separation of the population into rigid castes. A councillor must have leisure while he is acting as councillor; but he will do his public work better if he has had other experience, and the duties of lesser offices can be carried out in spare time. The isolation of a deliberative and military caste holding all the property could only lead to the splitting of the community into two hostile parts, which was the very danger most feared by other Greek political thinkers. They sought to promote concord, internal harmony, unity. This danger seems in the last resort to

have escaped Aristotle's notice, or at least not to have sufficiently engaged his attention. One certainly cannot see how, even in Aristotle's own day, such a scheme could have been imagined as capable of providing the happiness and well-being of any Greek community.

Aristotle's Ideal State was obsolete before it was conceived. In 322 B.C. Macedonia finally took away the independence of the Greek city-States in Greece Proper and Asia Minor, and soon afterwards Aristotle died. The next philosophical view of society that arose was, as might have been expected, an escape from the uncertain and dangerous world of reality.

Epicurus was born at Athens in 342 B.C., but was brought up on the island of Samos. He returned to Athens at the age of eighteen, two years before Aristotle's death, and studied at the rival School, the Academy, now under the headship of Plato's pupil Xenocrates. He then went overseas again, and did not return till 306 B.C. in his middle thirties. He bought the famous Garden, and lived here for the rest of his life, teaching and studying in the company of friends and disciples.

The Society of the Garden was a success. It endured for many years after Epicurus' death, and his doctrines gained adherents all over the civilized world. Epicurus frankly put the happiness of the individual first, and his Society was designed to create for all its members the best possible life in the sense of the happiest. By " happiness " he meant, not a succession of pleasures, but well-being, contentment, freedom from pain and from emotional disturbance, cheerfulness. He borrowed these notions from Democritus, but he combined them with other theories borrowed without acknowledgement from other sources, and put them into practice in his working model at Athens.

The principle of the Garden was withdrawal as complete as possible from the life around one into the society of a few like-minded friends. The bond between the members was *Philia*, friendship and affection. He said that of all things designed by wisdom to produce the blissfulness of the whole life, the greatest by far is the acquisition of friendship. Friendship may and does start from the need of help; nevertheless it is desirable in itself. The idea of help is the very basis of friendship. It is, of course, contrary to the spirit of friendship to be always asking for help; to do that is to barter kindly feeling for a material return. But it is equally contrary to the spirit of friendship not to be ready to give help, for to do that is to destroy the expectation of good in the future. It is on this expectation, rather on actual benefits received, that friendship flourishes; for as he shrewdly observes, " It is not so much our friends' help that helps us as the confident knowledge that they will do so ". One of the most delightful of his remarks is a little paean of praise: " Friendship goes dancing round the world proclaiming to us all to awake to the praises of the happy life."

Such was the bond that was to hold together the Society of the Garden. But this happy relationship was possible only within the bounds of a small circle. Towards the unknown world of men outside it, one's attitude could be nothing but suspicion. Epicurus believed that what we want in relation to our neighbours is protection. Towards this, the laws of human society and the particular State do something, for there does exist among civilised men a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed, which is what they mean when they speak of justice. This was the teaching of the Sophists. Epicurus says: " Justice never is anything in itself," but he also speaks of it as " the justice which arises from nature ". That is, though he will not agree that

justice is an absolute virtue in the Platonic sense, nevertheless he is aware that it is an instinctive, not an artificial agreement. He contrasts civilised Man with other animals and with savages in this respect, saying:

> "For all those living creatures which have not been able to make compacts not to harm one another or be harmed, nothing ever is either just or unjust; likewise too for all tribes of men which have been unable or unwilling to make compacts not to harm or be harmed."

He makes a distinction between justice in general, which is immutable, being the law of "mutual advantage in the dealings of men with one another", and particular kinds of justice, or manifestations of it, which vary from time to time or from country to country. The "general concept" remains the same. It follows from this view that injustice is not in itself evil, but only the consequence of the fear of detection and punishment which must always be present in one who acts in secret contravention of the terms of the compact. To behave rightly is therefore necessary to individual happiness: "The greatest fruit of justice is serenity," and "A man who causes fear cannot be free from fear". Once he goes so far as to suggest an absolute ideal: "The man who has attained the natural end of the human race will be equally good, even though no one is present"—one of Democritus' theories, though Epicurus does not acknowledge the debt.

However, he says, the social compact is not enough to ensure complete immunity from one's neighbours. This immunity is highly desirable; a natural instinct in us craves for it, and anything is a natural good by which we attain it. But some ways are better than others, because more efficacious. One of the commonest ways is to seek power—

position and fame. But this is not a good way, for men find that when they have become famous and conspicuous they are no more safe from other men than they were before, and they may be a good deal less safe. The only sure way is to aim at a quiet life, in retirement from the world. If it is not possible for a man to live in complete retirement, he must be guided by what Epicurus calls " a certain force of expulsion " in himself. This means that he must take careful stock of his environment: whatever it holds that has any kinship with himself, he can assimilate; if it holds anything that may endanger his peace, he must try to make it at least not actively hostile, but if there are things to which he cannot even do this, he will refrain from mixing with them, and expel from his life everything that it is of advantage to treat thus.

But in the outside world, any environment is bound to be full of hostile forces. Therefore the best thing to do is to withdraw entirely, and live either by oneself, or better still if possible, in a community where help and support will always be forthcoming. The motto of the Epicureans was: " Live unseen." This was a rule for everybody; but they themselves did better: they " lived unseen " in company. By this means another great good is added to us: leisure. Nietzsche said that the man who had not two-thirds of his time to himself was a slave; Epicurus would have called him a prisoner. He says: " We must release ourselves from the prison of routine-work, private and public." Then, having time for everything, we shall do our work gaily.

In this way, then, the blessing of protection from the outside world was secured; the member of the Society of the Garden did not trouble himself even about the opinion of his neighbours, except in so far as he risked falling into their power. Epicurus said of himself:

"I was never anxious to please the mob. I had never learnt the sort of thing they liked, and the things I knew were far removed from their perception."

He advised his disciples not to trouble about praise:

"Praise from others must come unasked. We must concern ourselves with the healing of our own lives."

As for blame, the rule was:

"Let nothing be done in your life which will cause you fear if it becomes known to your neighbours."

The Epicureans, then, sought isolation and security. They disclaimed any idea of service to society in general; what service they were willing to give was expended on their friends. All that they would do for society as a whole was to proclaim their views about the right way to attain happiness, a way not open to any but a few. That is why society has always valued them less highly than the Stoics. But the Society of the Garden was not a cult of self-indulgence; it was an experiment by a small group of devoted disciples gathered round an inspired teacher, endeavouring to shelter from the storms and stresses of a world in which the good life as they saw it, that is, the philosophic life, was no longer possible, and to pursue in peace and quiet the art of living. One might be reminded of the monastic life; but Epicurus' Society was not devoted to worship, or even to the pursuit of truth. Its object was the practice of communal happiness, and as such it had and has a value:

"We must laugh and study at the same time, and do our household duties, and employ our other faculties, and never cease uttering the sayings of the true philosophy."

The worst thing that could happen to the Society was the loss of a loved member; but this too must be borne with reasoned calm. The members "live most pleasantly with one another, and after they have enjoyed the fullest intimacy, they do not lament the previous departure of a dead friend, as though he were to be pitied". The true Epicurean values life highly: "He is a little man in all respects who has many good reasons for quitting life." But when the time comes to die, he will die as splendidly as he has lived; saying:

> "I have anticipated thee, Fortune, and entrenched myself against all thy secret attacks. We will not give ourselves up as captives to thee or to any other circumstance. When it is time for us to go, we will spit contempt upon life and all who vainly cling to it; we will leave life crying aloud in a glorious triumph-song that we have lived well."

In the Stoic system, as in the Epicurean, the emphasis is on the individual, his inner harmony and his relation to the whole universe, rather than on the theory of communal life and the nature of the ideal State. Plato and Aristotle tried to devise a community in which the individual could function at his best. The Stoics, owing to the conditions of their times, were not interested in the State, and the science of political life occupied a much less important part in their thought than speculation on the soul, the universe and the divine. The Stoics believed that happiness depended entirely on the condition of the soul, and that if the soul was rightly constituted, nothing external had any power to affect it; they therefore considered society only in so far as it was necessary to lay down rules for the individual's relation to it and duties towards it.

In the long course of Stoic thought, from Zeno at Athens

in the third century B.C. to Seneca and Marcus Aurelius in the Roman Empire, many views on man's relations to his fellows are expressed by different thinkers, not all of them consistent. The earliest thinkers, following on the line suggested by the Cynic School, emphasised the independence of the individual: his duty to develop himself as a human being, according to the law of nature, and to ignore and even flout the laws of society, which are often mere conventions. The outstanding example of this attitude was Diogenes of Sinopê, whose unconventionality was notorious. Another early leader, Chrysippus, attacked many of the Greek religious rules as purely artificial: funeral rites, for instance, which he thought should be abolished for the simplest possible burial. He and other Stoics even defended the eating of human flesh in certain crises of necessity. Zeno wanted dress reform for women. Diogenes said that there should be no difference between men's and women's clothes, and (following Plato) that women should exercise naked. Similarly they examined the marriage-laws, the permitted degrees of kinship, and the relations of the sexes generally. Some of them argued in favour of prostitution and paederasty.

Their pronouncements seemed startling to their contemporaries, and often wicked and disgusting.[1] But these views followed from their general proposition that Man should obey Nature, not man-made laws, and that the wise man should disdain many of the irrational rules of society derived from tradition and custom. At least the early Stoics began a thorough investigation of these customs, according to the criterion of Reason.

This line of thought tended to die out in time, and was dropped when Stoicism came to Rome. Cicero, drawing

[1] Still more so to the nineteenth-century thinkers. See Zeller's transports of horror in *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics* (English translation, 1870).

on the Stoic Panaetius, has much to say on the virtue of Decorum, " what is proper ", which he makes one of the four chief virtues, equating it with intelligence, justice and courage. Decorum includes self-control generally, as exhibited in circumstances of varying importance, and it covers even propriety of conversation and tact. Seneca, though he praised the eccentric Diogenes, nevertheless thought that a philosopher should accommodate himself to the customs prevailing in the society in which he found himself, and even do what he did not approve of out of consideration for others.

Stoics always held to the belief that the philosopher is independent of society and can be happy without it. But another of their principles brought them directly into relationship with their fellowmen. Since the Stoic is guided by Reason, he has a kinship with all other men who are so guided. All men have a share in the rational faculty whether they obey it or not. Thus the man who listens to his reason knows himself to be a part of a larger whole, not an isolated unit, and knows that he is under the rule of a universal law. He will feel attracted to others of his own sort, and though he can do without anyone else, it will be natural for him to seek the society of his own kind. In our world, beings with reason stand on one side, beings without reason on the other. The non-rational exist for the benefit of the rational, but the members of the rational class must combine, if only because in this way they can exercise power over nature. An individual man is helpless alone.

This unity among rational beings can exist actively only among the wise, who are by nature friends, since they think alike about virtue and conduct. This is the only form of society that is really worthy of the wise man's seeking. He will on the whole tend to avoid public affairs, except in so far as he feels it his duty to do good to his

fellows; he will then accept office, even the highest. He will also accept marriage and domestic life, in order to promote the good of the human race. But the Stoic could not accept any of the existing forms of constitution as really good, and many of them, he thought, were bad, so that to take part in public life might be to endanger one's own virtue. In that case it is right and proper to withdraw and live apart, giving oneself up to study and teaching, which may benefit the State as much as active administrative work.

On the whole, the life of an ordinary member of society could not be reconciled with Stoic belief. Stoics could not do more than outwardly conform to the many rules of social life, nor could they regard themselves as loyal citizens of the States in which they happened to be born, since they recognised as real only the basic laws of Nature, and the kinship of the wise. The society to which the Stoic belonged was that of philosophers wherever they might be, no matter what their nationality or status. They first broke down the barriers between Greek and barbarian, bond and free, and professed to be "citizens of the world". Epictetus, himself a freedman, calls all men brothers because God is the Father of all. Others declare that no man is too humble to be the object of the love and justice of his fellowmen; even towards slaves, justice must be observed.

Thus the Stoic's particular ties to his State are loosened, in favour of a bond with the whole of humanity. Later Stoics—Epictetus and Seneca—advise against family ties also, because the Stoic wishes to owe allegiance to the universe only. As in Aristotle's scheme, intellectual research is set above the life of action, because political activity must concern itself with the mass of men, who are uncultivated and foolish, whereas the thinker deals with universal laws. For this reason the Stoics were not great reformers.

They disapproved, on the whole, of the institution of slavery, on the ground that a slave is a man, not an animal or a tool; but they could do nothing, either in Greece or in Rome, to abolish it, and they took refuge in the theory that a man's external conditions cannot affect his essential nature: only wisdom and virtue can do that. They therefore preached, to the master, the humane treatment of the slave, and to the slave, acceptance and resignation, coupled with virtue. Slavery does not affect the whole man. Only his body belongs to his master; his mind is his own. Seneca speaks of a slave as a friend of a lower rank, and of himself under God as a "fellow-slave".

The State into which the Stoic happens to have been born is to him like a house in a city, the city being the universe. Seneca says that a man is, in the last resort, neither an Athenian nor a Corinthian but "a son of God". Musonius, a Roman Stoic contemporary with Seneca, writes: "The good man believes himself to be a citizen of the city of God, which is a community of men and gods." He will not consider exile an evil (Musonius was exiled by Nero) because "The universe is the common fatherland of all men". Thus they looked back to the doctrine of the founders, four centuries before, who said that the Ideal State would be one in which there was no marriage, no family, no temples or lawcourts, not even coinage because there would be no buying and selling; a State at peace with all other States, because all differences of nationality would be merged in a common brotherhood of Man.

It must, however, be remembered that this brotherhood does not rest on sentiment. Its basis is not love and friendship, which can only be fully active between wise men, and even among them must never be carried to excess; its basis is reason, the belief that all men are akin under universal

law. Stoics were not allowed to be sentimental; they were expected to be just, with a bias towards charity. Cicero, following his Stoic author Panaetius, says that justice and generosity are the two bonds which hold human society together. If it be asked how justice can be reconciled with mercy, the Stoic says that the wise man will show justice in that he will punish offences which deserve correction, but not in a spirit of anger, and with due regard to extenuating circumstances; likewise he will always help to relieve distress, but will not indulge in feelings of sorrow himself.

The most interesting and most likable convert to Stoicism was the last whose writings have come down to us: the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. By position the chief citizen and ruler of the Roman world, by conviction a Stoic, he managed to reconcile these two allegiances in the declaration: "My nature is two-fold: rational and social. As Antoninus my State is Rome, as a man it is the world." He echoes the ordinary Stoic theory that all men, as rational beings, are akin and form one composite social body of which each individual is a unit, or a limb. The social instinct is innate in Man, and its harmonious working is essential to the good of the whole. Disunion is like trying to sever a limb from the body from which it derives its life. But to Antoninus justice or even benevolence are not enough; there must be warmth in our well-doing. Kind actions should bring joy to the doer, who should not act out of a sense of duty but in the belief that he is thus benefiting himself. We must not merely agree with our reason that we are integral members of human society, but we must love mankind "from the heart".

If this was not to be reconciled with the duty of a Roman emperor to lead his armies into war, the Stoic in him was content with fatalism: whatever happens to a man is

prepared for him from all eternity. This fatalism is in its turn irreconcilable with the exhortation to do good. Antoninus had finally to content himself with:

> "Love mankind, follow God. It is enough to remember that Law rules all."

The deep inconsistency in the Stoic system remained unsolved.

Marcus Aurelius, no less than Epictetus, envisaged a State in which there should be equality before the law, and a government whose chief concern should be the freedom of the subject.[1] He could not put this into practice, but his faith influenced others, and in spite of a deep pessimism he comes nearest to the modern ideal.

[1] *Meditations*, I. 14. 3.

IV

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION IN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

EDUCATION, in the Greek city-States as everywhere else, was at first confined to the children of the upper class; but it spread throughout the community of citizens more quickly in Greece than it has done in modern nations, for several reasons. One of these was the use of slave-labour in cities, which relieved the free citizen of the most irksome menial duties and gave him leisure. Another was the possession from early times of a great national poet.

The epics of Homer, composed some time at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. for the small circles of the Courts of kings and princes, were at first handed down orally, within the guild of bards. In historic times when Greek writing had been invented and these poems were recorded, they became the property of all the people and were the basis of children's education. The stories of the Trojan War, of the wanderings of Odysseus after the war, of Heracles, of the tragic royal family of Thebes, were told to children as we tell fairy stories, and since the poems were so great in themselves, in language, in thought, in beauty, they were a formative influence on the young mind before any direct instruction began. From them he learnt about the gods and heroes of the Hellenic people, quite apart from the particular legends connected with his own native city, and he was always aware that no matter how great the difference between Greek and Greek, Dorian and Ionian,

Spartan, Corinthian and Athenian, this was as nothing to the gulf fixed between Greek and non-Greek or barbarian.

From Homer he learnt of the capriciousness of fortune, of the courage and obstinacy, the wisdom and folly, the prudence and passion of mankind; he learnt of the life of cities, the countryside, the sea; of women, their feelings and preoccupations; of young and old; of the sorrows of war and the blessings of peace; of the Greek way of life, and of life itself, so lovely and so fleeting. If the life of the toiler on land and sea in all its hardship was not stressed, this want was supplied by Hesiod, with his picture of the farmer's bitter struggle with the soil and the seasons. Hesiod too supplied many more stories of the gods and heroes. These two poets, as all the philosophers agree, were the educators of Hellas, for better or worse, in historic times, and from end to end of the Greek world, from Marseilles to Byzantium.

Education in reading, music (playing the lyre and singing), calculation for practical purposes, together with gymnastics, was taken for granted in the early education of a Greek boy in most of the cities, though the emphasis varied. With certain exceptions (which were noted and scoffed at) the Greeks of the city-States were quick and clever, good talkers, interested in daily life, fond of entertainment and social activities such as festivals. The small populations of the towns made intercourse easy, and news and gossip spread quickly through the market-place. They were also fond of physical activity. They lived largely out of doors when that was possible, and took a keen interest in competitive sports: foot-racing, jumping, boxing, wrestling, and for those who could afford it, chariot-racing also—though the driver was usually a paid charioteer. In their own cities they met and talked and exchanged views daily, except at those times and in those places where there

was a repressive government, a dictator or a clique with spies to put a curb on freedom of speech. The well-to-do in historic times travelled, about Greece, to Italy and Sicily, and further afield to Egypt and even Babylon. And a great concourse drawn from a great number of cities gathered at the great panhellenic festivals held every four years at Olympia and Delphi, and biennially at the Isthmus of Corinth and at Nemea near by.

The criticism by Xenophanes of the moral value of Homer and Hesiod has already been mentioned. He himself was a travelling bard like them, and he doubtless regarded them as rivals. At any rate, they were four or five centuries before him, and he believed himself to have a new message to deliver in his recitations: "Since from the beginning all have learnt in accordance with Homer . . ." one of his verses runs. Clearly in this poem (which like Homer is in hexameter verse) he was setting himself up as a better educator of all Hellas, one who could tell them, in place of legends, the truth about God and the universe, and the right way to live.

After his day, many thinkers took up this theme and developed it in detail. Xenophanes began (about 530 B.C.) the discrediting of Homer as teacher, especially of youth. But the schools of Hellas went on using the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their syllabuses, and no man could be considered educated who did not know these two great poems. They could always be quoted in civilized circles in the confidence that the quotation would be familiar.

The first direct recorded mention of education attributed to a philosopher is: "Education is a second sun to its possessors," included in the sayings of Heracleitus.

Whether he said it or not is uncertain, but he undoubtedly had strong views on education. He reiterated Xenophanes' strictures on the poets in much stronger language:

> "Homer deserves to be flung out of the arena and given a beating; also Archilochus."
>
> "Homer, wisest of the Greeks, was deceived over the recognition of visible objects."
>
> "Hesiod, the teacher of very many, did not understand that night and day are one."
>
> "What intelligence or understanding have they? They believe the people's bards, and use the populace as their teacher."

He included in his condemnation several of the philosophers, naming Xenophanes and Pythagoras, and saying contemptuously: "Much learning does not teach intelligence." His criticism also was a prelude to his own claim to teach the One Wisdom—the Logos governing the ordered process of change in the visible world.

To the sixth century belongs also the system of education devised by Pythagoras, in which mathematics (arithmetic and geometry, astronomy, physics) were studied by those with sufficient mental equipment, not only for the sake of the subject but also as a discipline for the character and a means of approach to the divine Mind which arranged the universe as a harmony. The later Pythagoreans, doubtless deriving their system from the Master, also employed music as a catharsis or purge for the soul: medicine for the body, music for the soul.

In education they set a high value on memory. A Pythagorean before rising from his bed was expected to recollect all the events of the previous day in their exact

order, as an exercise. One writer says that it was thanks to this memory-training that the Greek colonies of Italy produced so many poets, philosophers and statesmen. The Pythagoreans divided education into three grades: for children, letters and such subjects; for young men, the laws of the State; for adult men, active life and public service; for old men, theoretical knowledge, judgement, counsel. But, they said, the divisions must not be too rigid: the education of the boy must to some extent anticipate that of the youth, and so on, otherwise the well-trained child will throw over all discipline when he comes to manhood. Correct behaviour towards others must be taught from childhood; this differs according to age, relationship, position. The most difficult period is adolescence, which unites the faults of childhood and manhood: frivolity and strong passions. This age needs most attention, but at no age can a man be left to do as he pleases; he must always have someone or something to obey, because whatever is neglected degenerates. This insistence on adult education is typically Greek. Solon of Athens in the first half on the sixth century wrote: "As I grow old, I learn many things," showing that a Greek never regarded himself as too old to learn. The Sophists likewise attracted adults and older men as well as the young.

Pythagorean education had as its objects good conduct and the pursuit of knowledge, the inculcation of a true love of the beautiful, and the repudiation of wrong desires, which, they said, took three forms: desire for what is in itself vulgar or base (this they called "lack of form"); desire that is too violent or long-sustained ("lack of proportion"); and desire at the wrong time and for the wrong object ("lack of appropriateness"). Their teaching set a very high value on friendship, for which strict rules were laid down, the chief being that there must be no envy or

rivalry, that advice must be given only with solicitude and kindness, and that there must be complete loyalty. This made Pythagorean friendship famous throughout Greece, and it was claimed that a member would do anything for another member even if he had never seen him before and he came from the other end of the earth.

Physical fitness was encouraged by teaching boys that health and self-indulgence are incompatible. Sexual precocity was discouraged by keeping the young preoccupied with other things until " the right time ", which for a boy was not before the age of twenty. Boys and girls alike were to be reared in hard work, exercise and the right kind of endurance, and must be given the diet suitable to a hard-working abstemious life. When maturity was reached, great moderation in sexual intercourse was still insisted upon, for the sake of health. The other appetites also must be controlled. Desire must be indulged only in so far as it is natural; for instance, the satisfaction of hunger. But the young must be taught from birth not to give in to the desire for what is unnecessary, in the way of food, clothes, bedding, houses and all luxury-goods.

This specialised scheme spread all over Greece when the Pythagoreans of Croton were dispersed, and greatly influenced later theories of education, especially that of Plato, in whose scheme mathematics played the chief part. The influence of music, early realised, began to be considered carefully. The different modes were qualified according to their effect on character and temper: the Lydian Mode induced relaxation and softness, the Dorian Mode induced the martial virtues. At Athens in the middle of the fifth century a famous music teacher was Damon, who taught Pericles and other eminent men. Damon's own teacher had been trained in the Pythagorean tradition;

some said that he had also taught Socrates. Damon laid stress on the important part played by music in the training of character and in the making of good citizens. He believed that the practice of music—singing and playing the lyre—could not only rouse or allay different emotions but also inculcate the virtues of courage, self-restraint and even justice. The quality of song and dance, he said, would leave a mark on the soul for good or evil, and new characteristics could be created or latent ones brought out, not only in the young but also in adults, by appropriate harmonies.

Music, therefore, he said, is essential, not only to a liberal education but also to the common welfare. Damon is recorded as having declared that no innovation in musical fashion is possible without a resultant change in the most important political institutions:

> " Song and dance necessarily arise when the soul is in some way moved. Liberal and beautiful songs and dances create a similar soul, and the reverse kind create a reverse kind of soul. . . . Musical modes are nowhere altered without changes in the most important laws of the State."

In the *Republic* Plato has a passage in which he depicts Socrates as in agreement with this theory, and Adeimantus, Plato's brother, replies that " lawlessness creeps in " through music, in the guise of amusement; after corrupting manners it proceeds to undermine contracts, laws and constitutions, until it overthrows everything, public and private. Plato clearly approved of Damon's teaching; in another dialogue he shows the famous generals Nicias and Laches conversing about the education of their boys. Laches commends Damon as a teacher not only of music, but of every other subject that is worthy of pursuit by the young.

Damon taught music at a time when musical fashions were changing. The Lydian Mode, an Asiatic importation, and the playing of the flute, were insinuating themselves into Athenian musical competitions, to the dismay of those who saw the relaxing effect of these new melodies. Cratînus, a comic playwright of the first half of the fifth century, complains in one of his choric odes that the flute is exceeding its rights by leading the song and dance when it should be an accompaniment only; he asks that his own dignified Dorian Mode shall be heard instead. It was this playing of "effeminate" oriental music to which Damon headed the opposition, as a modern admirer of Bach might deplore the playing of Hungarian gypsy music.

Damon analysed the component parts of music, its rhythms and stresses, giving a moral value to all these both singly and in combination. A good musical education will expel all those elements which are akin to vice and excess, and will retain those which are akin to virtue and order. The Dorian Mode was the model of restraint and manly endurance.

When one remembers that music (the playing of the lyre) was part of the curriculum of the Athenian school, and that every educated man was expected to be able to take the lyre in his turn at a dinner-party and sing to his own accompaniment, it is obvious that musical education was of the highest importance at Athens and doubtless elsewhere. Music also formed an important part of the public festivals, where competitions, choric and instrumental, for boys and men, were a regular feature. Above all, there were the dramatic festivals, in which the Chorus with its singing and dancing played a major part. The Greeks believed that music should be only an accompaniment to the words, and doubtless the private singer at a social gathering was not required to do more than provide a very

simple background to the voice; but even this requires some skill, and not to be able to do so was regarded as boorish. Appreciation of expert playing and singing was lively and general.

Apart from Plato and Aristotle, the shrewdest thinker on education was Democritus. He set the highest value on it, likening its work to the creative power of Nature:

> "Nature and instruction are similar: instruction transforms the man, and in transforming, creates his nature."

This was a retort to the view expressed by Pindar, who wrote for the aristocracy, namely that nature is everything, instruction nothing. Pindar derided those whose art was learnt, likening them to crows cackling against "the divine bird of Zeus", and saying that nothing can be done by teaching if innate ability is not there:

> "The wise man is he who knows much by nature."[1]

Democritus replies that education performs wonders in any nature. He praised its contribution to the good life:

> "Education is an ornament for the prosperous, a refuge for the unfortunate."
>
> "The hopes of the educated are better than the wealth of the ignorant."

He believed that the adoption of children was more satisfactory than the begetting of them; but it was most important to see that children were correctly educated. This, he says, can be done without great expenditure, and it is worth while even from a financial point of view: education is like the building of a fortifying wall round their

[1] Pindar, *Second Olympian Ode*, v. 155.

property and their lives. Children must be made to work; if they are allowed to be idle, they cannot learn letters or music or gymnastic, and they will not acquire the virtue which embraces all the others, namely reverence, which is created by these studies. The worst educator of youth is frivolity, because it breeds the pleasures from which wickedness comes. Rhetoric is not essential: fine speech cannot cover up base action, neither can good action be affected by calumny. The rule is, one should speak the truth, not speak at length. Children should learn responsibility early: the wise parent will give them a share of his property to manage, watching carefully over them at first to see that they do nothing foolish. This encourages thrift, and a healthy desire to acquire money and to compete with one another. But miserliness is deplorable. The children of misers, if they are reared in ignorance, are apt to go to the other extreme and to injure themselves thereby.

Age does not of itself develop wisdom; only education can do that:

> "There is an intelligence of the young, and an unintelligence of the aged. It is not time that teaches wisdom, but early training and natural endowment."

The creation of anything good or beautiful requires study and effort; the bad and ugly are reaped automatically without toil. In the crafts we can learn much by studying nature:

> "We are pupils of the animals in the most important things: the spider for spinning and mending, the swallow for building, and the songsters, swan and nightingale, for singing, by way of imitation."

It will be seen that Democritus does not appear to have had any of the Athenian contempt for craftsmanship; in

this he resembled the Corinthians, the only people in Greece, we are told, who set the craftsman above the soldier.

The fruits of his educational system are to be self-control, cheerfulness, a balanced and harmonious life with the pursuit of active interests, including the practice of a craft or trade: he had no contempt for money-making either. The highest art, he thinks, is statesmanship; he did not set the thinker over the practical man in any sphere. Hard work from childhood upwards is one of the secrets of happiness:

> "All kinds of toil are pleasanter than rest, when men attain that for which they labour, or know that they will attain it. But whenever there is failure to attain, then labour is painful and hard."

The greatest help in education is habit:

> "More men become good through practice than by nature."

This was a view that Aristotle incorporated into his own scheme.

The Sophists, though not believing in the possibility of absolute knowledge, specialised in education. They were professional teachers of young men, and older men if they wished to attend their lectures. They provided a kind of finishing-school for young men about to enter public life.

The emphasis they placed on different subjects varied according to their own talents and tastes. Protagoras disparaged the sciences; the instruction he offered was not a study of truth but of opinions and the means of influencing opinions: rhetoric or the art of persuasion. This involved a thorough grounding in all branches of oratory and the ancillary studies such as grammar, correctness of diction, and the analysis of poetry. To help his pupils, he wrote

exercises on set themes, showing that two contradictory propositions can be defended; these were of course dependent on fallacies, and were, as Plato and Aristotle said, an art of deception.

Gorgias taught rhetoric almost exclusively. He too composed exercises in different styles, which he made his pupils learn by heart; this method, Aristotle says, was rapid but unscientific, as if a teacher of shoemaking were to give the pupil a large number of shoes instead of teaching him the technique. Gorgias enumerated the various styles of diction and gave them technical terms; but his temperament was exuberant and unanalytical, and what he did was rather to demonstrate his own powers of oratory, impromptu as well as prepared, than to show others the principles at work in the art of persuasion. Nevertheless he too, like Protagoras, made a large fortune out of teaching.

Prodicus taught exactitude of terminology, with some reference to the sciences, including medicine.

Hippias, an immensely learned man in mathematics and the sciences, in the elements of language, in literature, politics, law and history, made his pupils also learn these subjects. He was expert in various crafts, and was able to make all the articles he wore or carried: tunic, cloak, shoes, embroidered belt, ring, seal and the rest. He invented a mnemonic scheme which he taught his pupils. He stands out from the other Sophists as valuing knowledge of facts and the practice of the useful arts. Protagoras, according to Plato, sneered at Hippias for teaching these subjects, which (Plato said) were useless for those wishing to take part in public affairs.

With one exception, nothing is left of the Sophists' writings on education except a few banalities such as Protagoras':

> " Teaching needs natural endowment and practice. Learning must begin in youth. Art without practice, and practice without art, are nothing. Education does not take root in the soul unless one goes deep."

Otherwise the only Sophist whose own words on this subject have come down to us is Antiphon. He wrote:

> " The first thing, I believe, for mankind is education. Whenever anyone does the beginning of anything correctly, it is likely that the end also will be right. As one sows, so can one expect to reap. If in a young body one sows a noble education, this lives and flourishes through the whole of his life, and neither rain nor drought destroy it."
>
> " Nothing is worse for mankind than anarchy. Hence our forefathers instilled obedience into their children, so that when these grew up they might not be overcome by any great change of fortune."

The business of education is to create concord, internal and external. Besides training, it is necessary to provide the right environment:

> " One's character must necessarily grow like that with which one spends the greater part of the day."

Persuasion is better than force:

> " When they understand the arrangement, they listen."

An example of a sophistic exercise has been preserved in the form of an essay written in literary Doric at the end of the fifth century or beginning of the fourth. It purports to illustrate the familiar thesis, popularised by Protagoras, that on every question two contradictory arguments are

possible. One of the questions so dealt with is the much-debated "Can virtue and knowledge be taught?" The question is not, as in Plato, discussed seriously, but merely used to show the writer's versatility in argument. On the affirmative side it is put forward that some have studied under professional teachers (Sophists) and not been improved, whereas many who have not had teachers have shown merit. On the negative side it is asked: What else do the Sophists teach if not wisdom and virtue? If anyone has failed to impart his knowledge this proves nothing; but if anyone has succeeded, this proves that the subject is teachable.

Plato's scheme of education, like his political constitution, must be considered in relation to the current practice in Athens; it is as if a nineteenth-century English writer, disgusted with the result of the public school system, were to advocate a scheme in every respect dissimilar.

In Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., education was highly regarded. Everyone who could afford to do so sent his sons to school. A law of Solon enacted in 594 B.C. prescribed that every boy should learn swimming and letters; parents who did not give their sons any education, even that of a trade, forfeited all right to be maintained by them in old age. The daughters were kept at home, practically in purdah, learning household duties and correct behaviour, the main stress being an obedience and modesty, the self-effacement of the female before the male. Slaves did all the heavy work, and went to market to do the shopping. The women of the household lived in their own quarters, bringing up the small children, seeing no male visitors, even those related to them, unless it was necessary or customary, as at a funeral or a family conference of great importance. They did not leave the house except

on special occasions such as to the women's festival to Demeter (*Thesmophoria*) and the great four-yearly procession to the Parthenon (*Panathenaia*) when the embroidered robe woven by the women of Athens for the Protectress of the city-State was dedicated to her in her temple on the Acropolis. The girls had their parts in these, and also in certain other festivals; but their lives consisted mainly of sitting about, weaving and gossiping, walking under the colonnade of their courtyard, bearing children if they were married, and if not, waiting to be given to a husband already chosen for them. They took no part in public or business life, having no political rights and no right to own property; they did not share in the social life of their menfolk, nor even to a great extent in the running of their households, where often the necessary arrangements were made by men-servants. They needed no education and on the whole received none. Many of them must have been illiterate.

Since they were married young, sometimes as soon as they were of marriageable age, to men considerably older (thirty was considered the best age for marriage for a man) they were in no way capable of companionship with their husbands, and were in fact almost entirely excluded therefrom, unless a happy accident of compatibility overrode the natural division.[1] Misogyny, or at least contempt for women, was usual with the Athenian male, and this was inevitable: he reared his womenfolk to be a tiresome necessity in his life, and then avoided them as much as possible. Divorce on both sides was therefore made easy: if the man wished to end the marriage, he could make a declaration before witnesses and send his wife back to her father or other male guardian; if the woman had cause for complaint, she could return to her male guardian, taking

[1] See Xenophon, *Œconomia*, and Antiphon the Sophist, Fragment 49.

her dowry with her. She would then be given in marriage to some other man chosen by her guardian.

The literature of Athens is full of complaints about the tiresomeness and instability of women. Menander's characters utter the general sentiment when they say:

> "Yes, matrimony, if you face the truth,
> Is a misfortune—but inevitable."

and:

> "The man who does not marry has no troubles."

and:

> "Alike in temper are the sea and woman."

The Athenian male had almost no home life. He loved the market-place, the Assembly, the lawcourts, the affairs of State and private business. When he relaxed, it was in the company of men: at the gymnasium watching the young if he were past the age of exercise, and at dinner in his friends' houses where no women were present except flute-girls. The results of Athenian refusal to regard women as human beings cannot be exaggerated, and were contributory to the rapid decline and fall of that splendid civilization.

Now all this was obvious to Plato. One of the chief provisions of his ideal State was that women were to be trained like men, to do the same tasks in so far as their inferiority allowed. This inferiority was mainly physical, but even Plato regarded it as general also. He pointed out that even in the spheres where women were supposed to excel, such as in weaving and cake-making, they were easily beaten by men: "Women naturally participate in all occupations, and so do men; but in all of them women are weaker than men." But they must have tasks assigned to them according to their gifts: one woman will be naturally suited to the practice of medicine, another not; one will be musical, another unmusical, and so on. But they are

to be trained to the limit of their capacity, and given their full share of work in the Ideal State. This is the first important provision of Plato's educational system: that it is to apply equally to men and women. For the Athenian public, nothing could have been more revolutionary; to the majority of them it would appear totally absurd.

Plato drew his ideas on this subject partly from Sparta, and partly from the Pythagoreans. In Sparta the girls lived an outdoor life, and trained themselves to be physically fit no less than the boys. They practised gymnastics, wrestling, running and swimming, throwing the discus and the javelin. They wore only a short tunic with split sides, and no veil, unlike the Athenian girl who covered her face in company and wore the long dress to the feet. After marriage all this freedom ceased at Sparta: the women remained at home, wore the veil, and gave up gymnastics and outdoor sport. The sole object of their training was to ensure that they should have healthy children. The Pythagoreans, on the other hand, trained the mind as well as the body, admitting women—at least, those related to members—to the full teaching in mathematics and music. Some of these women attained to distinction in their own city-States.

Plato, however, went much further than either. The object of his system was not merely to train either the body or the mind, but to develop the right kind of character, especially in those who would wield power in the State. His women were to be ruler-Guardians along with the men, and therefore he would take his girls through the whole course of training: physical (exercise in the gymnasia, stripped like the men, use of arms, horse-riding: this is to continue into later life, not to be limited to the young women); and intellectual (music and letters). There is to be:

> " . . . a common sharing by women and men of education, care of the children, and guardianship of the other citizens. Both must remain in the city and go out to war, guard and hunt with the men like dogs, and as far as possible take their full share in everything, so that their behaviour will be admirable and not at all contrary to the natural relations between male and female, that is, the mutual collaboration intended by nature."[1]

This being agreed, it is now necessary to consider what Plato thought this education should be. He agreed in general that the traditional Greek education in " music " (this term includes poetry in Greek) for the mind, gymnastic for the body, was sound. Literature is to come before physical training, the mind before the body; and since literature comes first, it is extremely important that it shall be good, not bad, since " the most important part of every task is its beginning, especially when we are dealing with anything young and tender. For then it can be most easily moulded, and whatever impression anyone cares to stamp upon it sinks in."

The Athenian child was brought up on stories from Homer and Hesiod, about the gods and heroes. To this Plato, following Xenophanes, strenuously objects. All these old stories are obsolete. Children are not able to separate true and false, symbolic and historical. Therefore the educator's first duty is to watch the story-writers, choose those of their stories that are not only beautiful but true and good, and reject the rest. The nurses and mothers must then be persuaded to tell only these approved stories to their children in infancy, because " they will mould their souls with stories far more than they can mould their bodies with their hands ". Children must not be told

[1] *Republic*, 466D.

stories which show " God " as doing evil, nor those which inculcate fear of death and the after-life, nor those which depict heroes as weeping or laughing immoderately, nor those which extol falsehood, intemperance over food, wine and love, avarice or any other unseemly conduct. Poets who write such stories must be asked to ply their craft elsewhere.

The time comes for the child to go to school. In Athens the age varied according to the position and wealth of the parents—the richer the earlier. Six or seven was customary; some thought that they should go as soon as they could understand. The ordinary system of elementary education consisted of reading, writing and arithmetic, with some memorizing of poetry, especially Homer and Hesiod; music, which meant learning to play a seven-stringed instrument as an accompaniment to lyric poems which they sang; and gymnastic, which probably began later, with preparatory physical exercises, and was not undertaken in earnest until the boy was about twelve: boxing and wrestling, running, jumping, throwing the discus and javelin, and other exercises. At fourteen the sons of the rich left to attend a more advanced school, where they remained until they were of age to do their two years' military training (eighteen to twenty). The sons of the poor left earlier to devote themselves to farming or a craft.

The teaching of music and letters, accompanied by physical training, was general throughout Greece except at Sparta, where everything was sacrificed to gymnastic, and gymnastic was directed towards the creation of good soldiers. Elsewhere in Greece its object was physical health and grace as well as the ability to fight in battle when necessary. Plato does not quarrel with the Athenian curriculum in its main outlines, but he makes some amendments:

First, the boys, above all those who are to be trained for the highest offices of State, the Guardians, must not be allowed to learn by imitation; that is, they must not take part in tragedy or comedy, or if they do, they must not take on the parts of wicked men, or pretend to be women, animals or inanimate things such as storms. They must be taught to say what they have to say directly, and if they act, they must from childhood play only the parts fitting their vocation—men who are brave, self-controlled, reverent and so on; they must not imitate what is base or mean, lest they are corrupted. This is because the habit of imitation, if begun in youth and continued, will leave a mark on the character and nature—on body, voice and mind. Thus drama will be cut out of the educational scheme, for the most part, and only narrative of a simple and edifying kind will be allowed.

Secondly, the accompanying music—and music in Greece, it will be remembered, is always an accompaniment —must be confined to the best style or styles. It does not matter how attractive other styles may be; they must be banished as harmful to character. The music must suit the words, and the words must be edifying. The music will therefore assist the virtues necessary in war or any other misfortune, that is, courage and resolution in all circumstances. It must also assist the virtues of peace, when a man has freedom to do what he likes, that is, wisdom and restraint. Thus two musical modes are needed, and only two, corresponding (so Adeimantus says) to the Dorian, the military mode, and the Phrygian, the mode of peace. The only instrument allowed will be the lyre; the flute, and instruments with many strings, will be forbidden. So too with rhythm: only the good will be admitted, that is, the rhythms conducive to grace and harmony of body and mind.

All the arts are imbued with grace or its opposite: painting, weaving and embroidery, architecture and the manufacture of all other objects. All are important; but a right education in music is of paramount importance because:

> "Rhythm and harmony penetrate most thoroughly into the farthest corners of the soul and lay hands upon it most powerfully, bringing gracefulness, and so making him who is rightly trained in them graceful, and him who is not, the reverse. He who has been rightly educated in this subject will be quick to notice all works of art that are lacking or ugly, and all natural objects that are unbeautiful. He will be displeased with them, and rightly; but the beautiful things he will praise, and receiving them with joy into the depths of his soul he will be nourished by them and become fine and good. Ugly things he will rightly condemn, and will hate them even in his youth before he is capable of reason; but when reason comes, he above all will welcome it as something he recognises because his education has familiarised him with it."

Music, then, is the most powerful aid in rousing the love of the beautiful, not only of beautiful things but of fine and noble conduct. The true music-lover will be incapable of vulgarity or excess.

Gymnastic, or physical training, will be taught according to the theory that "it is not a healthy body that by its excellence makes the soul good, but the reverse: a good soul by its excellence makes the body as good as it can be". Physical training will be given from childhood. The general principles are avoidance of excess; a simple diet which will accustom men to changes of food and weather (not like that of athletes who are ill if they depart from the diet prescribed); sexual moderation (avoidance of prostitu-

tion); no valetudinarianism. Plato revises what he has said earlier, namely that as music is for the soul, gymnastic is for the body; gymnastic also, he now says, is meant for the soul, the proof being that excessive devotion to physical training makes men too hard and savage, whereas the same devotion to music makes them softer than is good for them. The true use of both is to tune the two elements, the fierce and the gentle, into harmony with one another; the right education is a mixture of both, the spirited and the philosophic faculties being thus correctly balanced. The mixture will vary according to the individual and his endowment; the fierce nature must be made gentle with music, the spiritless nature must be tautened with gymnastic exercise, until the right "pitch" is reached in each.

This discussion on the basis of education leads Plato to a consideration of the selection and training of his Guardians. He reiterates that the best possible precaution against any misuse of power by the rulers is "a really noble education".

From fourteen to eighteen, the Athenian boy, if his parents could afford it, would go to a higher school, or to a higher division of his primary school. Here his musical and literary education would continue, and he might learn something of mathematics and the sciences, as interest in these studies grew. He would also begin to learn about the constitution and laws of Athens, and as he reached military age he would, if a public career were planned for him, take courses in rhetoric, perhaps attending the lectures of the visiting Sophists. Such courses would include advanced analyses of literature with regard to diction and meaning. If a boy showed special aptitude for singing and dancing, he might be chosen as one of the representatives of his Tribe in the choric competitions at the great festivals; in that case his training would be paid for by some wealthy citizen

chosen by the Tribe to undertake this public service. Otherwise all education was private and paid for by the parents at Athens. In certain Greek cities of Sicily and Italy, it is said, literary instruction was provided at State expense and under State supervision, according to a law of Charondas who flourished about 500 B.C. No such provision was made at Athens, though elementary instruction in letters was compulsory, and even the lowest types could read, however badly. The gymnasia, being built at State expense, were open to all, whether performers or spectators, free of charge, but there were also private "wrestling-schools", and the physical training taught by the ordinary schools no doubt took place on the premises. The public gymnasia served for recreation or practice or extra training.

At eighteen, when the two years' military training began, the young man had to go to camp, and his school education gave way to military training.[1] He could on his return take up his studies again if he wished, but this was unusual. Some adults were found in the classes of famous teachers like Damon, and adults of all ages frequented the lectures of the visiting Sophists.

In Plato's ideal scheme, higher education is confined to those chosen for character and ability to be the rulers or Guardians. He complains that at the present time those who learn philosophy are mere striplings just past their boyhood, who dally with the subject before they have any experience of real life such as running a household or engaging in business, and then cease. Thus they consider themselves, on the strength of this smattering, to be expert in philosophy, and will hardly deign to listen to anyone else who has studied the subject; as they grow towards old age, all but a very few

[1] After the downfall of Athens as a city-State, the Macedonian occupation put an end to this period of military training for Athenian youths. Those who could afford it and were interested then took to higher education in literature, rhetoric and philosophy.

give it up altogether. Plato would change this system to its opposite. Children and adolescents should have the training in culture and in gymnastic which is suitable for their age, as a preparation for the higher learning. As they approach maturity, their mental exercise must become more strenuous, not less. When their physical strength begins to wane, then they can give themselves entirely up to these studies, so that they may live happily, and after death pass to a suitable reward in the next world.

He then sketches a system of adolescent and adult education which will " make human character as dear to God as human character can be ". The essential prerequisites for this higher education are readiness to learn, a good memory, sagacity, quickness, together with spirit and highmindedness, balanced by steadfastness, trustworthiness, the ability to persist in difficult studies as well as to stand firm in war. The prospective Guardians must be willing to " go round by the longer route ", and not be content with short measure in education ; they must work as hard at study as at physical training. The object of this study for the Guardians is that they shall as far as is humanly possible learn to distinguish what is good in reality and not be misled by fake opinions in this matter. This means that they must try to know the absolute pattern or Form of the Good, and all their training must lead towards this knowledge, from which all else, truth and beauty and even the actual existence of things follow.

Education and lack of education are described by means of the parable of the cave-dwellers. These live underground at the end of a tunnel leading up to the light. They are chained from childhood with their backs to the light. If anything passes behind them, they see the shadow on the back wall of the cave. If any one of them should escape to the light, he would be at first dazzled. Any tales he brought

back would not be believed. Such is the position of mortal men with regard to the truth. If left to themselves they see only shadows and are incredulous if it is suggested that these are not reality. Education therefore is not what some of its professors claim: it cannot put knowledge into the soul where no knowledge is; but since each soul has within it the instrument by which he learns, education must turn this faculty away from shadows to the light of reality and truth. Education is "an act of conversion". The Ideal State cannot be properly governed by the uneducated, because they have no criterion by which to measure what should be done. Nor can it be governed by men who are allowed to spend their whole lives in the process of education, because they are too happy to leave their studies except under compulsion. Therefore the legislator must compel the best natures to undertake the higher studies necessary to fit them for public responsibility, and then compel them to take office.

The education by which these prospective rulers are to be trained for office must in the first place turn the soul away from the shadows of seeming reality to the light of truth. It must also be of use to the fighting man. Music, gymnastics and the crafts will not aid in the search for the criterion of truth we are now seeking; we need studies which deal with fundamental principles. The test is passed only by mathematics, studied for the insight they afford into the true nature of things as opposed to appearance, and for their power to correct the inexactitudes of sense-perception. The branches of mathematics to be studied are:

Arithmetic (not practical calculation but the properties of numbers).

Geometry, plane and solid.

Astronomy (regarded not as the investigation of

natural phenomena but as the science of solids in motion).

Harmonics.

All these are to be considered theoretically, not by experiments, but as pure problems. This so far is the Pythagorean system, as Plato suggests, except that they experimented as well.

The last and most important step in this advanced educational scheme is that which Plato called Dialectic, " a coping-stone on the top of our studies ". This, the most difficult, must not begin until the physical training is finished and a test in gymnastic passed, that is, after the age of twenty. For one thing it is too arduous a pursuit to be combined with strenuous physical exercise; and again, it is not to be attempted by the young, who treat it as a game. Between the ages of twenty and thirty, the student will review all his previous studies and learn their relationship with one another and with the nature of reality. During this ten years he will be under constant observation; and at the end, those most suited to the last intensive course must be selected. These survivors will then be given five years' direct training in Dialectic.

What is Dialectic? It is Plato's substitute for Rhetoric and the rhetorical disputation which served as a finishing-course for the young men training for a political career at Athens. Dialectic is concerned, not with what seems, but with what is; not with trying to make the weaker cause appear the stronger or the worse the better, but with the study of first principles, through the discourse of reason unaided by the senses. All the other arts and sciences are concerned to a greater or less extent with opinions, beliefs, unfinished processes. Dialectic alone tries to abstract the reality of everything, and above all of the principle of Goodness.

After this final course, to which five years are to be given, the man of thirty-five who has come triumphantly through the preparation will again " descend into the cave ", that is, he will be compelled to take up junior offices and to take command in war. He will still be under observation, to see if he can stand firm against all temptation. This period of probation will last fifteen years. At the end of this time, when he is fifty, he will be regarded as completely trained and tested. After that he will be allowed to spend most of his time in the contemplation of the true Good, that is, in philosophy; but when his turn comes round he will take up the burden of office and for the sake of the city-State will direct its affairs in company with the other Guardians. These will also help to train the succeeding generation, so that they can happily leave their State to the care of others like themselves, and depart to dwell in the Isles of the Blest.

This is to be the education of the philosophers who will rule or rather " guard " the Ideal city-State; and it is to be remembered—Plato makes Socrates remind Glaucon at the end of the discourse on education—that all these provisions apply to women as well as to men, if women of adequate natural gifts can be found.

Such, then, was Plato's scheme. The motive behind it was detestation of everything he saw around him. Athenian education, elementary, secondary and adult; the tales of Homer and Hesiod, the dangerous innovations in music, the over-emphasis on athleticism and diet in physical training; rhetoric and disputation; the narrow clannishness of Athenian life and the lack of any attempt to educate Athenian women; above all, the Athenian political system, in which office went to the uneducated and influence to the loudest talkers while the educated refused all public responsibility. All these things he hated and feared, seeing

decadence and irresponsibility everywhere, as well as acute danger. But when he wrote the *Republic* he was still young enough to write with provocative wit and mordant irony. By the time he wrote the *Laws*, all the gaiety had departed and only the anxiety remained.

Just as Plato's system is to be understood as an expression of his disapproval of that of Athens, so Aristotle's system cannot be completely understood except as a reaction against Plato. No doubt Aristotle's intellectual hostility remained more or less latent during his master's lifetime; but after Plato's death the truth emerged that Aristotle detested almost all the arrangements for an Ideal State suggested by Plato. This was not due to any personal animosity; Aristotle revered Plato's brilliance and was anxious to make it clear that his criticisms were made reluctantly and only in the cause of truth. Nevertheless, in his own book on the Ideal State he " repealed " all Plato's provisions with a certain impatience and even irascibility which gives his work a retrograde appearance compared with that of Plato.

We have seen how Aristotle's political arrangements contradicted those of Plato. We have now to see the same process at work over his projected education.

Aristotle agrees that the State should regulate marriage in order that the children produced may be fit subjects for the education of body and mind; but he will have nothing to do with the idea of communal marriages. Monogamy must be the rule while the couple remain husband and wife, and those who transgress must be punished with loss of citizenship. The correct age for marriage, he thinks, is eighteen for a woman, and about thirty-seven for a man; he gives reasons for this, concerned with parentage. No deformed child is to be reared, and the size of families must

be limited by law; if children are begotten beyond the limit, abortion must be practised.

With this preliminary, he passes on to consider the rearing and education of the healthy children produced. The training of the body will precede that of the mind, and the training of appetite will precede that of the intellect, since this is the natural order of development. But the training of the appetite must be for the sake of the intellect, and that of the body for the sake of the mind.

From infancy children must be gradually inured to cold and exercise. Up to the age of five, this will be done by means of games, but they must be suitable games, not too strenuous, not disorderly. These games are meant to train the child for later life; therefore they should imitate the serious activities of the adult. The games, as well as the kind of tales and stories they will hear, will be supervised by State officials called Inspectors of Juvenile Education.[1] The Inspectors will also concern themselves with general manners. They will see to it that the children associate as little as possible with servants, because children reared at home (as they will be up to the age of seven) if left to the care of the slaves, will acquire something of their vulgarity of outlook and behaviour. Nothing unsuitable for the young must be exhibited before them, such as indecent paintings or sculpture; they must not be allowed to attend public performances where impropriety is customary, such as comedy.

Between five and seven the children will be made to look on at the lessons they will shortly have to learn, such as gymnastic and music. At seven years of age a natural period comes to an end, and serious education begins. This is divided by Aristotle into two periods: seven to fourteen, and fourteen to twenty-one. There is no question of co-

[1] Such officials existed at Sparta, Miletus, Ephesus, in Crete, and elsewhere.

education in his scheme: girls revert to the status of potential mothers, and their only concern is to keep healthy and have healthy children.

He lays down a number of general principles:

The education of the young requires special regulation and control by the authorities: neglect of this in some city-States is injurious to their constitutions. Education should suit the future citizen for the particular constitution under which he is to live, whether this is democratic or oligarchic or some other form. The same education must be accorded to all; it should be public, not left to private caprice, since it is a matter of public interest. At present, Aristotle complains, there is no uniformity, because there is no agreement on the proper function of education: whether it should concern itself chiefly with intellect or with character, and if the latter, what kind of character is the best. He allows a place for the useful arts in his scheme only in so far as they are not practised to the deterioration of body or mind, or with a view to earning a living, and insists that any art or science must be considered vulgar if it has the effect of preoccupying and debasing the mind. That is, he will not admit vocational training to be a part of education. Even those branches of knowledge which in themselves are worthy must not be pursued too assiduously, otherwise they too can have the same ill effect.

Thus Aristotle dismisses the notion of specialised education for rulership. He thinks that a basic education will bring unity in the State more effectively than laws and regulations can do so; he does not want his rulers so educated that they are cut off from the rest of the community. He accepts as the four basic subjects of education, reading and writing, gymnastics, music, and for some people drawing. The first two are obviously essential. A query might be raised about music: it is neither necessary

nor useful, but is a pastime for enjoyment during leisure. But, Aristotle replies, the subject which enables us to spend our leisure hours well is more important than those which are necessary or useful. Leisure is the time we have in which to relax from the pursuit of special ends such as business or health, and cultivate our minds with a view to improvement. To look for utility everywhere is quite unfitted to men of broad and liberal outlook.

The influence of music in education is of the highest importance. There is no need to become expert at playing any special instrument: the ability to judge between good music and bad is all that is required. Good music is ideally suited to the education of young and adult: to the young because it is pleasant and they must have pleasure with their learning; to the adult because it is a relaxation and an entertainment by means of which they fit themselves for further work; and to both because it has a potent effect on character. The young will take part in choric and other performances not for the sake of proficiency but because only in this way can they learn to judge music. He agrees with Plato that certain instruments should be barred in education: the flute, because it has an exciting, not a moral effect, the harp, and other many-stringed instruments. There was a legend that Athena found a flute and threw it away, the story said because she disliked the distortion of the features that it caused; but, Aristotle says, probably it was because Athena, patron of science and art, knew that flute-playing was valueless in education, having no effect on the intelligence.

Music, then, is to remain for the free man a pastime, and never to be practised professionally. Aristotle counts performance for competitions " professional ", because the performer is seeking a reward (his hearers' applause), not his own improvement, and an audience will influence the

music, generally for the worse. Music is to be employed for education, as a katharsis or purging of the emotions by giving them an outlet, and as a relaxation. The types of harmony and rhythm must accord with the particular purpose.

The discussion on education breaks off at this point, and the *Politics* remains unfinished.

Aristotle's educational system, like his political and social suggestions in general, must have seemed to his contemporaries a reversion to commonsense and realism as opposed to Plato's impossible proposals. To the modern mind, however, Aristotle's scheme is hopelessly retrograde.[1] Nevertheless, we shall find that even in the *Politics* much of what he said is true, however unpopular it may be at the present time. It is true, for instance, that education, unless it is freed from a vocational bias, cannot fully develop the mind. It is also true that if the arts are pursued for a reward, whether of money or acclaim, they will be vulgarised. Again, the pursuit of the arts and sciences for their own sakes is impossible without freedom from financial necessity, and from the drudgery of caring for one's daily needs.

Nevertheless, we do not need to accept Aristotle's solutions of these problems. To deal with them in reverse order: machinery has done much to reduce drudgery, and it would nowadays be claimed that an admixture of handwork is a help to thought and even a relaxation. The effort to combine general and vocational education has so far not

[1] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 216–17: "The aim of the State, in his view, is to produce cultured gentlemen—men who combine the aristocratic mentality with love of learning and the arts. . . . Both for good and evil, the day of the cultured gentleman is past." A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, p. 99, pointing out the "twofold nature of Aristotle's ethical and political teaching" has aptly written: "We have sometimes the most penetrating discussion of universal principles which it is still necessary to take very seriously in any discussion on ethics; and sometimes the exposition of a prosperous Greek citizen's philosophy of living at its most narrowminded and complacent, dominated and limited by the prejudices of his class, civilisation and period."

been very successful; on the other hand, a wish to earn is often a stimulus, whereas study without such a purpose may grow stale, and too much leisure is often wasted. There is no harm in earning *per se*. Even the arts are not necessarily cheapened by adaptation to an audience, as Homer and the Athenian dramatists prove.

It is well to remember, however, that mere proficiency in an art or science does not constitute a liberal education, nor does the training of taste or intellect or both to the highest possible degree produce the best type of human being. For Plato and Aristotle the aim of education was the development of "the good man". Plato's ideal human being was the man or woman trained to the acme of his or her capacities for public service. Aristotle's ideal man was not the "cultured gentleman" but the man who by nature, training and circumstance was able to devote himself to the pursuit of truth, regardless of all utilitarian considerations.

It is a paradox that Plato, the philosopher of the Ideal World beyond the world of sense, should have as his Ideal Man the one devoted to the service of the Ideal Society, while Aristotle, the philosopher of the actual world as opposed to the transcendental, should have as his Ideal Man the one devoted to pure thought. It is therefore not surprising that Plato's scheme of education is a training primarily of character and a sense of duty, and of intellect for the sake of character, as with the Pythagoreans to some extent, and Aristotle's is a training in good habits and health of body and mind for the sake of the right functioning of the intellect.

Epicurus had a system of education devised for the promotion of happiness as he conceived it: well-being, serenity, freedom from fear.

He places the intellectual pleasures first, because:

> "In all other occupations the fruit comes painfully after completion, but in intellectual pursuits pleasure goes hand in hand with knowledge. Enjoyment does not *follow* comprehension; comprehension and enjoyment are simultaneous."

This being so, the chief activity of the Society of the Garden was the training of the intellect.

We have no record of what he thought about the education of children, but he cannot have allowed them to be told the stories of gods and heroes on which the ordinary Greek boy was brought up, except perhaps as pleasant fairy-tales: it was essential to his theory that adults should not believe in the gods, or in stories of the next world, because these evoke fear and disturb the serenity of the mind. A hint of this is contained in a letter to a young disciple of whom he was very fond:

> "As for every sort of culture, my dear soul, take to your yacht and flee away from it."

By "culture" is meant the ordinary literary education: rhetoric, poetry, music, writing. In this letter he offers the young man a substitute, namely the study of science, especially astronomy and meteorology, and he outlines how it should be pursued and for what purpose.

Epicurus, then, advocated the study of what he called Physics, that is, natural science, in place of the usual curriculum, and in particular the Atomic Theory of Democritus, because science offers a rational explanation of everything; all mystery is done away with and there is no longer any ground for superstitious fear, the great enemy of serenity.

He went to considerable trouble to collect and lay before

his companions and disciples the various explanations suggested by preceding scientists to account for natural phenomena. But he asserted that it was not possible to tell which of these explanations was the right one, especially in astronomy. He even castigated the scientists who "become enamoured of the method of the single cause and groundlessly put the others out of court, without having considered what we can observe and what not, and so desiring to observe the impossible". He writes to his favourite disciple: "To designate a single cause for these occurrences is madness." He is satisfied if he can show that one of these explanations, or at least something like it, must be right, without having to say which, in view of the limitations of the means of observation. His object was not to find the right explanation (and he was ready—too ready —to believe that this was impossible) but to give his pupils "peace of mind". Mystery, he says, means fear. The universe is not mysterious; it is intelligible. This faith banishes fear. Why waste time trying to give the exact cause, so long as we know that a rational cause exists?

This was the basic principle of Epicurean education. It is to be begun young and continued throughout the whole of life; but it is never too late to begin. In a letter to another pupil he writes:

> "Let no one when young delay to study philosophy; let no one when he is old grow weary of the study. No one can be too early or too late in coming to the consideration of his soul's health. The man who says that the time for studying philosophy has not come or that it has gone by, is like a man who says that his time for *happiness* has not yet come or has gone by. We must therefore meditate and practise the things that produce happiness;

for when happiness is with us, everything is ours; and when it is absent, we do everything to obtain it."

Throughout the five centuries of their influence, the Stoic School cannot be said to have put forward any definite scheme of education. Learning was always highly regarded by them. Zeno, the founder, underwent many years of intellectual preparation before setting up his own school. He came to Athens and learnt all that he could from the existing Schools and lectures, and his pupils also persevered in study with the same industry, though without his originality. Chrysippus, who succeeded Zeno's pupil Cleanthes as the third principal of the School, and who was regarded as its second founder, was far more learned even than Zeno, and was sometimes described as the most learned and industrious man of antiquity.

This tradition of learning persisted throughout the whole long history of Stoicism into the Roman Empire, with men of predominantly scientific interests like Seneca. Its purpose, however, was never the study of pure truth for its own sake; it had as its aim the study of nature with a view to virtue, because virtue in the Stoic scheme was the acceptance of the universe as wholly good. Chrysippus, for instance, stated that natural science, though it is at the very heart of a philosophical education, is necessary because it enables the student to distinguish between right and wrong and to choose the right. He could not agree with Aristotle that pure speculation was the good life for Man; to a Stoic, such a life in no way differed from a pastime pursued for enjoyment. Thus the Stoics, like the Epicureans, harnessed the search for truth to the practice of "the best life", but whereas the Epicureans sought truth in so far as knowledge gave serenity, the Stoic sought it for the sake of a willing acceptance of the natural scheme by the good

man. Both attitudes were equally fatal to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

The Stoics placed "philosophy" first, that is, the practical pursuit of virtue. The three studies they recommended were natural science, ethics and logic. Different teachers differed in the value they assigned to each: some put ethics first, some natural science, and both these positions could be defended. It can be argued that ethics comes first because the Stoics were primarily interested in conduct, not in knowledge; but since they derived their principles of conduct from a knowledge of the laws of the universe, it can also be argued that natural science takes the first place. Logic was the instrument of enquiry and argument, not studied for its own sake but because of its usefulness in the study of the other two subjects.

But these studies are not undertaken until one is adult. So far as is known, the Stoics put forward no detailed scheme for education beginning in childhood, like those of Plato and Aristotle, but were content to take over the teaching of young men when they were of an age to choose between the life of virtue and that of self-advancement. For that age the Stoics substituted the study of nature in place of Rhetoric, and this preparation was meant to produce a man obedient to the natural law rather than a politician: a citizen of the Cosmos rather than a citizen of Athens or Rome.

V

THE GREEK CONCEPT OF LAW

FROM EARLY times, the Greeks were conscious of the importance of Law. Into the origins of this concept we need not go; it was in action in the city-States of Sumeria in the third millennium B.C., and there is in the *Iliad* a famous picture wrought on Achilles' shield by Hephaestus:

> "The people were assembled in the market-place, where a quarrel had arisen: two men were disputing over the recompense to be paid for a man who had been slain. The defendant was swearing that he had paid all, and expounding his case to the people, while the prosecutor was denying that he had received any payment; so that both of them were on their way to the examining magistrate to put their case to the test. The people were cheering both of them on: both had their supporters. The heralds were restraining the crowd. The elders sat on polished seats of stone in a sacred circle, and held in their hands the sceptres of the loud-voiced heralds. The disputants hastened before these, and stated their cases in turn. In the centre lay two talents of gold, to be given to whoever stated his case most justly before them."

Whether these "elders" had any defined code of law to guide their decisions is not known, but it cannot have been a written code, for writing was unknown in Greece until after these poems were composed. The Code of Hammurabi King of Babylon was inscribed on a stone pillar.

The Cretans also had their script, still undeciphered, so that their city-colonies in Greece may have had written records. But when the first Greek invaders, the Achaeans, came in the middle of the second millennium, they had not yet learnt to write their own language, so that the laws they observed were traditional and customary; hence the Greek word for Law, *Nomos*, which means "custom".

Government by a traditional code of law was the general practice in the Greek city-States when they begin to emerge from legend into history. The care of this tradition, civil and religious, was an important function of the king, where there was a monarch, or of the nobles where there was oligarchy. This worked smoothly so long as the people were satisfied with their rulers, or were still not conscious of their inferior status. But when in the seventh century economic pressure caused discontent among the workers and an awareness of their complete exclusion from power, the unsatisfactory administration of justice by the few in their own interest caused a clamour, not only for a share in the wealth of the city-State, especially a redivision of the land, but also for a clarification of the constitution and a codification of the existing law.

This process, which no doubt occurred elsewhere, can best be studied in the city-State of Athens, where in about 621 B.C., after an abortive attempt at revolution, the demand for codification became so insistent that the ruling minority had to appoint one of their own members to carry out the task. This was Dracon, whose Code gave Athens her first written laws. Dracon originated nothing; he merely recorded what he found in practice. The Code was so obviously harsh and biassed that a new clamour arose for its reform. This was accorded in 594 B.C. when Solon, a nobleman who had taken to overseas commerce and had travelled considerably, was appointed Chief Magistrate

with plenipotentiary powers for one year, to rewrite the constitution and the laws. His constitution, which gave some power to the people but not as much as they hoped or expected, did not survive intact. His creation of a jury-court or jury-panel chosen by lot, however, prepared the way for the complete democracy which was the Athenian constitution throughout the fifth and fourth centuries with only two brief interruptions; and the legal Code by which all magistrates and lawcourts were to be bound formed the nucleus of the Athenian administration of justice down to the final loss of independence in 322 B.C.

Throughout their history the Greek city-States, ordinary citizens as well as leaders, were extremely conscious of the importance of Law. They regarded the legal Code (which of course differed from city-State to city-State) as their protection, and the government as its interpreters. They contrasted the Greek service to the impersonal Law of the State with the oriental service to a capricious monarch. The Greeks, who obeyed laws, seemed to themselves free and civilised men; the non-Greeks who obeyed a despot seemed to the Greeks to be barbarians and slaves. They were prouder of this worship of Law than of any other one thing in the Hellenic way of life, and it was to them a religion. The laws were regarded as having divine sanction, and as being in fact an imperfect copy of the divine Law by which the universe is governed. The first thing that any colony setting out to found a new city-State had to do was to appoint a legislator. Throughout Greek history there are frequent records of the calling in of legislators from outside to help in the formulation of the new Code and constitution, or the careful selecting and combining of the best laws from other States.

Nevertheless the Greeks as a race did not forget that actual law can be unjust, especially if it is laid down and

administered by a class in its own interest. When the question of the validity of Law and its connection with natural Law came to be a favourite topic with thinkers, the double strand of argument is found from the first: that Law is an artificial imposition by the strong upon the weak; and that Law is the people's defence and safeguard against tyranny. This antithesis is the fruit of the original struggle between the oligarchic governments of the Greek city-States and their subjects, between the concept of Law as the instrument of a class or a party, and Law as justice for every citizen, free, impartial and known to all. This conflict still rages in the world today. All totalitarian governments are hostile to and contemptuous of the concept of impartial Law; among their first actions is always the abolition of impartial lawcourts and the substitution of courts which will give decisions in the interest of the government. All democracies are at pains to protect the administration of justice as far as possible from political pressure, especially pressure by the government in power.

The hatred felt by the best Greek thinkers for anarchy and their fear of internal strife or civil war is seen at its purest and clearest in the poems of Solon. Writing in Homeric verse for the admonition of his fellow-countrymen of Athens after the institution of his own reforms, he said:

" This is the truth my heart would have me preach
In Athens—how that countless woes are wrought
By lawlessness; but service to the Law
Sets all things neat and trim and fair to see.
She weights the wicked all about with shackles,
She tames the savage heart, she checks the greedy,
She saps the strength of Arrogance; the blooms
Of Ruin's deadly plant upon their stalk
She withers; she makes straight the crooked judgement.
She lays a soothing hand upon the mane

Of pride and all its works; she stays the hands
Of rival factions as they rise to strike.
She curbs the passion born of bitter hatred.
Beneath her rule all things throughout the world
Are tuned to wisdom and to harmony."

Solon's reforms, while not redistributing the land, as the popular leaders wished, did save the people as a whole from their crushing material hardship by cancelling all debts, setting free those who had mortgaged their freedom in return for a loan, and recalling from exile all debtors who had gone abroad to escape slavery. He also abolished the exclusive privilege based on birth, by giving even the lowest income-group, the labourers, a vote in the Assembly, and higher income-groups the right to hold office; he also gave the people a legal Code which ended the oppressive interpretation of a traditional usage observed in the interest of a propertied class and administered by them as they thought fit. Therefore when the people, disappointed by his moderation, demanded more, Solon could cast at their leaders the reproach:

"They take no heed of the holy foundations of Justice,
Who in silence marks what happens and what has been,
And who in course of time comes without fail to exact the penalty."

To Solon, Law was the expression of Justice, and Justice was personified as a divinity who if revered will bring internal peace and prosperity, and if flouted will in time send punishment.

Solon had as his object the framing of a constitution that would allay discord and civil strife, because he was well aware that the alternative was the seizure of power by a popular leader and the establishment of that leader as "tyrant", that is, unconstitutional ruler supported by a

personal bodyguard and not responsible to any legally constituted body of citizens. In an iambic poem Solon recounts his aims and activities. There were some who had thought that he would use his own position of absolute authority to establish himself as permanent dictator. When he refused to do this and laid down his powers at the end of the year for which he had been elected, these critics thought him a fool for his moderation; they themselves had nothing in mind except to benefit by the changes, and they could not imagine that any man was simply and solely concerned with the public welfare:

"Those who came as pillagers had lavish hopes;
Every man of them believed that he would light on a
great fortune,
And that I,
Though I coaxed so smoothly,
Would soon reveal a harsh purpose.

Vain were their imaginings then,
And now in their anger against me
They all eye me askance
As if I were an enemy.

It is undeserved!
What I promised I have fulfilled,
By Heaven's aid.
And other things I undertook,
Not without success.

To achieve aught by violence or tyranny
Is not to my mind,
Nor that the unworthy should have a equal share
with the good
In the rich soil of my native land."

He enumerates his services to the poor and the enslaved, and once more puts forward his concept of Law:

" These things I wrought by main strength,
Fashioning that blend of force and justice which is Law,
And I went through to the end as I had promised.

Ordinances for noble and base alike I wrote,
Fitting a rule of jurisdiction straight and true
To every man.

Had another, a villainous and covetous man,
Grasped the goad as I did,
He would not have held the people back.

Had I complied with my opponents' wishes then,
Or at a later time with the designs of the other party against them,
This city would have been deprived of many sons.

Wherefore I stood at bay,
Defending myself on every side,
Like a wolf among a pack of hounds."

Solon failed to prevent an immediate dictatorship. Power, after years of conflict, was seized by his own cousin Peisistratus, who proved a comparatively mild ruler and at least made a show of governing according to Solon's Code. With the overthrow and banishment of Peisistratus' son Hippias this brief Athenian experience of absolute rule by one man came to an end, and thereafter the word " tyrant " was sufficient to arouse popular fury. The pair of friends, one of whom assassinated Hippias' brother, were always regarded as heroes and martyrs and were incorporated into the popular songs of the next century. When, a century later, at the end of the fifth century, Athens was for eight months ruled by a cabal of thirty men, these were called the Thirty Tyrants and were later execrated with all the old fury, when democracy was

restored and with it the legal Code of Solon and its accretions.

Solon's system provided a complete legal Code dealing with all offences, from homicide (the only set of provisions he retained from the old Code) to the most detailed regulations on the improvement of agriculture and trade, and the reform of the coinage and the calendar. The law was to be known to all, was to be strictly observed by all authorities, and was to be free and impartial. Litigants were to be tried by their fellow-citizens in public, or by magistrates bound by the Code. Lastly, he provided that the laws were not to be altered for a stated length of time—some said for a hundred years. This decree was secured by an oath which he obliged all magistrates to swear. He himself is said to have left Athens immediately after completing the Code, and to have stayed away for ten years, expressly so that he should not have to consider suggestions for amending it or requests to explain it. He thought that it should be given a chance to work.

This conviction, that the laws of any city-State should not be altered unless this become imperative, was another powerful factor in the Greek concept of Law. At all costs its sacrosanctity as a principle must not be endangered: while the Code remains in force it must be obeyed, and at all times the less it is altered the better. Solon is credited with the saying:

"Obey the magistrates whether it be just or unjust." That is, the administration of the Law must be accepted while this stands. It was this principle that led Socrates to accept his unjust condemnation by an Athenian jury two hundred years after Solon.

The title Legislator (*Nomothetês*) was one of the most honourable, perhaps the most honourable, in Greece. City-States revered the memory of their original lawgiver as

much as and sometimes more than that of their founder. The borrowing of lawgivers as well as of laws was frequent even in later times. Known experts in constitutional law might be sent for by city States suffering from internal strife, just as a sick man consults a specialist physician or surgeon. The Spartans ascribed their unique constitution, with its dual monarchy and rigid caste system, to the lawgiver Lycurgus, who, they said, derived this system from Crete; but nothing certain is known of Lycurgus, and he may be an invention. The Spartan laws were never written down, because it was said that Lycurgus had forbidden it. The Athenians had the very real and admirable Solon, followed a hundred years later by Cleisthenes. The city-States of Sicily and Italy had their written Codes even earlier than Athens. Zaleucus of Western Locri in south Italy was said to have been the first to provide his State with a written Code in the middle of the seventh century, and his disciple Charondas of Catanê (modern Catania) in east Sicily did the same service not only for his own city-State but also for others which invited him to do so. Both these men were greatly reverenced in later times, and their provisions were borrowed, though now not much is known of their work.

In Greece Proper the city-State of Corinth had a legislator named Pheidon, and she also provided one called Philolaus for Thebes. Another early legislator was Androdamas of Rhegium on the Straits of Messina, who provided a Code for the distant peninsula of Chalcidicê in Thrace.[1] Protagoras was asked by Pericles to frame a Code for the new foundation of Thourioi on the site of Sybaris in south Italy in 444 B.C. The Thourians also chose certain laws from the Codes of Zaleucus and Charondas. Even as late as the end of the third century B.C., the city-

[1] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1274a *sqq.*

State of Cyrene sent for two famous political philosophers from Megalopolis in Arcadia, to help them to put an end to a party war and to establish a more satisfactory legal Code and constitution on the lines suggested by Aristotle.

The extraordinary reverence paid by the Greeks to law and the legislator is shown by the work of the Athenian Cleisthenes, who completely rewrote the Athenian constitution in 501 B.C. The legal Code of Solon had held firm, but his arrangements for the promotion of internal unity had completely failed. Party strife had continued and had led to the dictatorship of Peisistratus and his sons. After this short-lived dynasty had been overthrown, civil war helped by foreign interference seemed inevitable. Cleisthenes put an end to this by an entirely artificial division of the city-State (which included the whole of Attica) into administrative divisions. The old Athenian Four Tribes, which were local divisions of ancient origin and sanctioned by religious usage, were abolished. Cleisthenes created ten new divisions which he called Tribes and which he provided with all the customs of the old Tribes: a patron hero taken from Attic legend, regular sacrifices and so on. These new Tribes were built up quite arbitrarily by taking three groups of villagers, one from the mountainous region of Attica, peopled mostly by goatherds and the poorest rural class; one from the plain, peopled by farmers and more prosperous agricultural workers; and one from the coastal strip, where were the traders and merchants. In the past these three districts fell apart into three political groups having nothing in common either with one another or with the city itself. Cleisthenes split them up by taking a group of villages from each, calling it a Tribe, and ordering all to meet in the city of Athens for public business. This brisk severing of old ties and imposing of new ones by law was accepted at once and

finally by the population, and henceforth all public administration substituted the Ten Tribes for the ancient Four. Party strife in its old form of local jealousy, suspicion and hatred was ended for ever. Henceforth the contest was a direct one between oligarchs and democrats, instead of being between district and district, city and country, or even poor against rich. Such a reform could not have been so smoothly put through unless the people of Attica—never docile by nature—had entirely accepted the necessity for new legislation and had been willing to put themselves temporarily into the hands of the chosen and trusted legislator.

From earliest times, then, the Greek citizen was accustomed to the idea of the importance of law; and when this was applied to Nature by the early scientific philosophers of Miletus, we at once see an attempt to connect universal Law with that of the human community. In the sixth century, Anaximander of Miletus, the successor of Thales as head of the research school there, spoke of the creation and destruction of our universe in terms of justice and injustice. He envisaged the original state of matter as an inarticulated mass from which existing things derive their existence and to which they return "according to necessity, for they give justice and make reparation to one another for their injustice, according to the arrangement of Time". That is, there is a natural law of compensation by which opposites come and go; for example, from the indeterminate mass (which he called the Non-Limited) Hot and Cold may be temporarily separated off and be in opposition to each other, but in due course they will again be assimilated into the mass and neutralized. This opposition he calls by analogy mutual injustice, the Hot encroaching on the Cold, the Cold on the Hot, and the return is the rendering of justice and reparation. Thus the human notions of encroachment, correction and

retribution are imposed by him on the natural world of inanimate substances.

The Ephesian Heracleitus made Law (Logos) the central factor of his system, calling it the one thing, common to all, the principle, by which the whole universe is governed. He too, like Anaximander, speaks as if there were a principle of justice at work in the world of inanimate nature, but he suggests that no injustice is possible because the Logos and its delegates do not permit the encroachment of one element on another:

> " The sun will not transgress his measures; otherwise the Furies, ministers of Justice, will find him out."

The Law of Nature is fixed by eternal decree, but in the human sphere things are different. Here there is Right and Wrong, which are opposites, continually at war; but this is necessary also, for " men would not know the name of Right if the opposite did not exist". Human law, though not omnipotent, is nevertheless based on divine Law: we must found our strength, he says, on the divine Law (Logos) as the city-State founds its strength on constitutional Law (Nomos), and even more so, because " all human laws are nourished by one, which is divine. This governs as far as it will, and is sufficient for all, and more than enough". That is, human Law is to be obeyed because it is, however imperfect, derived from the divine Logos, and the very imperfection of human Law is part of the intelligent dispensation of divine Law, so that we shall learn to distinguish Right and Wrong by contrast.

Heracleitus was well aware that democracy depended on the supremacy of an impartial legal Code; but he preferred a constitutional monarchy if the right man could be found. This was the view of some of his successors: Law is a second best, after all, if one can only find the perfect Man. But

the general opinion was that this ideal was unattainable: men are never perfect and power corrupts; the Law provides the only relatively stable criterion of Justice.

In Pythagorean teaching, obedience to Law took a high place. The Pythagorean inculcated first service to God, and under God, to one's parents and the Law. Law and usage must not be lightly set aside, even for reform, lest anarchy should follow, and there is nothing worse than anarchy. Thus the Pythagorean was able to adapt himself to the prevailing system in any city-State where he happened to settle, and the sect was therefore never at odds with any government; after their misfortune at Croton they seem to have given up all attempt at political power and to have accepted whatever laws were in force where they were living.

The metaphysical philosophers of Elea and their followers took no interest in political constitutions and laws, because they were convinced that all was illusion except Absolute Being. But the researches of historians, local and general, brought out the artificial nature of many national laws and customs, and showed that not only were they different for different races and places but were actually opposed. Herodotus especially, by collecting and recording the customs of the Persians, Scythians, Egyptians and others, emphasised those that were strange to the Greeks, and gave impetus to the great controversy that occupied the Schools of philosophy for many decades, namely, What is the sanction of human Law? Philosophers were divided on this question, some agreeing with Heracleitus that human Law is an imperfect copy of divine or natural Law, others that these are directly opposed, the one being " real ", the other artificial or conventional.

Another line of thought had always been that laws, far from being related to the divine Law, are the rules imposed

by the party in power for the control and exploitation of their subjects. This point of view was attributed to Anacharsis, a Scythian, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, who was said to have visited Solon while Solon was writing his legal Code and to have sneered at his labours :

> " Laws are like spiders' webs : they catch the weak and small, but the strong and powerful break through them."

Solon's reply was that his laws would be so framed that it would be to everybody's advantage to keep them.

The Sophists were responsible for preaching the obvious conventionality of human laws. Since the teachers of rhetoric had to prepare their pupils for forensic as well as political oratory, they were often concerned rather with showing how regulations could be circumvented ; it was not in their interest to regard any particular Code as sacrosanct, and as they travelled from city-State to city-State they were bound to notice differences between the legal Codes prevailing in each. A Sophist named Lycophron, for instance, is attacked by Aristotle in the *Politics* for his theory that the law is merely a covenant, a " guarantee of mutual justice", between men, whereas, Aristotle says, Law ought to be a means of making the citizens good and just. Lycophron's point of view is much the same as that put forward by Glaucon in the *Republic*, that Law is a social compact " not to harm or be harmed". Thrasymachus, who also appears in the *Republic*, violently maintains that " justice is the advantage of the stronger " : any man of character will break the law if he can do so with impunity ; the only deterrent is the fear of retaliation. Hippias is shown by both Plato and Xenophon discussing the relationship between divine and human Law. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Hippias after an amicable discussion is brought by Socrates to agree that the

distinction between Law and Justice is unreal. But in Plato's dialogue *Protagoras*, Hippias is the principal exponent of the theory that Nature and Law are opposed.

A typical passage of sophistic argument on Law occurs in the recently-discovered treatise called *Truth* by the Sophist Antiphon. The argument is as follows:

Justice consists in not breaking the laws of the city-State of which one happens to be a citizen. Therefore the best course is to keep the laws of the State when there are witnesses, but when one is alone, to observe the laws of Nature only. The commands of the State are imposed artificially, but those of Nature are obligatory. The State laws are arrived at by agreement; those of Nature are not a matter of consent.

Therefore if a man can transgress the legal Code and escape the detection of those who have agreed to it, he will avoid disgrace and punishment. But if a man breaks a law of Nature, he will suffer whether anyone sees him or not. His punishment does not depend on opinion but in fact. The Law's injunctions and prohibitions have nothing to do with Nature, being often opposed to the natural impulses. The advantages and the disadvantages sought by the Law are not necessarily those of the individual: the Law often imposes what is disagreeable and prohibits what is pleasant; for instance, it insists on our caring for aged parents even when these have treated us ill.

This would not matter so much if obedience to the Law were properly rewarded and disobedience punished. But as things are (he complains) the Law is not strong enough to protect those who accommodate themselves to it; and even if one suffers an injury, the Law insists on recourse to litigation, thus placing the injured person on the same footing as the aggressor, since the injured person has to persuade a jury and win his case before he can get redress. If the

defendant has the better technique, the prosecutor loses his case and the injury goes unpunished.

In another passage, Antiphon argues that to give evidence as a witness in the lawcourt is to " wrong " someone who has not done one any wrong, and so to make an enemy who in his turn unjustly hates one. Thus the legal system itself is the cause of unjust actions. It was this sort of shallow and perverted argument that brought the whole sophistic movement into disrepute and provoked the hostility of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who re-examined the whole question.

The opposite point of view is expressed by Democritus of Abdera, who held the democratic[1] belief that the Law of the State is the nearest possible approximation to the moral Law, not to the Law of Nature, which was where the Sophist went wrong. Obedience to an accepted Code enables every individual to fulfil himself as far as possible without injury to his neighbour and to exercise his own natural bent in peace :

> " The laws would not prevent each person from living according to his inclination unless individuals harmed one another ; for envy creates the beginnings of strife. . . . The Law wishes to benefit men's life, and it is able to do so when they themselves wish to receive benefit, for it shows to those who obey it their own particular virtue."

Taking up the points raised in Antiphon's treatise, which were no doubt commonplaces of philosophical discussion, Democritus lays it down firmly that :

> " One must punish wrongdoers to the best of one's

[1] In Herodotus, Book III, Chapter 80, the Persian Otanes is shown advocating democracy and saying : " The rule of the majority has in the first place the finest of all titles, namely, equality before the Law."

ability and not neglect it. Such conduct is just and good, and the neglect of it is unjust and bad."

The argument that the judge or juryman is "wronging" someone by punishing an offence is thus dismissed. Democritus says on the contrary:

> "One must at all costs kill all those creatures which do hurt contrary to justice; the man who does so has the greater share of justice and courage in every ordered society than the one who does not."

Criminals are like animals inimical to Man; ancestral law demands that they shall be put to death unless some other Law, sacred or secular, forbids it. Moreover, no penalty is to attach to any man who brings about the death of a brigand or pirate, whether he do so by his own hand, or at the instigation of others, or by means of his part in a legal verdict. So too with lesser penalties: those deserving exile or imprisonment must be condemned and not let off. Whoever, allowing his judgement to be deflected by profit or influence, acquits a man contrary to the Law, is himself committing a crime and this must lie on his conscience. Concience for the good man is the Law in the soul, which prevents him from doing anything wrong even if no one knows. As for the magistrates whose duty it is to administer the Law, they will never be perfect, and there is no means of preventing them from sometimes doing wrong, however good they may be, since they will often show themselves different men when in power. But it is important to see that if they do their duty and convict offenders, the Law shall protect them from vengeance.

To sum up: Democritus believed that the rightly constituted citizen, so formed by the right education, will not need laws or compulsion, but will live freely within the Law

without injuring or wishing to injure his neighbours. The aim of the Law is to create unity of outlook within the State, and to give every citizen the chance to develop his powers. But the lawless must be eliminated without mercy, for the good of the whole, and the Law itself must be strengthened by every possible means.

Athens in the fifth century B.C. was proud of having a constitution and laws that were her own and not imitated from those of her neighbours. The Funeral Speech attributed by Thucydides to Pericles well expresses that pride: "We are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves."[1] The administration, he says, favours the majority, not the minority, and so is called democracy. The laws afford equal justice to all. Individuals are free to behave as they like in matters which are not the concern of the Law, but this ease in private life does not make for lawlessness, because a salutary fear teaches obedience to the magistrates and the laws, especially those laws designed to protect the injured, whether these laws are codified or belong to the unwritten code which cannot be broken without bringing down public condemnation on the offender. But this was an ideal picture, designed to appeal to patriotism.

Meanwhile, among intellectual circles, the sophistic point of view was gaining ground: the rules of conduct we call Law vary from State to State, and are a purely conventional Code to suit particular needs. They need not therefore be taken as binding or as having any sanction in Nature or in ethics. It is expedient to obey them because if you are found out when committing an offence you will be punished, and because if you respect your neighbours' rights they will respect yours. If, however, you come into collision with the Law, it is necessary to defend yourself. Rhetoric can

[1] *Thucydides*, Book II, Chapter 37.

persuade any Assembly or Lawcourt to accept your reasoning, true or false; therefore it is necessary to become accomplished in this art, which it was the business of the visiting Sophist to expound, by teaching its principles, demonstrating its performance, and providing suitable material for students to study and exercises for them to practise.

Discussion of the basic sanction of actual Law raised the question, Should the citizen be bound by the laws of his city-State even when this means accepting a punishment he does not deserve? This received an uncompromising answer from Socrates: the laws must be obeyed, whatever the cost. In the *Crito* he is shown resisting the suggestion that he should evade the verdict passed against him by escaping from prison, which his friends could have arranged, and going into exile. He eloquently pleads the cause of the laws of Athens. If he runs away, he will so far as in him lies be trying to destroy the laws, and with them the whole State—for this will be the result if the decisions reached by the lawcourts are to be made void by private individuals. The claim of the laws to be obeyed even when the verdict is unjust is that the citizen born and brought up under their régime has received many benefits from them, and must not retaliate with disobedience when a decision does not suit him, any more than he must revolt against a command of his father and mother. If the citizen does not like the laws of Athens, they do not prevent him from going off to live elsewhere; but if he stays, he has entered into an agreement to obey their behests, and if he now makes an illegal escape, he is breaking that agreement for his own personal advantage. Throughout Socrates' speech in the *Crito* it is implied that the laws are identical with the city-State itself, that to weaken them is to weaken the whole

structure of ordered society, and that they are the chief educators of the citizen.

Socrates therefore believed in complete acceptance of the laws of Athens because they were on the whole good and he had hitherto found no fault with them, or at least knew of none better elsewhere. On one occasion when Socrates refused to carry out a popular decree this was because it was in direct contravention of the law that every citizen should have a separate trial. He did not accept the verdict against him; but he accepted his obligation to submit to it, even if this cost him his life.

Plato, while presenting Socrates as having this attitude and as maintaining it to the end, obviously had no such view of Athenian Law, as his very unflattering picture of the law-courts and those who frequent them shows.[1] He probably agreed that existing Law should not be broken or evaded to suit the individual, even when a decision was manifestly unjust. But he could not accept the laws and constitution which could result in the death of Socrates, and he was bitterly opposed to actual Athenian practice, and also to the theory of the Sophists that:

> "Whatever in any country is regarded as just and admirable *is* just and admirable, in that country and for so long as that convention maintains itself."

Protagoras claimed (according to Plato) that:

> "The wise and efficient statesman is the man who alters the public conception of justice, and makes wholesome things seem just instead of pernicious ones . . . He replaces each pernicious convention by a wholesome one, making this both be and seem just. The professional teacher who is able to educate his pupils on these lines is a wise man, and worth his large fees."[2]

[1] *Theaetetus*, 172C, *sqq.* [2] *Theaetetus*, 167C.

Plato was of course in agreement with Protagoras that if laws are bad they must be reformed. Where he quarrels with Protagoras is in that the Sophist appears to have no belief in truth or abstract Justice, no clear standard by which he decides whether any law is good or bad. Plato cannot agree that " Whatever view is commonly held on matters of ' just and unjust ', ' religious and irreligious ', in any political society, and is there established as law or convention, *is* truth and fact for that society. In such matters neither any individual nor any State can claim superior wisdom." Protagoras concedes that " the decision of one State may be more in conformity with truth than that of another". But what he will not concede, and what Plato insists upon, is that justice and injustice, right and wrong, have any being of their own apart from this or that society ; in short, that there is an absolute standard by which Law should and must be judged. Plato's own suggestions for the construction of an ideal Code of Law are made with a view to his idea of absolute justice.

To Plato, Justice is that principle in the individual and in the community which sees to it that the different parts each have and keep to their proper function.[1] In the individual this means the rule of reason over the will and the appetites, and the willing acceptance of this rule by the other faculties. In the State it means the rule of the best characters trained in the best way, and the willing obedience of the other classes to this rule. Every law that he lays down in the *Republic* and the *Laws* has this principle in mind, so that the point of view that Law is the imposition of the will of the group in power, or even a voluntary social compact for mutual safety and convenience, is banished before the ideal view that Law must be an expression and instrument of ideal Justice, that which keeps the parts of the State functioning

[1] *Republic*, 443D, 444A.

each at its own proper work, and so preserves not only order but internal unity or concord. The laws should embody not the law of Nature but the moral Law, the origin of which is divine, and a part of which, as Democritus said, resides in every soul in the form of his conscience. The legendary lawgivers of Crete and Sparta, Plato reminds his hearers, received their inspiration from the gods.[1]

Aristotle's opinions on Law are less exalted. He deals with the question under the enquiry whether it is better to be ruled by the best man or the best laws. Some argue that laws, written rules, enunciate general principles only and cannot give directions on particular cases. But, Aristotle replies, rulers must be guided by general principles when they decide particular cases. The Law, being unemotional, is better than the human soul which is bound to be swayed by emotion. In cases where the Law cannot decide at all, or cannot decide well, the collective wisdom of the best men must be applied, and it is likely to be sounder and less open to corruption than the judgement of one man. Law stands above human prejudice and passion; it first educates the magistrates for the purpose and then appoints them to judge and administer matters left over "according to their best judgement"; it also grants them the right to introduce any amendment which they find by experience to be better than the existing Code:

> "The man who recommends that Law shall rule appears to recommend that God and reason alone shall rule, but he who recommends that Man shall rule is adding a wild beast to the governing authority, because appetite is like a wild beast, and passion distorts the rule even of the best men. . . . Obviously when we seek for what is just, we mean what is impartial: Law is the Impartial."[2]

[1] See the opening of the *Laws*.

[2] *Politics*, 1287a–b.

Aristotle is therefore of the opinion that whether the constitution of any State is monarchic, aristocratic, democratic or any blend of these, it is essential to have a written Code of Law by which the government shall be guided, though with power to amend the Law when it proves inadequate, and to decide certain cases not covered by Law. He does not speak of " Absolute Justice " as Plato does, but he sees Law rather as an equivalent in the State to reason in the individual; he adds that the unwritten laws of custom and tradition are likely to be superior to any private person's judgement on matters which the Law cannot regulate.

The Epicureans, forming a close circle isolated from the social group though within it, were not much interested in the concept of Law. They needed no special rules, like those of the Pythagoreans, to keep order among themselves, since their order was based on Friendship. The laws of the State are useful in that they protect one to some extent from the rest of mankind; but they have no other sanction or validity, and possess interest only in so far as they are effective in preserving an order in which the philosopher can live his own life undisturbed.

The Stoics likewise were not much interested in political Law. Some of the originators of the sect adopted the attitude of the Cynics towards social usages, taking a pleasure in ignoring or defying all rules of conventional behaviour; but in general the Stoics were too much interested in universal Law, to which the good man according to them owed absolute obedience, to be greatly concerned with political Law.

Under Rome, they accommodated themselves without difficulty to the Law of the State, and even accepted public office, not troubling to resolve any inconsistencies or to

work out the relation between natural or moral Law and any particular Code.

In this respect, therefore, as in others, the Stoics and the Epicureans, in spite of their different approach, arrived at a similar line of conduct. Both turned away from the political unit, from the Law of the State and of society. But whereas the Epicureans turned inward towards the Law of their small circle, the Stoics turned outward to the Law of the universe and of mankind.

TRANSLATIONS

The translations in this book are my own unless I have stated otherwise.

For a complete translation of the remaining writings of the Pre-Socratic Philosophers, see my *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Blackwell and Harvard University, 1948), and as a commentary on these, my *Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Blackwell and Harvard University, edn. 2, 1949).

For Plato's Dialogues, the most readable translation is still that of Benjamin Jowett. For the *Republic*, A. D. Lindsay's translation in the Everyman Series is excellent.

Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* are difficult to read in translation because of their concentrated reasoning and laconic style; but H. Rackham's versions in the Loeb Series are clear, accurate and as readable as it is possible to make them.

For Epicurus, see Cyril Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains* (Oxford, 1926).

Translations of the Stoics appear in the Loeb Series and the Oxford Library of Translations. The latest translation of the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* is that of A. S. L. Farquharson (Oxford, 1944).

E. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics* (1870 and 1880), though not a translation, contains a summary of the writings of the members of these Schools, and is still the best single volume.

The classic translation of Plotinus is that of Stephen Mackenna and B. S. Page (London, 1926–30).

APPENDIX I

(to Chapters I–IV)

The Chief Philosophers of Greece,[1] in chronological order

THE MILESIAN SCHOOL: three successive generations of scientific thinkers living at Miletus on the coast of Asia Minor in the sixth century B.C. The names of the heads of the school in each generation are known:

THALES: prime[2] about 585 B.C. Not known if he wrote a book; if so, nothing survives.

ANAXIMANDER: prime about 560 B.C. Wrote a book or books; no title survives, but only two sentences and a few words.

ANAXIMENES: prime about 546 B.C. Wrote one book, in "simple and unextravagant style", of which only one sentence survives.

The Milesian School was dispersed in 494 B.C. when Miletus was captured and destroyed by the Persians.[3]

PYTHAGORAS: prime about 530 B.C. Born on Samos, island off coast of Asia Minor; migrated to Croton on south coast of Italy. Mathematician, astronomer and religious teacher. His teaching was oral only: he left no written works. Founded the Pythagorean School, dispersed in the fifth century when many of the disciples were massacred at Croton. Those who escaped settled in various cities throughout Greece and had great influence, e.g.:

[1] For details of their work, see my *Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*.
[2] In Greek chronology the "prime of life" (*acmé*) was forty years of age.
[3] See my *Greek City-States* (Macdonald, 1950), pp. 152–3.

PHILOLAUS of Tarentum, said to have written a book on Pythagoreanism.[1]

XENOPHANES: prime about 530 B.C. Born at Colophon in Asia Minor. Lived and travelled in Sicily and Italy. Was still active at the age of ninety-two. Wrote poems for recitation, dealing with religion, ethics and physical science. Over thirty extracts survive.

HERACLEITUS: prime about 500 B.C. Born and lived at Ephesus on coast of Asia Minor. Wrote one book, dealing with all knowledge, metaphysical, religious, scientific and political, in an oracular style. Over one hundred and thirty extracts survive.

PARMENIDES: prime about 475 B.C. Born and lived at Elea, Greek city-State on west coast of Italy. Wrote a metaphysical poem in three parts: Prologue, the Way of Truth, the Way of Opinion. Extracts survive. Founded Eleatic School. His chief followers were:

ZENO: prime about 450 B.C. Native of Elea, pupil of Parmenides. Wrote a book called *Attacks*, a series of logical deductions in defence of Parmenides' metaphysical theory. Extracts survive.

MELISSUS: prime about 440 B.C. Native of Samos. Defended Parmenides' theory in a treatise called *On Being*, of which extracts survive.

EMPEDOCLES: prime about 450 B.C. Of Acragas on south coast of Sicily. Physician, scientist and metaphysician. Wrote two poems in hexameters: *On Nature* (metaphysical and scientific), and *Purifications* (on Orphic religion).

ANAXAGORAS: prime about 460 B.C. Born at Clazomenae

[1] For other followers of Pythagoras see my *Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, pp. 83-8 and 204-61.

in Asia Minor. Lived at Athens under Pericles until expelled. Wrote one book of which a few extracts survive.

DEMOCRITUS: prime about 420 B.C. Born and lived at Abdêra on coast of Thrace (north Aegean). Wrote voluminously on all subjects: art, science, metaphysics, politics. Nearly three hundred extracts survive. Founded scientific school, which greatly influenced Epicurus, and through him Lucretius and Rome. His teacher was:

LEUCIPPUS of Abdêra, of whom nothing is known except that he first evolved the Atomic Theory of Matter adopted by Democritus.

THE SOPHISTS: travelling professional teachers who were active in the latter half of the fifth century B.C.; men of learning and distinction whose work had a great effect on education. They all taught rhetoric or the art of public speaking in some form, but individuals specialised in different branches of knowledge. The chief Sophists were:

PROTAGORAS of Abdêra: wrote a number of works, metaphysical and educational, one of which was called *Truth*. Only a few sentences survive, but there are paraphrases of his teaching in Plato's dialogues *Protagoras* and *Theaetêtus*.

GORGIAS of Leontini in Sicily. Wrote on metaphysics and oratory. Long extracts survive.

PRODICUS of Ceos, island in the Aegean. Wrote treatises on terminology, and set pieces of oratory. A few extracts survive, and a paraphrase in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.

HIPPIAS of Elis in the north-west Peloponnese. Wrote on various subjects, including mathematics. A few words, and a complex mathematical proposition on the squaring of the circle survive.

ANTIPHON: ("the Sophist", not the orator), probably of Athens. Wrote a book called *Truth*, of which a long extract survives; and other works.

THRASYMACHUS of Calchêdon on the Bosphorus, wrote mostly on rhetoric; he appears in Plato's *Republic*, in argument with Socrates. One long extract of his work survives.

CRITIAS of Athens, nobleman and politician. Wrote verse and prose of which extracts survive.

DAMON of Athens, musical theorist and teacher. Taught Pericles.

SOCRATES, born 469 B.C., died 399 B.C. Spent his whole life at Athens except for military service. Taught orally. Wrote nothing on philosophy. His life, character and teachings were described by Plato and Xenophon, and discussed by Aristotle; he is satirized in Aristophanes' comedy *The Clouds*. Among his lesser disciples (called "the Minor Socratics" to distinguish them from Plato) were:

ANTISTHENES of Athens, founder of the Cynic School which was the antecedent of Stoicism.

EUCLEIDES of Megara, founder of the Eristic School ("the Wranglers"), opponents of Plato.

ARISTIPPUS of Cyrene, founder of the Hedonist School which influenced Epicurus.

PLATO of Athens, born 428 B.C., died 347 B.C. Friend and disciple of Socrates. Founder of the Academic School at Athens. His works, in dialogue form with Socrates as the chief speaker, survive: these cover the whole field of knowledge, and offer solutions to the problems raised by his predecessors. His most famous dialogue, the *Republic*, attempts a theoretical construction of the perfect society. There are also a number of letters, some of which are genuine.

ARISTOTLE, born 384 B.C. at Stageira in Macedonia, died 322 B.C. Studied under Plato at Athens, 367–347 B.C. Travelled to the Troad; lived there and at Mitylene in

Lesbos. Became tutor to Alexander the Great; returned to Athens about 335 B.C. Founded the Peripatetic School. Wrote works on logic, mathematics, physics (inorganic nature), psychology, biology, metaphysics, ethics, politics, poetry (especially drama) and rhetoric. The First Book of his *Metaphysics* is the chief authority for the views of his predecessors from Thales onward, apart from the surviving fragments of their own writings.

EPICURUS, 342–270 B.C. Lived and taught at Athens. Founder of the Hedonist School of philosophy named after him. His writings are lost except for four letters and the *Ruling Principles* embodying his chief precepts. His most important work was called *On Nature*: only fragments survive.

THE STOIC SCHOOL: founded by Zeno, flourished for five centuries, from about 300 B.C. to the second century A.D., in Greece and Rome. Its chief members were:

ZENO, native of Citium in Cyprus, born about 340 B.C., died about 265 B.C. Settled in Athens and became founder of the Stoic School. Wrote numerous works which have not survived but which were incorporated in the works of later Stoics.

CLEANTHES, born at Assus in the Troad about 300 B.C., died about 220 B.C. Pupil of Zeno and second head of the Stoic School at Athens. His *Hymn to Zeus* is extant.

CHRYSIPPUS, born at Soli in Cilicia (south Asia Minor) about 280 B.C., died 207 B.C. Third head of the School at Athens. His many writings have not survived except in quotation and paraphrase.

SENECA the Younger, native of Cordova in Spain, born a few years B.C. Wrote numerous essays on ethical questions, many of which survive.

EPICTETUS, native of Hieropolis in Phrygia (Asia Minor) lived in the first and second centuries A.D. mostly in

Rome. Left no writings. His pupil Arrian composed a Handbook from his discourses, and also preserved his lectures in eight books, four of which survive.

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS, Emperor of Rome A.D. 161–180. Left a book of *Meditations*, moral precepts extracted from the works of others and reflections of his own, written in Greek.

THE NEOPLATONISTS. This School of thought was founded in Rome in the third century A.D. Its founders were:

PLOTINUS, born at Lycopolis in Egypt about A.D. 203. Wrote a work in fifty-four books, which his pupil Porphyry divided into *Enneads* or groups of nine: this recorded the subject-matter of their discussions, and other teachings.

PORPHYRY, probably of Tyre, A.D. 233–305. Pupil of Plotinus. Wrote a treatise against the Christian religion in fifteen books, destroyed by order of the Emperor Theodosius (A.D. 378–395). His surviving works include Lives of Pythagoras and of Plotinus, and other interpretative treatises.

APPENDIX II

(to Chapter V)

The Chief Lawgivers of Greece

LYCURGUS of Sparta. Date unknown. A legendary figure whose existence has been doubted, but whom the Spartans honoured as their original legislator. Said to have derived some of his laws from Crete.

ZALEUCUS of Western Locri in south Italy. Seventh century B.C.

CHARONDAS of Catanê in east Sicily. Seventh century B.C.

PHEIDON of Corinth. Date uncertain. Gave laws to his native city.

PHILOLAUS of Corinth legislated for Thebes. Date uncertain.

ANDRODAMAS of Rhegium on Straits of Messina, provided legal code for Chalcidicê in Thrace.

DRACON of Athens recorded traditional laws of Athens in 621 B.C.

SOLON of Athens rewrote the Athenian constitution and drew up new legal code in 594 B.C.

CLEISTHENES of Athens emended Solon's constitution, end of sixth century B.C.

PROTAGORAS of Abdera helped to frame legal code for Thourioi in south Italy, 444 B.C.

ECDEMUS and MEGALOPHANES of Megalopolis in Arcadia established new constitution for Cyrene soon after 246 B.C.

INDEX OF PROPER NAMES