I N T R O D U C T I O N.

The Republic of Plato is the longest of his works with the exception of the Laws, and is certainly the greatest of them. There are nearer approaches to modern metaphysics in the Philebus and in the Sophist. The Politicus or Statesman is more ideal; the form and institutions of the State are more clearly drawn out in the Laws; as works of art, the Symposium and the Protagoras are of higher excellence. But no other Dialogue of Plato has the same largeness of view and the same perfection of style; no other contains more graphic descriptions of character, or is richer in humour and imagery. Nor in any other Dialogue is the attempt made to unite the speculative and practical, or to interweave the State with philosophy. Neither must we forget that the Republic is but the third part of a still larger work which was to have included an ideal history of Athens, as well as a political and physical philosophy. Lastly, Plato may be regarded as the ‘captain or leader’ of a goodly band of followers; in him is to be found the original of Cicero’s De Republica, of St. Augustin’s City of God, of the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, and of the numerous modern writings which are framed upon the same model. The Republic of Plato is also the first treatise upon education, of which Milton and Locke, Rousseau, Jean Paul, and Goethe are the legitimate descendants. Like Dante or Bunyan, he has a revelation of another world; in the early Church he exercised a real influence on theology, and at the Revival of Literature on politics. And many of the latest thoughts of modern philosophers and statesmen, such as the unity of knowledge, the reign of law, and the equality of the sexes, have been anticipated in a dream by Plato.

The argument of the Republic is the search after Justice, the nature
THE REPUBLIC.

of which is first hinted at by Cephalus—then discussed on the basis of the old proverbial morality by Socrates and Polemarchus—then caricatured by Thrasymachus and partially explained by Socrates—reduced to an abstraction by Glaucon and Adeimantus, and having become invisible in the individual reappears at length in the ideal State which is constructed by Socrates. The State introduces the subject of education, of which the first outline is drawn after the old Hellenic model, providing only for an improved religion and morality, and more simplicity in music and gymnastic, and greater harmony of the individual and the State. But this leads to the conception of a higher state, in which ‘no man calls anything his own,’ and in which there is neither ‘marrying nor giving in marriage,’ and ‘kings are philosophers’ and ‘philosophers are kings;’ and there is another and higher education, intellectual as well as moral and religious, of science as well as art, and not of youth only but of the whole of life. Such a State soon begins to degenerate, and is hardly to be realized in this world. The old quarrel of poetry and philosophy which has been lightly touched upon in the earlier books of the Republic is then fought out to the end. Poetry is discovered to be an imitation thrice removed from the truth, and Homer, as well as the dramatic poets, having been condemned as an imitator, is sent into banishment along with them. And the idea of the State is supplemented by the revelation of a future life.

The division into books, like all similar divisions¹, is probably later than the age of Plato. The natural divisions are six in number;—first, book i. and the first half of book ii. down to p. 368, which is introductory; the first book containing a refutation of the popular and sophistical notions of justice, and concluding, like some of the earlier Dialogues, without arriving at a definite conclusion. To this is appended a restatement of the nature of justice according to common opinion, and an answer is demanded to the question—What is justice, stripped of appearances? The second division includes the remainder of the second and the whole of the third and fourth books, which are mainly occupied with the construction of the first State and the first education. The third division consists of the fifth, sixth, and seventh books, in which philosophy rather than justice is the subject of enquiry, and the second State is constructed on principles of communism and ruled by

INTRODUCTION.

philosophers, and the contemplation of the idea of good takes the place of the social and political virtues. In the eighth and ninth books the perversions of States and the individuals which correspond to them are reviewed in succession; and the nature of pleasure and the principle of tyranny are further analyzed in the individual character. The tenth book is the conclusion of the whole, in which the relations of philosophy to poetry are finally determined, and the happiness of the citizens in this life, which has now been assured, is crowned by the vision of another.

Or a more general division into two parts may be adopted; the first (books i—iv) containing the description of a state framed generally in accordance with Hellenic notions of religion and morality, while in the second (v—x) the Hellenic state is transformed into an ideal kingdom of philosophy, of which all other governments are the perversions. These two points of view are really opposed, and the opposition is only veiled by the genius of Plato. The Republic, like the Phaedrus (see vol. i. p. 551), is an imperfect whole; the higher light of philosophy breaks through the regularity of the Hellenic temple, which at last fades away into the heavens (592 B). Whether this imperfection of structure arises from an enlargement of the plan, or, perhaps, from the composition of the work at different times, is one of those questions, like the similar question about the Iliad and Odyssey, which are worth asking, but which cannot have a distinct answer. In the age of Plato there was no regular mode of publication, and an author would have the less scruple in altering or adding to a work which was known only to a few of his friends. There is no absurdity in supposing that he may have laid his labours aside for a time, or turned from one work to another; and such interruptions would be more likely to occur in the case of a long than of a short writing. In all attempts to determine the chronological order of the Platonic writings on internal evidence, this uncertainty about any single work being composed at one time is a disturbing element, which must be admitted to affect longer works, such as the Republic and the Laws, more than shorter ones. But, on the other hand, the seeming discrepancies of the Republic may only arise out of the discordant elements which the philosopher has attempted to unite in a single whole, perhaps without being himself able to recognize the inconsistency which is obvious to us. For there is a criticism of after ages which few great writers have ever been able to anticipate for themselves. And the supposition that the Republic was written at one
time, and without interruption, is confirmed by numerous references from one part of the work to another.

The second title, 'Concerning Justice,' is not the one by which the Republic is generally quoted in antiquity, and may therefore be assumed to be of later date. Morgenstern and others have asked whether the definition of justice, which is the professed aim, or the construction of the State, is the principal argument of the work. The answer is that the two blend in one, and are two faces of the same truth; for justice is the order of the State, and the State is the visible embodiment of justice under the conditions of human society. The one is the soul and the other is the body, and the Greek ideal of the State, as of the individual, is a fair mind in a fair body. In Hegelian language the State is the reality of which justice is the idea. Or, as in Christian theology, the kingdom of God is within, and yet is imagined also as an external kingdom. And when the constitution of the State is completed, the conception of justice is not dismissed, but reappears under the same or different names throughout the work, both as the inner law of the individual soul, and finally as the principle of rewards and punishments in another life. The virtues are based on justice of which common honesty in buying and selling is the shadow, and justice is based on the idea of good, which is the harmony of the world, and is reflected both in the institutions of states and in the motions of the heavenly bodies (cp. Tim. 47).

Neither is it necessary to discuss at length another question which has been raised by Boeckh, respecting the imaginary date at which the conversation was held (the year 411 B.C. which is proposed by him will do as well as any other); for a writer of fiction, and especially a writer who, like Plato, is notoriously careless of chronology, only aims at general probability. Whether all the persons mentioned in the Republic could ever have met at any one time is not a difficulty which would have occurred to an Athenian reading the work forty years later, or to Plato himself at the time of writing (any more than to Shakespeare in a parallel case); and need not greatly trouble us now. Yet this may be also one of those questions which are worth asking, because the investigation shows that we cannot argue historically from the dates in Plato, and have therefore no need to waste time in inventing far-fetched reconciliations of them (such, for example, as the conjecture that
INTRODUCTION.

Glaucon and Adeimantus are not the brothers but the uncles of Plato)², in order to avoid chronological difficulties.

The principal characters in the Republic are Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus. Cephalus appears in the introduction only, Polemarchus drops at the end of the first argument, and Thrasymachus is reduced to silence at the close of the first book. The main discussion is carried on by Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus. Among the audience are Lysias the orator and Euthydemos the sons of Cephalus and brothers of Polemarchus, an unknown Charmantides—these are mute auditors; also there is Cleitophon, who once interrupts (340 A), and there, as in the Dialogue which bears his name, appears as the friend and ally of Thrasymachus.

Cephalus, the father of Polemarchus and his two brothers, is the patriarch of the house who has been appropriately engaged in offering a sacrifice. He is the pattern of an old man who has almost done with life, and is at peace with himself and with all mankind. He seems to linger around the memory of the past, and is not without consolation in the future. He is eager that Socrates should come to visit him, fond of the poetry of the last generation, happy in the consciousness of a well-spent life, glad at having escaped from the tyranny of youthful lusts. His love of conversation, his indifference to money, even his prolixity and repetition, are interesting traits of character. The respectful attention shown to him by Socrates, who must however be asking questions of him as of all men, is also remarkable. The moderation with which old age is pictured by him as a very tolerable portion of existence is characteristic, not only of him, but of Greek feeling generally, and contrasts with the exaggeration of Cicero in his work on old age. The evening of life is described by Plato in the most expressive manner, yet with the fewest possible touches. As Cicero remarks, the aged Cephalus would have been out of place in the discussion which follows, and which he could neither have understood nor taken part in without a violation of dramatic propriety (cp. Melesias in the Laches).

His ‘son and heir’ Polemarchus has the frankness and impetuousness of youth; he is for detaining Socrates by force in the opening scene, and will not ‘let him off’ (449 B) on the subject of women and children. Like Cephalus, he is limited in his point of view, and represents the

² Stallbaum.
proverbial stage of morality which has rules of life rather than principles; and he quotes Simonides as his father had quoted Pindar. But after appealing to this authority he has no more to say; the inferences which he draws are only elicited from him by the dialectic of Socrates. He has not yet experienced the influence of the Sophists like Glaucon and Adeimantus, nor is he sensible of the necessity of refuting them; he belongs, in short, to the pre-Socratic age. He is bewildered by Socrates to such a degree that he does not know what he is saying. From his brother Lysias (contra Eratos, p. 121) we learn that he fell a victim to the thirty tyrants, but no allusion is made to his fate, nor to the circumstance that Cephalus and his family were of Syracusan origin, and had migrated to Athens.

The ‘Chalcedonian giant,’ Thrasymachus, of whom we have already heard in the Phaedrus (p. 267), is the personification of the Sophists according to Plato’s conception of them, in some of their worst characteristics. He is vain and blustering, refusing to discourse unless he is paid, fond of making an oration, and hoping in that way to escape the inevitable Socrates; but a mere child in argument, and unable to foresee that the next ‘move’ (to use a Platonic expression) will ‘shut him up’ (487 B). He has reached the stage of framing general notions, and in this respect may be regarded as in advance of Cephalus and Polemarchus. But he is incapable of defending them in a discussion, and vainly tries to cover his confusion with banter and insolence. He further makes an irrelevant appeal to the experience of daily life. Whether such doctrines as are attributed to him by Plato were really held either by him or by any other Sophist is uncertain—in the eagerness for generalization such fundamental errors might easily grow up, and are certainly put into the mouths of speakers in Thucydides; but we are concerned at present with Plato’s description of him, and not with the historical reality. The inequality of the contest adds greatly to the humour of the scene. He is utterly helpless in the hands of Socrates, who knows how to touch all the springs of vanity and weakness in him. His determination to cram down their throats, or put ‘bodily into their souls’ his own words, elicits a cry of horror from Socrates. The state of his temper is quite as worthy of remark as the process of the argument. Nothing is more amusing than his complete submission when he has been once thoroughly beaten. At first he seems to carry on the discussion with reluctance, but soon with ap-
INTRODUCTION.

parent good-will, and he even testifies his interest at a later stage by one or two occasional remarks (v. 450 A, B). When attacked by Glaucon (in book vi. 498 C, D) he is humorously protected by Socrates ‘as one who has never been his enemy and is now his friend.’

When Thrasymachus has been silenced, the two principal respondents, Glaucon and Adeimantus, appear on the scene; here as in Greek tragedy (cp. Introd. to Phaedo, vol. i.) three actors are introduced. At first sight the two sons of Arison may seem to wear a family likeness, like the two friends Simmias and Cebes in the Phaedo. But on a nearer examination of them the similarity vanishes, and they are seen to be distinct characters. Glaucon is the impetuous youth who can ‘just never have enough of fighting’ (cp. the character of him in Xen. Mem. iii. 6); the man of pleasure who is acquainted with the mysteries of love (v. 474 D); the ‘juvenis qui gaudet canibus,’ and who improves the breed of animals (v. 459 A); the lover of art and music (iii. 398 D, E) who has all the experiences of youthful life. He is full of quickness and penetration, piercing easily below the clumsy platitudes of Thrasymachus to the real difficulty; he turns out to the light the seamy side of human life, and yet does not lose faith in the just and true. It is Glaucon who seizes what may be termed the ludicrous relation of the philosopher or the state of philosophers to the world, to whom a state of simplicity is ‘a city of pigs,’ who is always prepared with a jest (iii. 398 C, vi. 509 C) when the argument offers him an opportunity, and is ever ready to second the humour of Socrates and to appreciate the ridiculous, whether in the connoisseurs of music (vii. 531 A), or in the lovers of theatricals (v. 475 D), or in the fantastic behaviour of the citizens of democracy (viii. 557 foll.). His weaknesses are several times alluded to by Socrates (iii. 402 E), who, however, will not allow him to be attacked by his brother Adeimantus (viii. 548 D, E). He is a soldier, and, like Adeimantus, has been distinguished at the battle of Megara (ii. 368 A, anno 456?). The character of Adeimantus is deeper and graver, and the profounder objections are commonly put into his mouth. Glaucon is more demonstrative, and generally opens the game; Adeimantus pursues the argument further. Glaucon has more of the liveliness and quick sympathy of youth; Adeimantus has the maturer judgment of a grown-up man of the world. In the second book, when Glaucon insists that justice and injustice shall be considered without regard to
their consequences, Adeimantus remarks that they are regarded by mankind in general only for the sake of their consequences. In a similar vein of reflection Adeimantus urges at the beginning of the fourth book that Socrates fails in making his citizens happy, and is answered that happiness is not the direct aim, but the indirect consequence of the good government of a State. It is Adeimantus again who volunteers the criticism of common sense on the Socratic method of argument, and who refuses to let Socrates pass lightly over the question of women and children. It is Adeimantus who is the respondent in the more argumentative, as Glaucon in the lighter and more imaginative portions of the Dialogue. For example, throughout the greater part of the sixth book, the causes of the corruption of philosophy, and the conception of the idea of good are discussed with Adeimantus. At the end of the book, Glaucon resums his place of principal respondent; but he has a difficulty in apprehending the higher education of Socrates, and makes some false hits in the course of the discussion (526 D, 527 D).

Thus in a succession of characters Plato represents the successive stages of morality, beginning with the Athenian gentleman of the olden time, who is followed by the practical man of that day regulating his life by proverbs and saws; to him succeeds the wild generalization of the Sophists, and lastly come the young disciples of the great teacher, who know the sophistical arguments but will not be convinced by them, and desire to go deeper into the nature of things.

The character of Socrates in the Republic is not wholly consistent. In the first book we appear to have more of the real Socrates, such as he is depicted in the earliest Dialogues of Plato and in the Apology. He is ironical, provoking, questioning, the old enemy of the Sophists, ready to put on the mask of Silenus as well as to argue seriously. But in the sixth book his enmity towards the Sophists abates; he acknowledges that they are the representatives rather than the corruptors of the world (vi. 492 A). He also becomes more dogmatic and constructive, passing beyond the range either of the political or the speculative ideas of the real Socrates. In one passage (vi. 506 C) Plato himself seems to intimate that the time had now come for Socrates, who had passed his whole life in philosophy, to give his own opinion, and not to be always repeating the notions of other men. There is no evidence that either the idea of good or the conception of a perfect state were
INTRODUCTION.

comprehended in the Socratic teaching, though he certainly dwelt on the nature of the universal and of final causes (cp. Xen. Mem. i. 4; Phaed. 97); and a deep thinker like him, in his thirty or forty years of public teaching, could hardly have failed to touch on the nature of family relations, for which there is also some positive evidence in the Memorabilia (Mem. i. 2, 51 foll.). The Socratic method is nominally retained; and every inference is either put into the mouth of the respondent or represented as the common discovery of him and Socrates. But any one can see that this is a mere form, the affectation of which grows wearisome as the work advances. The nature of the process is truly characterized by Glaucion, when he describes himself as a companion who is not good for much in an investigation, but can see what he is shown (iv. 432 C), and may, perhaps, give the answer to a question more aptly than another (v. 474 A).

Neither can we be absolutely certain that Socrates himself taught the immortality of the soul, which is unknown to his disciple Glaucion in the Republic (book x. 608 D); nor is there any reason to suppose that he used myths or revelations of another world as a vehicle of instruction, or that he would have banished poetry or have denounced the Greek mythology. His favourite oath is retained, and a slight mention is made of the daemonion, or internal sign, which is alluded to by Socrates as a phenomenon peculiar to himself (book vi. 496 C). A real element of Socratic teaching, which is more prominent in the Republic than in any of the other Dialogues of Plato, is the use of example and illustration (τὰ φορμικὰ αὐτῶν προσφέρειτ, iv. 442 E): ‘Let us apply the test of common instances.’ ‘You,’ says Adeimantus, ironically, in the sixth book, ‘are so unaccustomed to speak in images.’ And this use of examples or images, though truly Socratic in origin, is enlarged by the genius of Plato into the form of an allegory or parable, which embodies in the concrete what has been already described, or is about to be described, in the abstract. Thus the figure of the cave in book vii. is a recapitulation of the divisions of knowledge in book vi. The composite animal in book ix. is an allegory of the parts of the soul. The captain and the ship and the true pilot in book vi. are a figure of the relation of philosophers to the State which is about to be described.

Plato is most true to the character of his master when he describes him as ‘not of this world.’ And with this the paradox of the ideal state and the other paradoxes of the Republic, though they cannot be shown
THE REPUBLIC

to have been speculations of Socrates, are in harmony. He is not any nearer the common opinions of mankind when he is constructing than when he is destroying. But it must also be observed that this opposition to the world in the latter part of the work turns to a sort of ironical pity or love. The world is incapable of philosophy, and is therefore at enmity with the philosopher; but this arises from an unavoidable necessity (vi. 494 foll.): for they have never seen him as he truly is in his own proper image; they are only acquainted with artificial systems in which there is no native force of truth—words which admit of another application. They do not know how to measure, and therefore are angry with those who take their measure. They are to be pitied or laughed at, not to be quarrelled with; they mean well with their nostrums, but are unconscious that they are cutting off a Hydra’s head (iv. 426 D, E). This moderation towards those who are in error is one of the most characteristic features of Socrates in the Republic. In all the different representations of Socrates, whether of Xenophon or Plato, and amid the differences of the earlier or later Dialogues, he always retains the character of the unwearied and disinterested seeker after truth, without which he would have ceased to be Socrates.

Leaving the characters we may now analyze the contents of the Republic, and then proceed to consider, (1) The general aspects of this Hellenic ideal of the State. (2) The modern lights in which the thoughts of Plato may be read.

BOOK I. The Republic opens with a truly Greek scene—a festival in honour of the goddess Bendis which is held at the Piraeus; to this is added the promise of an equestrian torch-race in the evening. The whole work is supposed to be recited by Socrates on the day after the festival to a small party, consisting of Critias, Timaeus, Hermocrates, and another; this we learn from the first words of the Timaeus.

When the rhetorical advantage of reciting the Dialogue has been gained, the attention is not distracted by any reference to the audience; nor is the reader further reminded of the extraordinary length of the narrative. The incident out of which the conversation had arisen on the preceding day is described as follows:—Socrates and his companion Glaucon are just leaving the festival when they are detained by a message from Polemarchus, who soon arrives accompanied by Adeimantus, the brother of Glaucón, and with playful violence compels them to remain,