

THE
COLLECTED DIALOGUES OF
PLATO

INCLUDING THE LETTERS

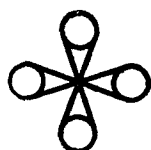
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With Introduction and Prefatory Notes



BOLLINGEN SERIES LXXI

PANTHEON BOOKS

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B O O K X

And truly, I said, many other considerations assure me that we were 595
entirely right in our organization of the state, and especially, I think,
in the matter of poetry.

What about it? he said.

In refusing to admit at all so much of it as is imitative, for that it is certainly not to be received is, I think, still more plainly apparent
b now that we have distinguished the several parts of the soul.

What do you mean?

Why, between ourselves—for you will not betray me to the tragic poets and all other imitators—that kind of art seems to be a corruption of the mind of all listeners who do not possess as an antidote a knowledge of its real nature.

What is your idea in saying this? he said.

I must speak out, I said, though a certain love and reverence for Homer that has possessed me from a boy would stay me from speak-
c ing. For he appears to have been the first teacher and beginner of all these beauties of tragedy. Yet all the same we must not honor a man above truth, but, as I say, speak our minds.

By all means, he said.

Listen, then, or rather, answer my question.

Ask it, he said.

Could you tell me in general what imitation is? For neither do I myself quite apprehend what it would be at.

It is likely, then, he said, that *I* should apprehend!

596 It would be nothing strange, said I, since it often happens that the dimmer vision sees things in advance of the keener.

That is so, he said, but in your presence I could not even be eager to try to state anything that appears to me, but do you yourself consider it.

Shall we, then, start the inquiry at this point by our customary procedure? We are in the habit, I take it, of positing a single idea or form in the case of the various multiplicities to which we give the same name. Do you not understand?

I do.

In the present case, then, let us take any multiplicity you please;
b for example, there are many couches and tables.

Of course.

But these utensils imply, I suppose, only two ideas or forms, one of a couch and one of a table.

Yes.

And are we not also in the habit of saying that the craftsman who produces either of them fixes his eyes on the idea or form, and so makes in the one case the couches and in the other the tables that we use, and similarly of other things? For surely no craftsman makes the idea itself. How could he?

By no means.

c But now consider what name you would give to this craftsman.
What one?

Him who makes all the things that all handicraftsmen severally produce.

A truly clever and wondrous man you tell of.

Ah, but wait, and you will say so indeed, for this same handicraftsman is not only able to make all implements, but he produces all plants and animals, including himself, and thereto earth and heaven and the gods and all things in heaven and in Hades under the earth.

A most marvelous Sophist, he said. d

Are you incredulous? said I. Tell me, do you deny altogether the possibility of such a craftsman, or do you admit that in a sense there could be such a creator of all these things, and in another sense not? Or do you not perceive that you yourself would be able to make all these things in a way?

And in what way, I ask you, he said.

There is no difficulty, said I, but it is something that the craftsman can make everywhere and quickly. You could do it most quickly if you should choose to take a mirror and carry it about everywhere. You will speedily produce the sun and all the things in the sky, and speedily the earth and yourself and the other animals and implements and plants and all the objects of which we just now spoke. e

Yes, he said, the appearance of them, but not the reality and the truth.

Excellent, said I, and you come to the aid of the argument opportunely. For I take it that the painter too belongs to this class of producers, does he not?

Of course.

But you will say, I suppose, that his creations are not real and true. And yet, after a fashion, the painter too makes a couch, does he not?

Yes, he said, the appearance of one, he too.

What of the cabinetmaker? Were you not just now saying that he does not make the idea or form which we say is the real couch, the couch in itself, but only some particular couch? 597

Yes, I was.

Then if he does not make that which really is, he could not be said to make real being but something that resembles real being but is not that. But if anyone should say that being in the complete sense belongs to the work of the cabinetmaker or to that of any other handicraftsman, it seems that he would say what is not true.

That would be the view, he said, of those who are versed in this kind of reasoning.

We must not be surprised, then, if this too is only a dim adumbration in comparison with reality. b

No, we must not.

Shall we, then, use these very examples in our quest for the true nature of this imitator?

If you please, he said.

We get, then, these three couches, one, that in nature, which, I take it, we would say that God produces, or who else?

No one, I think.

And then there was one which the carpenter made.

Yes, he said.

And one which the painter. Is not that so?

So be it.

The painter, then, the cabinetmaker, and God, there are these three presiding over three kinds of couches.

Yes, three.

- c Now God, whether because he so willed or because some compulsion was laid upon him not to make more than one couch in nature, so wrought and created one only, the couch which really and in itself is. But two or more such were never created by God and never will come into being.

How so? he said.

Because, said I, if he should make only two, there would again appear one of which they both would possess the form or idea, and that would be the couch that really is in and of itself, and not the other two.

Right, he said.

- d God, then, I take it, knowing this and wishing to be the real author of the couch that has real being and not of some particular couch, nor yet a particular cabinetmaker, produced it in nature unique.

So it seems.

Shall we, then, call him its true and natural begetter, or something of the kind?

That would certainly be right, he said, since it is by and in nature that he has made this and all other things.

And what of the carpenter? Shall we not call him the creator of a couch?

Yes.

Shall we also say that the painter is the creator and maker of that sort of thing?

By no means.

What will you say he is in relation to the couch.

- e This, said he, seems to me the most reasonable designation for him, that he is the imitator of the thing which those others produce.

Very good, said I. The producer of the product three removes from nature you call the imitator?

By all means, he said.

This, then, will apply to the maker of tragedies also, if he is an

imitator and is in his nature three removes from the king and the truth, as are all other imitators.

It would seem so.

We are in agreement, then, about the imitator. But tell me now this about the painter. Do you think that what he tries to imitate is in each case that thing itself in nature or the works of the craftsmen? 598

The works of the craftsmen, he said.

Is it the reality of them or the appearance? Define that further point.

What do you mean? he said.

This. Does a couch differ from itself according as you view it from the side or the front or in any other way? Or does it differ not at all in fact though it appears different, and so of other things?

That is the way of it, he said. It appears other but differs not at all. b

Consider, then, this very point. To which is painting directed in every case, to the imitation of reality as it is or of appearance as it appears? Is it an imitation of a phantasm or of the truth?

Of a phantasm, he said.

Then the mimetic art is far removed from truth, and this, it seems, is the reason why it can produce everything, because it touches or lays hold of only a small part of the object and that a phantom, as, for example, a painter, we say, will paint us a cobbler, a carpenter, and other craftsmen, though he himself has no expertness in any of these arts, but nevertheless if he were a good painter, by exhibiting at a distance his picture of a carpenter he would deceive children and foolish men, and make them believe it to be a real carpenter. c

Why not?

But for all that, my friend, this, I take it, is what we ought to bear in mind in all such cases. When anyone reports to us of someone, that he has met a man who knows all the crafts and everything else that men severally know, and that there is nothing that he does not know more exactly than anybody else, our tacit rejoinder must be that he is a simple fellow, who apparently has met some magician or sleight-of-hand man and imitator and has been deceived by him into the belief that he is all-wise, because of his own inability to put to the proof and distinguish knowledge, ignorance, and imitation. d

Most true, he said.

Then, said I, have we not next to scrutinize tragedy and its leader Homer, since some people tell us that these poets know all the arts and all things human pertaining to virtue and vice, and all things divine? For the good poet, if he is to poetize things rightly, must, they argue, create with knowledge or else be unable to create. So we must consider whether these critics have not fallen in with such imitators and been deceived by them, so that looking upon their works they 599 e

stripped bare of their musical coloring and taken by themselves, I think you know what sort of a showing these sayings of the poets make. For you, I believe, have observed them.

I have, he said.

Do they not, said I, resemble the faces of adolescents, young but not really beautiful, when the bloom of youth abandons them?

By all means, he said.

c Come, then, said I, consider this point. The creator of the phantom, the imitator, we say, knows nothing of the reality but only the appearance. Is not that so?

Yes.

Let us not, then, leave it half said but consider it fully.

Speak on, he said.

The painter, we say, will paint both reins and a bit.

Yes.

But the maker will be the cobbler and the smith.

Certainly.

Does the painter, then, know the proper quality of reins and bit? Or does not even the maker, the cobbler, and the smith know that, but only the man who understands the use of these things, the horseman?

Most true.

And shall we not say that the same holds true of everything?

d What do you mean?

That there are some three arts concerned with everything, the user's art, the maker's, and the imitator's.

Yes.

Now do not the excellence, the beauty, the rightness of every implement, living thing, and action refer solely to the use for which each is made or by nature adapted?

That is so.

e It quite necessarily follows, then, that the user of anything is the one who knows most of it by experience, and that he reports to the maker the good or bad effects in use of the thing he uses. As, for example, the flute player reports to the flute maker which flutes respond and serve rightly in flute playing, and will order the kind that must be made, and the other will obey and serve him.

Of course.

The one, then, possessing knowledge, reports about the goodness or the badness of the flutes, and the other, believing, will make them.

Yes.

602 Then in respect of the same implement the maker will have right belief about its excellence and defects from association with the man who knows and being compelled to listen to him, but the user will have true knowledge.

Certainly.

And will the imitator from experience or use have knowledge

whether the things he portrays are or are not beautiful and right, or will he, from compulsory association with the man who knows and taking orders from him for the right making of them, have right opinion?

Neither.

Then the imitator will neither know nor opine rightly concerning the beauty or the badness of his imitations.

It seems not.

Most charming, then, would be the state of mind of the poetical imitator in respect of true wisdom about his creations.

Not at all.

Yet still he will nonetheless imitate, though in every case he does ^b not know in what way the thing is bad or good. But, as it seems, the thing he will imitate will be the thing that appears beautiful to the ignorant multitude.

Why, what else?

On this, then, as it seems, we are fairly agreed, that the imitator knows nothing worth mentioning of the things he imitates, but that imitation is a form of play, not to be taken seriously, and that those who attempt tragic poetry, whether in iambics or heroic verse, are all altogether imitators.

By all means.

In heaven's name, then, this business of imitation is concerned ^c with the third remove from truth, is it not?

Yes.

And now again, to what element in man is its function and potency related?

Of what are you speaking?

Of this. The same magnitude, I presume, viewed from near and from far does not appear equal.

Why, no.

And the same things appear bent and straight to those who view them in water and out, or concave and convex, owing to similar errors of vision about colors, and there is obviously every confusion of this ^d sort in our souls. And so scene painting in its exploitation of this weakness of our nature falls nothing short of witchcraft, and so do jugglery and many other such contrivances.

True.

And have not measuring and numbering and weighing proved to be most gracious aids to prevent the domination in our soul of the apparently greater or less or more or heavier, and to give the control to that which has reckoned and numbered or even weighed?

Certainly. ^e

But this surely would be the function of the part of the soul that reasons and calculates.

Why, yes, of that.

And often when this has measured and declares that certain things are larger or that some are smaller than the others or equal, there is at the same time an appearance of the contrary.

Yes.

And did we not say that it is impossible for the same thing at one time to hold contradictory opinions about the same thing?

And we were right in affirming that.

603 The part of the soul, then, that opines in contradiction of measurement could not be the same with that which conforms to it.

Why, no.

But, further, that which puts its trust in measurement and reckoning must be the best part of the soul.

Surely.

Then that which opposes it must belong to the inferior elements of the soul.

Necessarily.

b This, then, was what I wished to have agreed upon when I said that poetry, and in general the mimetic art, produces a product that is far removed from truth in the accomplishment of its task, and associates with the part in us that is remote from intelligence, and is its companion and friend for no sound and true purpose.

By all means, said he.

Mimetic art, then, is an inferior thing cohabiting with an inferior and engendering inferior offspring.

It seems so.

Does that, said I, hold only for vision or does it apply also to hearing and to what we call poetry?

Presumably, he said, to that also.

c Let us not, then, trust solely to the plausible analogy from painting, but let us approach in turn that part of the mind to which mimetic poetry appeals and see whether it is the inferior or the nobly serious part.

So we must.

Let us, then, put the question thus. Mimetic poetry, we say, imitates human beings acting under compulsion or voluntarily, and as a result of their actions supposing themselves to have fared well or ill and in all this feeling either grief or joy. Did we find anything else but this?

Nothing.

d Is a man, then, in all this of one mind with himself, or just as in the domain of sight there was faction and strife and he held within himself contrary opinions at the same time about the same things, so also in our actions there is division and strife of the man with himself? But I recall that there is no need now of our seeking agreement on this point, for in our former discussion we were sufficiently agreed

that our soul at any one moment teems with countless such self-contradictions.

Rightly, he said.

Yes, rightly, said I, but what we then omitted must now, I think, be set forth.

What is that? he said.

When a good and reasonable man, said I, experiences such a stroke of fortune as the loss of a son or anything else that he holds most dear, we said, I believe, then too, that he will bear it more easily than the other sort.

Assuredly.

But now let us consider this. Will he feel no pain, or, since that is impossible, shall we say that he will in some sort be moderate in his grief?

That, he said, is rather the truth.

Tell me now this about him. Do you think he will be more likely 604 to resist and fight against his grief when he is observed by his equals or when he is in solitude alone by himself?

He will be much more restrained, he said, when he is on view.

But when left alone, I fancy, he will permit himself many utterances which, if heard by another, would put him to shame, and will do many things which he would not consent to have another see him doing.

So it is, he said.

Now is it not reason and law that exhorts him to resist, while that which urges him to give way to his grief is the bare feeling itself? b

True.

And where there are two opposite impulses in a man at the same time about the same thing we say that there must needs be two things in him.

Of course.

And is not the one prepared to follow the guidance of the law as the law leads and directs?

How so?

The law, I suppose, declares that it is best to keep quiet as far as possible in calamity and not to chafe and repine, because we cannot know what is really good and evil in such things and it advantages us nothing to take them hard, and nothing in mortal life is worthy of c great concern, and our grieving checks the very thing we need to come to our aid as quickly as possible in such case.

What thing, he said, do you mean?

To deliberate, I said, about what has happened to us, and, as it were in the fall of the dice, to determine the movements of our affairs with reference to the numbers that turn up, in the way that reason indicates would be the best, and, instead of stumbling like children,

d clapping one's hands to the stricken spot and wasting the time in wailing, ever to accustom the soul to devote itself at once to the curing of the hurt and the raising up of what has fallen, banishing threnody by therapy.

That certainly, he said, would be the best way to face misfortune and deal with it.

Then, we say, the best part of us is willing to conform to these precepts of reason.

Obviously.

And shall we not say that the part of us that leads us to dwell in memory on our suffering and impels us to lamentation, and cannot get enough of that sort of thing, is the irrational and idle part of us, the associate of cowardice?

Yes, we will say that.

e And does not the fretful part of us present many and varied occasions for imitation, while the intelligent and temperate disposition, always remaining approximately the same, is neither easy to imitate nor to be understood when imitated, especially by a nondescript mob assembled in the theater? For the representation imitates a type that is alien to them.

By all means.

605 And is it not obvious that the nature of the mimetic poet is not related to this better part of the soul and his cunning is not framed to please it, if he is to win favor with the multitude, but is devoted to the fretful and complicated type of character because it is easy to imitate?

It is obvious.

This consideration, then, makes it right for us to proceed to lay hold of him and set him down as the counterpart of the painter, for he resembles him in that his creations are inferior in respect of reality, b and the fact that his appeal is to the inferior part of the soul and not to the best part is another point of resemblance. And so we may at last say that we should be justified in not admitting him into a well-ordered state, because he stimulates and fosters this element in the soul, and by strengthening it tends to destroy the rational part, just as when in a state one puts bad men in power and turns the city over to them and ruins the better sort. Precisely in the same manner we shall say that the mimetic poet sets up in each individual soul a vicious constitution by fashioning phantoms far removed from reality, and by currying favor with the senseless element that cannot distinguish the c greater from the less, but calls the same thing now one, now the other.

By all means.

But we have not yet brought our chief accusation against it. Its power to corrupt, with rare exceptions, even the better sort is surely the chief cause for alarm.

How could it be otherwise, if it really does that?

Listen and reflect. I think you know that the very best of us, when we hear Homer or some other of the makers of tragedy imitating one of the heroes who is in grief, and is delivering a long tirade in his lamentations or chanting and beating his breast, feel pleasure, and abandon ourselves and accompany the representation with sympathy and eagerness, and we praise as an excellent poet the one who most strongly affects us in this way. d

I do know it, of course.

But when in our own lives some affliction comes to us, you are also aware that we plume ourselves upon the opposite, on our ability to remain calm and endure, in the belief that this is the conduct of a man, and what we were praising in the theater that of a woman. e

I do note that.

Do you think, then, said I, that this praise is rightfully bestowed when, contemplating a character that we would not accept but would be ashamed of in ourselves, we do not abominate it but take pleasure and approve?

No, by Zeus, he said, it does not seem reasonable.

Oh yes, said I, if you would consider it in this way. 606

In what way?

If you would reflect that the part of the soul that in the former case, in our own misfortunes, was forcibly restrained, and that has hungered for tears and a good cry and satisfaction, because it is its nature to desire these things, is the element in us that the poets satisfy and delight, and that the best element in our nature, since it has never been properly educated by reason or even by habit, then relaxes its guard over the plaintive part, inasmuch as this is contemplating the woes of others and it is no shame to it to praise and pity another who, claiming to be a good man, abandons himself to excess in his grief, but it thinks this vicarious pleasure is so much clear gain, and would not consent to forfeit it by disdaining the poem altogether. That is, I think, because few are capable of reflecting that what we enjoy in others will inevitably react upon ourselves. For after feeding fat the emotion of pity there, it is not easy to restrain it in our own sufferings. b

Most true, he said. c

Does not the same principle apply to the laughable, namely, that if in comic representations, or for that matter in private talk, you take intense pleasure in buffooneries that you would blush to practice yourself, and do not detest them as base, you are doing the same thing as in the case of the pathetic? For here again what your reason, for fear of the reputation of buffoonery, restrained in yourself when it fain would play the clown, you release in turn, and so, fostering its youthful impudence, let yourself go so far that often ere you are aware you become yourself a comedian in private.

d Yes, indeed, he said.

And so in regard to the emotions of sex and anger, and all the appetites and pains and pleasures of the soul which we say accompany all our actions, the effect of poetic imitation is the same. For it waters and fosters these feelings when what we ought to do is to dry them up, and it establishes them as our rulers when they ought to be ruled, to the end that we may be better and happier men instead of worse and more miserable.

I cannot deny it, said he.

e Then, Glaucon, said I, when you meet encomiasts of Homer who tell us that this poet has been the educator of Hellas, and that for the conduct and refinement of human life he is worthy of our study and devotion, and that we should order our entire lives by the guidance of
607 this poet, we must love and salute them as doing the best they can, and concede to them that Homer is the most poetic of poets and the first of tragedians, but we must know the truth, that we can admit no poetry into our city save only hymns to the gods and the praises of good men. For if you grant admission to the honeyed Muse in lyric or epic, pleasure and pain will be lords of your city instead of law and that which shall from time to time have approved itself to the general reason as the best.

Most true, he said.

b Let us, then, conclude our return to the topic of poetry and our apology, and affirm that we really had good grounds then for dismissing her from our city, since such was her character. For reason constrained us. And let us further say to her, lest she condemn us for harshness and rusticity, that there is from of old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry. For such expressions as 'the yelping hound barking at her master and mighty in the idle babble of fools,' and 'the mob that masters those who are too wise for their own good,' and the
c subtle thinkers who reason that after all they are poor, and countless others are tokens of this ancient enmity. But nevertheless let it be declared that, if the mimetic and dulcet poetry can show any reason for her existence in a well-governed state, we would gladly admit her, since we ourselves are very conscious of her spell. But all the same it would be impious to betray what we believe to be the truth. Is not that so, friend? Do not you yourself feel her magic and especially when
d Homer is her interpreter?

Greatly.

Then may she not justly return from this exile after she has pleaded her defense, whether in lyric or other measure?

By all means.

And we would allow her advocates who are not poets but lovers of poetry to plead her cause in prose without meter, and show that she is not only delightful but beneficial to orderly government and all the life of man. And we shall listen benevolently, for it will be clear

gain for us if it can be shown that she bestows not only pleasure but e benefit.

How could we help being the gainers? said he.

But if not, my friend, even as men who have fallen in love, if they think that the love is not good for them, hard though it be, nevertheless refrain, so we, owing to the love of this kind of poetry inbred in us by our education in these fine polities of ours, will gladly have the best possible case made out for her goodness and truth, but so long as she 608 is unable to make good her defense we shall chant over to ourselves as we listen the reasons that we have given as a countercharm to her spell, to preserve us from slipping back into the childish loves of the multitude, for we have come to see that we must not take such poetry seriously as a serious thing that lays hold on truth, but that he who lends an ear to it must be on his guard fearing for the polity in his b soul and must believe what we have said about poetry.

By all means, he said, I concur.

Yes, for great is the struggle, I said, dear Glaucon, a far greater contest than we think it, that determines whether a man prove good or bad, so that not the lure of honor or wealth or any office, no, nor of poetry either, should incite us to be careless of righteousness and all excellence.

I agree with you, he replied, in view of what we have set forth, and I think that anyone else would do so too.

And yet, said I, the greatest rewards of virtue and the prizes pro- c posed for her we have not set forth.

You must have in mind an inconceivable magnitude, he replied, if there are other things greater than those of which we have spoken.

What great thing, said I, could there be in a little time? For surely the whole time from the boy to the old man would be small compared with all time.

Nay, it is nothing, he said.

What then? Do you think that an immortal thing ought to be seriously concerned for such a little time, and not rather for all time? d

I think so, he said, but what is this that you have in mind?

Have you never perceived, said I, that our soul is immortal and never perishes?

And he, looking me full in the face in amazement, said, No, by Zeus, not I, but are *you* able to declare this?

I certainly ought to be, said I, and I think you too can, for it is nothing hard.

It is for me, he said, and I would gladly hear from you this thing that is not hard.

Listen, said I.

Just speak on, he replied.

You speak of good and evil, do you not?

I do.

e Is your notion of them the same as mine?

What is it?

That which destroys and corrupts in every case is the evil; that which preserves and benefits is the good.

Yes, I think so, he said.

609 How about this? Do you say that there is for everything its special good and evil, as for example for the eyes ophthalmia, for the entire body disease, for grain mildew, rotting for wood, rust for bronze and iron, and, as I say, for practically everything its congenital evil and disease?

I do, he said.

Then when one of these evils comes to anything does it not make the thing to which it attaches itself bad, and finally disintegrate and destroy it?

Of course.

Then the congenital evil of each thing and its own vice destroys it, or if that is not going to destroy it, nothing else remains that could, for b obviously the good will never destroy anything, nor yet again will that which is neutral and neither good nor evil.

How could it? he said.

If, then, we discover anything that has an evil which vitiates it, yet is not able to dissolve and destroy it, shall we not thereupon know that of a thing so constituted there can be no destruction?

That seems likely, he said.

Well, then, said I, has not the soul something that makes it evil?

c Indeed it has, he said, all the things that we were just now enumerating, injustice and licentiousness and cowardice and ignorance.

Does any one of these things dissolve and destroy it? And reflect, lest we be misled by supposing that when an unjust and foolish man is taken in his injustice he is then destroyed by the injustice, which is the vice of soul. But conceive it thus. Just as the vice of body which is disease wastes and destroys it so that it no longer is a body at all, in like manner in all the examples of which we spoke it is the d specific evil which, by attaching itself to the thing and dwelling in it with power to corrupt, reduces it to nonentity. Is not that so?

Yes.

Come, then, and consider the soul in the same way. Do injustice and other wickedness dwelling in it, by their indwelling and attachment to it, corrupt and wither it till they bring it to death and separate it from the body?

They certainly do not do that, he said.

But surely, said I, it is unreasonable to suppose that the vice of something else destroys a thing while its own does not.

Yes, unreasonable.

e For observe, Glaucon, said I, that we do not think it proper to say

of the body either that it is destroyed by the badness of foods themselves, whether it be staleness or rottenness or whatever it is, but when the badness of the foods themselves engenders in the body the defect of body, then we shall say that it is destroyed *owing to* these foods, but *by* its own vice, which is disease. But the body being one thing and the foods something else, we shall never expect the body to be destroyed by their badness, that is by an alien evil that has not produced in it the evil that belongs to it by nature. 610

You are entirely right, he replied.

On the same principle, said I, if the badness of the body does not produce in the soul the soul's badness we shall never expect the soul to be destroyed by an alien evil apart from its own defect—one thing, that is, by the evil of another.

That is reasonable, he said.

Either, then, we must refute this and show that we are mistaken, or, so long as it remains unrefuted, we must never say that by fever or any other disease, or yet by the knife at the throat or the chopping to bits of the entire body, there is any more likelihood of the soul perishing because of these things, until it is proved that owing to these affections of the body the soul itself becomes more unjust and unholy. But when an evil of something else occurs in a different thing and the evil that belongs to the thing is not engendered in it, we must not suffer it to be said that the soul or anything else is in this way destroyed. c

But you may be sure, he said, that nobody will ever prove this, that the souls of the dying are made more unjust by death.

But if anyone, said I, dares to come to grips with the argument and say, in order to avoid being forced to admit the soul's immortality, that a dying man does become more wicked and unjust, we will postulate that, if what he says is true, injustice must be fatal to its possessor as if it were a disease, and that those who catch it die because it kills them by its own inherent nature, those who have most of it quickest, and those who have less more slowly, and not, as now in fact happens, that the unjust die owing to this but by the action of others who inflict the penalty. d

Nay, by Zeus, he said, injustice will not appear a very terrible thing after all if it is going to be fatal to its possessor, for that would be a release from all troubles. But I rather think it will prove to be quite the contrary, something that kills others when it can, but renders its possessor very lively indeed, and not only lively but wakeful, so far, I ween, does it dwell from deadliness. e

You say well, I replied, for when the natural vice and the evil proper to it cannot kill and destroy the soul, still less will the evil appointed for the destruction of another thing destroy the soul or anything else, except that for which it is appointed.

Still less indeed, he said, in all probability.

Then since it is not destroyed by any evil whatever, either its own

611 or alien, it is evident that it must necessarily exist always, and that if it always exists it is immortal.

Necessarily, he said.

Let this, then, I said, be assumed to be so. But if it is so, you will observe that these souls must always be the same. For if none perishes they could not, I suppose, become fewer nor yet more numerous. For if any class of immortal things increased you are aware that its increase would come from the mortal and all things would end by becoming immortal.

You say truly.

But, said I, we must not suppose this, for reason will not suffer
b it, nor yet must we think that in its truest nature the soul is the kind of thing that teems with infinite diversity and unlikeness and contradiction in and with itself.

How am I to understand that? he said.

It is not easy, said I, for a thing to be immortal that is composed of many elements not put together in the best way, as now appeared to us to be the case with the soul.

It is not likely.

Well, then, that the soul is immortal our recent argument and our other proofs would constrain us to admit. But to know its true nature we must view it not marred by communion with the body and
c other miseries as we now contemplate it, but consider adequately in the light of reason what it is when it is purified, and then you will find it to be a far more beautiful thing and will more clearly distinguish justice and injustice and all the matters that we have now discussed. But though we have stated the truth of its present appearance, its condition as we have now contemplated it resembles that of the
d sea god Glaucus whose first nature can hardly be made out by those who catch glimpses of him, because the original members of his body are broken off and mutilated and crushed and in every way marred by the waves, and other parts have attached themselves to him, accretions of shells and seaweed and rocks, so that he is more like any wild creature than what he was by nature—even such, I say, is our vision of the soul marred by countless evils. But we must look elsewhere, Glaucou.

Where? said he.

e To its love of wisdom. And we must note the things of which it has apprehensions, and the associations for which it yearns, as being itself akin to the divine and the immortal and to eternal being, and so consider what it might be if it followed the gleam unreservedly and were raised by this impulse out of the depths of this sea in which it is now sunk, and were cleansed and scraped free of the rocks and barnacles which, because it now feasts on earth, cling to it in wild profusion of earthy and stony accretion by reason of these feasting that
612 are accounted happy. And then one might see whether in its real na-

ture it is manifold or single in its simplicity, or what is the truth about it and how. But for the present we have, I think, fairly well described its sufferings and the forms it assumes in this human life of ours.

We certainly have, he said.

Then, said I, we have met all the other demands of the argument, and we have not invoked the rewards and reputes of justice as you said Homer and Hesiod do, but we have proved that justice in itself is the best thing for the soul itself, and that the soul ought to do justice whether it possess the ring of Gyges or not, or the helmet of Hades to boot.

Most true, he said.

Then, said I, Glaucon, there can no longer be any objection, can there, to our assigning to justice and virtue generally, in addition, all the various rewards and wages that they bring to the soul from men and gods, both while the man still lives and after his death?

There certainly can be none, he said.

Will you, then, return to me what you borrowed in the argument? What, pray?

I granted to you that the just man should seem and be thought to be unjust and the unjust just, for you thought that, even if the concealment of these things from gods and men was an impossibility in fact, nevertheless it ought to be conceded for the sake of the argument, in order that the decision might be made between absolute justice and absolute injustice. Or do you not remember?

It would be unjust of me, he said, if I did not.

Well, then, now that they have been compared and judged, I demand back from you in behalf of justice the repute that she in fact enjoys from gods and men, and I ask that we admit that she is thus esteemed in order that she may gather in the prizes which she wins from the seeming and bestows on her possessors, since she has been proved to bestow the blessings that come from the reality and not to deceive those who truly seek and win her.

That is a just demand, he said.

Then, said I, will not the first of these restorations be that the gods certainly are not unaware of the true character of each of the two, the just and the unjust?

We will restore that, he said.

And if they are not concealed, the one will be dear to the gods and the other hateful to them, as we agreed in the beginning.

That is so.

And shall we not agree that all things that come from the gods work together for the best for him that is dear to the gods, apart from the inevitable evil caused by sin in a former life?

By all means.

This, then, must be our conviction about the just man, that whether he fall into poverty or disease or any other supposed evil, for

him all these things will finally prove good, both in life and in death. For by the gods assuredly that man will never be neglected who is willing and eager to be righteous, and by the practice of virtue to be likened unto God so far as that is possible for man.

It is reasonable, he said, that such a one should not be neglected by his like.

And must we not think the opposite of the unjust man?

Most emphatically.

Such then are the prizes of victory which the gods bestow upon the just.

So I think, at any rate, he said.

But what, said I, does he receive from men? Is not this the case, if we are now to present the reality? Do not your smart but wicked men fare as those racers do who run well from the scratch but not back from the turn? They bound nimbly away at the start, but in the end are laughed to scorn and run off the field uncrowned and with their ears on their shoulders. But the true runners when they have come to the goal receive the prizes and bear away the crown. Is not this the usual outcome for the just also, that toward the end of every action and association and of life as a whole they have honor and bear away the prizes from men?

So it is indeed.

Will you, then, bear with me if I say of them all that you said of the unjust? For I am going to say that the just, when they become older, hold the offices in their own city if they choose, marry from what families they will, and give their children in marriage to what families they please, and everything that you said of the one I now repeat of the other, and in turn I will say of the unjust that the most of them, even if they escape detection in youth, at the end of their course are caught and derided, and their old age is made miserable by the contumelies of strangers and townsfolk. They are lashed and suffer all things which you truly said are unfit for ears polite. Suppose yourself to have heard from me a repetition of all that they suffer. But, as I say, consider whether you will bear with me.

Assuredly, he said, for what you say is just.

614 Such then while he lives are the prizes, the wages, and the gifts that the just man receives from gods and men in addition to those blessings which justice herself bestowed.

And right fair and abiding rewards, he said.

Well, these, I said, are nothing in number and magnitude compared with those that await both after death. And we must listen to the tale of them, said I, in order that each may have received in full what is due to be said of him by our argument.

b Tell me, he said, since there are not many things to which I would more gladly listen.

It is not, let me tell you, said I, the tale to Alcinous told that I

shall unfold, but the tale of a warrior bold, Er, the son of Armenius, by race a Pamphylian. He once upon a time was slain in battle, and when the corpses were taken up on the tenth day already decayed, was found intact, and having been brought home, at the moment of his funeral, on the twelfth day as he lay upon the pyre, revived, and after coming to life related what, he said, he had seen in the world beyond. He said that when his soul went forth from his body he journeyed with a great company and that they came to a mysterious c region where there were two openings side by side in the earth, and above and over against them in the heaven two others, and that judges were sitting between these, and that after every judgment they bade the righteous journey to the right and upward through the heaven with tokens attached to them in front of the judgment passed d upon them, and the unjust to take the road to the left and downward, they too wearing behind signs of all that had befallen them, and that when he himself drew near they told him that he must be the messenger to mankind to tell them of that other world, and they charged him to give ear and to observe everything in the place. And so he said that here he saw, by each opening of heaven and earth, the souls departing after judgment had been passed upon them, while, by the other pair of openings, there came up from the one in the earth souls full of squalor and dust, and from the second there came down from heaven a second procession of souls clean and pure, and that those which arrived from time to time appeared to have come as it were e from a long journey and gladly departed to the meadow and encamped there as at a festival, and acquaintances greeted one another, and those which came from the earth questioned the others about conditions up yonder, and those from heaven asked how it fared with those others. And they told their stories to one another, the one lamenting and wailing as they recalled how many and how dreadful things they had suffered and seen in their journey beneath the earth 615 —it lasted a thousand years—while those from heaven related their delights and visions of a beauty beyond words. To tell it all, Glaucon, would take all our time, but the sum, he said, was this. For all the wrongs they had ever done to anyone and all whom they had severally wronged they had paid the penalty in turn tenfold for each, and b the measure of this was by periods of a hundred years each, so that on the assumption that this was the length of human life the punishment might be ten times the crime—as for example that if anyone had been the cause of many deaths or had betrayed cities and armies and reduced them to slavery, or had been participant in any other iniquity, they might receive in requital pains tenfold for each of these wrongs, and again if any had done deeds of kindness and been just and holy men they might receive their due reward in the same measure. And other things not worthy of record he said of those who had just been born and lived but a short time, and he had still greater c

requitals to tell of piety and impiety toward the gods and parents and of self-slaughter. For he said that he stood by when one was questioned by another, 'Where is Ardiaeus the Great?' Now this Ardiaeus had been tyrant in a certain city of Pamphylia just a thousand years before that time and had put to death his old father and his elder
 a brother, and had done many other unholy deeds, as was the report. So he said that the one questioned replied, 'He has not come,' said he, 'nor will he be likely to come here. For indeed this was one of the dreadful sights we beheld; when we were near the mouth and about to issue forth and all our other sufferings were ended, we suddenly
 e caught sight of him and of others, the most of them, I may say, tyrants. But there were some of private station, of those who had committed great crimes. And when these supposed that at last they were about to go up and out, the mouth would not receive them, but it bellowed when any one of the incurably wicked or of those who had not completed their punishment tried to come up. And thereupon,' he said, 'savage men of fiery aspect who stood by and took note of the
 616 voice laid hold on them and bore them away. But Ardiaeus and others they bound hand and foot and head and flung down and flayed them and dragged them by the wayside, carding them on thorns and signifying to those who from time to time passed by for what cause they were borne away, and that they were to be hurled into Tartarus.'

And then, though many and manifold dread things had befallen them, this fear exceeded all—lest each one should hear the voice when he tried to go up, and each went up most gladly when it had kept silence. And the judgments and penalties were somewhat after
 b this manner, and the blessings were their counterparts.

But when seven days had elapsed for each group in the meadow, they were required to rise up on the eighth and journey on, and they came in four days to a spot whence they discerned, extended from above throughout the heaven and the earth, a straight light like a pillar, most nearly resembling the rainbow, but brighter and purer. To this they came after going forward a day's journey, and they saw
 c there at the middle of the light the extremities of its fastenings stretched from heaven, for this light was the girdle of the heavens like the undergirders of triremes, holding together in like manner the entire revolving vault. And from the extremities was stretched the spindle of Necessity, through which all the orbits turned. Its staff and its hook were made of adamant, and the whorl of these and other
 d kinds was commingled. And the nature of the whorl was this. Its shape was that of those in our world, but from his description we must conceive it to be as if in one great whorl, hollow and scooped out, there lay enclosed, right through, another like it but smaller, fitting into it as boxes that fit into one another, and in like manner another, a third, and a fourth, and four others, for there were eight of the whorls in all, lying within one another, showing their rims as

circles from above and forming the continuous back of a single whorl e about the shaft, which was driven home through the middle of the eighth. Now the first and outmost whorl had the broadest circular rim, that of the sixth was second, and third was that of the fourth, and fourth was that of the eighth, fifth that of the seventh, sixth that of the fifth, seventh that of the third, eighth that of the second. And that of the greatest was spangled, that of the seventh brightest, that 617 of the eighth took its color from the seventh, which shone upon it. The colors of the second and fifth were like one another and more yellow than the two former. The third had the whitest color, and the fourth was of a slightly ruddy hue; the sixth was second in whiteness. The staff turned as a whole in a circle with the same movement, but within the whole as it revolved the seven inner circles revolved gently in the opposite direction to the whole, and of these seven the eighth moved most swiftly, and next and together with one another the b seventh, sixth, and fifth, and third in swiftness, as it appeared to them, moved the fourth with returns upon itself, and fourth the third and fifth the second. And the spindle turned on the knees of Necessity, and up above on each of the rims of the circles a Siren stood, borne around in its revolution and uttering one sound, one note, and from all the eight there was the concord of a single harmony. And there were three others who sat round about at equal intervals, each c one on her throne, the Fates, daughters of Necessity, clad in white vestments with filleted heads, Lachesis, and Clotho, and Atropos, who sang in unison with the music of the Sirens, Lachesis singing the things that were, Clotho the things that are, and Atropos the things that are to be. And Clotho with the touch of her right hand helped to turn the outer circumference of the spindle, pausing from time to time. Atropos with her left hand in like manner helped to turn the inner circles, and Lachesis alternately with either hand lent a hand to d each.

Now when they arrived they were straightway bidden to go before Lachesis, and then a certain prophet first marshaled them in orderly intervals, and thereupon took from the lap of Lachesis lots and patterns of lives and went up to a lofty platform and spoke, "This is the word of Lachesis, the maiden daughter of Necessity, "Souls that live for a day, now is the beginning of another cycle of mortal generation where birth is the beacon of death. No divinity shall cast lots for you, but you shall choose your own deity. Let him to whom falls the first lot first select a life to which he shall cleave of necessity. But virtue e has no master over her, and each shall have more or less of her as he honors her or does her despite. The blame is his who chooses. God is blameless." ' So saying, the prophet flung the lots out among them all, and each took up the lot that fell by his side, except himself; him 618 they did not permit. And whoever took up a lot saw plainly what number he had drawn. And after this again the prophet placed the

patterns of lives before them on the ground, far more numerous than the assembly. They were of every variety, for there were lives of all kinds of animals and all sorts of human lives, for there were tyrannies among them, some uninterrupted till the end and others destroyed midway and issuing in penuries and exiles and beggaries, and there were lives of men of repute for their forms and beauty and bodily strength otherwise and prowess and the high birth and the virtues of their ancestors, and others of ill repute in the same things, and similarly of women. But there was no determination of the quality of soul, because the choice of a different life inevitably determined a different character. But all other things were commingled with one another and with wealth and poverty and sickness and health and the intermediate conditions.

And there, dear Glaucon, it appears, is the supreme hazard for a man. And this is the chief reason why it should be our main concern that each of us, neglecting all other studies, should seek after and study this thing—if in any way he may be able to learn of and discover the man who will give him the ability and the knowledge to distinguish the life that is good from that which is bad, and always and everywhere to choose the best that the conditions allow, and, taking into account all the things of which we have spoken and estimating the effect on the goodness of his life of their conjunction or their severance, to know how beauty commingled with poverty or wealth and combined with what habit of soul operates for good or for evil, and what are the effects of high and low birth and private station and office and strength and weakness and quickness of apprehension and dullness and all similar natural and acquired habits of the soul, when blended and combined with one another, so that with consideration of all these things he will be able to make a reasoned choice between the better and the worse life, with his eyes fixed on the nature of his soul, naming the worse life that which will tend to make it more unjust and the better that which will make it more just. But all other considerations he will dismiss, for we have seen that this is the best choice, both for life and death. And a man must take with him to the house of death an adamantine faith in this, that even there he may be undazzled by riches and similar trumpery, and may not precipitate himself into tyrannies and similar doings and so work many evils past cure and suffer still greater himself, but may know how always to choose in such things the life that is seated in the mean and shun the excess in either direction, both in this world so far as may be and in all the life to come, for this is the greatest happiness for man.

And at that time also the messenger from that other world reported that the prophet spoke thus. 'Even for him who comes forward last, if he make his choice wisely and live strenuously, there is reserved an acceptable life, no evil one. Let not the foremost in the

choice be heedless nor the last be discouraged.' When the prophet had thus spoken he said that the drawer of the first lot at once sprang to seize the greatest tyranny, and that in his folly and greed he chose it without sufficient examination, and failed to observe that it involved the fate of eating his own children, and other horrors, and that when he inspected it at leisure he beat his breast and bewailed his choice, not abiding by the forewarning of the prophet. For he did not blame himself for his woes, but fortune and the gods and anything except himself. He was one of those who had come down from heaven, a man who had lived in a well-ordered polity in his former existence, participating in virtue by habit and not by philosophy, and one may perhaps say that a majority of those who were thus caught were of the company that had come from heaven, inasmuch as they were unexercised in suffering. But the most of those who came up from the earth, since they had themselves suffered and seen the sufferings of others, did not make their choice precipitately. For which reason also there was an interchange of good and evil for most of the souls, as well as because of the chances of the lot. Yet if at each return to the life of this world a man loved wisdom sanely, and the lot of his choice did not fall out among the last, we may venture to affirm, from what was reported thence, that not only will he be happy here but that the path of his journey thither and the return to this world will not be underground and rough but smooth and through the heavens. For he said that it was a sight worth seeing to observe how the several souls selected their lives. He said it was a strange, pitiful, and ridiculous spectacle, as the choice was determined for the most part by the habits of their former lives. He saw the soul that had been Orpheus', he said, selecting the life of a swan, because from hatred of the tribe of women, owing to his death at their hands, it was unwilling to be conceived and born of a woman. He saw the soul of Thamyras choosing the life of a nightingale, and he saw a swan changing to the choice of the life of man, and similarly other musical animals. The soul that drew the twentieth lot chose the life of a lion; it was the soul of Ajax, the son of Telamon, which, because it remembered the adjudication of the arms of Achilles, was unwilling to become a man. The next, the soul of Agamemnon, likewise from hatred of the human race because of its sufferings, substituted the life of an eagle. Drawing one of the middle lots the soul of Atalanta caught sight of the great honors attached to an athlete's life and could not pass them by but snatched at them. After her, he said, he saw the soul of Epeus, the son of Panopeus, entering into the nature of an arts and crafts woman. Far off in the rear he saw the soul of the buffoon Thersites clothing itself in the body of an ape. And it fell out that the soul of Odysseus drew the last lot of all and came to make its choice, and, from memory of its former toils having flung away ambition, went about for a long time in quest of the life of an ordinary citizen who minded his

own business, and with difficulty found it lying in some corner dis-
 d regarded by the others, and upon seeing it said that it would have done
 the same had it drawn the first lot, and chose it gladly. And in like
 manner, of the other beasts some entered into men and into one an-
 other, the unjust into wild creatures, the just transformed to tame,
 and there was every kind of mixture and combination.

But when, to conclude, all the souls had chosen their lives in the
 order of their lots, they were marshaled and went before Lachesis.
 e And she sent with each, as the guardian of his life and the fulfiller of
 his choice, the genius that he had chosen, and this divinity led the
 soul first to Clotho, under her hand and her turning of the spindle
 to ratify the destiny of his lot and choice, and after contact with her
 the genius again led the soul to the spinning of Atropos to make the
 621 web of its destiny irreversible, and then without a backward look it
 passed beneath the throne of Necessity. And after it had passed
 through that, when the others also had passed, they all journeyed to
 the Plain of Oblivion, through a terrible and stifling heat, for it was
 bare of trees and all plants, and there they camped at eventide by the
 River of Forgetfulness, whose waters no vessel can contain. They
 were all required to drink a measure of the water, and those who were
 b not saved by their good sense drank more than the measure, and each
 one as he drank forgot all things. And after they had fallen asleep
 and it was the middle of the night, there was a sound of thunder and
 a quaking of the earth, and they were suddenly wafted thence, one
 this way, one that, upward to their birth like shooting stars. Er him-
 self, he said, was not allowed to drink of the water, yet how and in
 what way he returned to the body he said he did not know, but
 suddenly recovering his sight he saw himself at dawn lying on the
 funeral pyre.

And so, Glaucon, the tale was saved, as the saying is, and was not
 c lost. And it will save us if we believe it, and we shall safely cross
 the River of Lethe, and keep our soul unspotted from the world. But if
 we are guided by me we shall believe that the soul is immortal and
 capable of enduring all extremes of good and evil, and so we shall
 hold ever to the upward way and pursue righteousness with wis-
 dom always and ever, that we may be dear to ourselves and to the
 gods both during our sojourn here and when we receive our reward,
 d as the victors in the games go about to gather in theirs. And thus both
 here and in that journey of a thousand years, whereof I have told
 you, we shall fare well.