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BY

HENRY STURT, M.A.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

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P R E F A C E

THE following essay makes a return to the Greek tradition in its method of studying ethics, the tradition of considering ethical questions in very close connection with politics. The business of the moralist is to explain the nature of virtue and the conditions of the virtuous life. Now the social and political system within which a man lives has an immense influence upon him morally. Plato recognized that. The main lesson of the *Republic* is that a good personal life is possible only in a good state. We cannot say what a good life is unless we have made up our minds what sort of state is good. Englishmen, with their traditional individualism, have tended to overlook this fact. The present essay has been written, quite frankly, with certain political pre-judgments.

The last essay of a similar character by a British thinker is Mill's *Utilitarianism*. There

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PREFACE

too behind arguments on moral questions lie convictions as to the direction which political and social reform ought to take. Mill's principles were those of early-Victorian liberalism; very useful in their day, but not adequate to the problems which confront us now.

The ethical and psychological analyses of the following pages will probably be questioned; they deal with matters about which there have always been great differences of opinion. But, even if his arguments were refuted in detail, this would not shake the writer's faith in his general view that what is right for individuals in their private conduct cannot be settled without reference to what is right for them in their wider relations with their fellow-men.

H. S.

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