bloody tribute exacted by Minos, by the mission of a vessel to Delos with sacrifices to Apollo, and other religious rites. When the priest of Apollo had once crowned the stern of the sacred vessel with the festive garland, it was not law­ful to pollute the city by a public execution, until the so­lemn pomp should have been performed, and the vessel had returned. This ceremony had been performed only the day before the trial of Socrates. Thus he obtained the respite of thirty days between his trial and execution.

These were days of high interest and importance not on­ly to his sorrowing friends, but to the cause of that admir­able practical philosophy which all his previous life had in­culcated. During this time he employed himself in literary exercises which he had never practised before. He com­posed a poem in honour of the god Apollo, whose festival was then in course of celebration. And feeling *a* religious scruple as to whether by the general pursuit of philosophy, he had fully complied with the suggestions of dreams repeatedly urging him, as he said, to “ cultivate music,” he new applied himself to the fulfilment of this supposed charge, by turning the fables of Æsop into verse.@@1 But these were only pastimes illustrative of the serenity of his mind. Now, too, in his prison, with the chains on his body, and the near prospect of a violent death, he could discourse with an unan­swerable cogency and eloquence of argument, of the vanity of human things, and the real happiness of man, as consist­ing in the cultivation of the spiritual and immortal princi­ples of his nature. He had professed his whole life to be a meditation or discipline of death. He now had the oppor­tunity.—which, as a philosopher, (could the voice of natural instinct have been silenced,) he would most have desired,— of realizing, by his own example, that death to which his thoughts and pursuits had been studiously directed. Un­like his successors in the schools of the Stoics, he did not advocate a doctrine of suicide, however he depreciated the importance of human life. With that good sense which re­strained his religion and his philosophy from running into fanaticism, he held it to be impious in any one to release himself, by his own hand, from that post of duty in which the Deity had placed him.@@2 Though, however, he had not courted death, or rashly placed himself in the way of it, he felt that, in the circumstances in which he was now placed, he was called to go through this last act of his philosophic profession. He seems, indeed, to have rejoiced in the op­portunity thus afforded him of summing up his philosophy in one great principle, from which every observation and ar­gument, in the course of previous teaching, had been drawn, by demonstrating, so far as reason could avail to demonstrate the fact, the absolute and eternal existence of the great principles of moral truth. The occasion was one which the genius of Plato would not fail to seize as most felicitous for the development of its own enthusiastic and transcen­dental view of the philosophy of Socrates. Plato, according­ly, has, in that most exquisite of his Dialogues, the Phædo, invited us to the couch of Socrates, on the last sad morning of his imprisonment, to listen to the philosopher, with the chill of death almost upon him, discoursing on the immor­tality of the soul. The affectionate and eloquent disciple doubtless shed natural tears over his dying master. But he

wished also to elevate his own philosophy to the dignity of being the dying confession of the great sage of Athens. And he wished, further, that his own philosophy should speak, as it were, the funeral oration over him to whom it was in­debted for its earliest inspirations, and pour its own libation on his tomb. Thus he has especially elaborated the last scene of his master’s life, and made us contemplate with the deepest interest the death of Socrates, not only as an act

of heroic self-devotion and patient martyrdom to the truth, taught by the great sage himself, but as a splendid episode in the dramatic development of his own philosophy.

During his imprisonment, Socrates was not denied the solace of receiving his friends, and conversing with them day after day. Early each morning might be seen a company of devoted friends, whom nothing could separate from him, assembled at the hall of justice, where the trial had taken place, and which was close to the prison, watching for the jailor to open the gate and admit them. Being admitted, they would commonly remain with him in the prison un­til evening, engaged in earnest and instructive conversa­tion. His wife and children, too, appear to have been constantly with him.@@3 He was importuned by these affec­tionate followers to suffer them to effect his escape. Crito earnestly entreated him to be allowed to execute a plan which he had concerted for rescuing him. Simmias, the Theban, also brought a sum of money with him to Athens for that purpose. Cebes and others were equally ready with their resources. They argued, that, so far from being at a loss what to do with himself out of Athens, as he had said on his trial, they could ensure him friends in Thessaly, and many other places, who would most gladly welcome him, and protect him. But to none of these importunities would he yield. He answered, that, while he highly estimated their kindness, he was pledged to obey reason only, and that he saw no ground in his present circumstances for taking a dif­ferent view of his case. As for the duty of providing for his children, by preserving his own life,—a consideration which Crito appears to have strongly pressed on him,—this was not now a matter for him to consider ;—it was for those to consider, who, as his Athenian judges, treated life and death as such light concerns ; for his part, he must look simply to what was right or wrong to be done.@@4 Thus stea­dily and calmly did he persevere in his resolution of await­ing the utmost extremity.

At length it was announced that the Theoric galley had been seen off Sunium, and might very shortly be expected to arrive at Athens. Crito proceeded in anxious haste to the prison, and being well-known to the jailor from his frequent visits there, obtained admission at a very early hour. He found Socrates asleep, and sat by him in silence, won­dering to see him sleep so soundly in so much trouble, un­til he at length awoke to receive the fatal intelligence. This he received with the same composure as if it had been some ordinary communication. His only answer to Crito was, that he was quite resigned to the will of the gods, if it were so, but that he was persuaded by a dream, from which he had just waked, that the vessel would not come that day, but the following one. His reliance on dreams as divine intimations, has been already mentioned. He told Crito, accordingly, of his having dreamed that a woman of noble form, clothed in white, came to him and called him, and said to him in the words of Homer,@@5 “ On the third day to deep-soiled Pthia thou shaft come.” The event, at any rate, accorded with his expectation from the dream. On the morrow the vessel reached the harbour of Piraeus ; and the following day was appointed for the execution.

By the dawn of that day, the sorrowing party again met at the accustomed place, and wore informed by the jailor, that the Eleven,—the officere who superintended the public exe­cutions,—had given orders that the chains should be taken off, and that Socrates should die on that day. After being kept waiting some time, they went in and found the philo­sopher already loosed from his chains, and sitting on the couch, with Xanthippe and his youngest child in her arms, by his side. By his desire they conduct her home, the kind Crito

@@@, Plato, Phædo. p. 60 d. *et* *sqq.*

@@@’ Plato, Phædo, p. 61, c. ,0v *μiv ισa>s βuiσeraι άντόν. oiι yap φaσl θ(μerov hvai.*

@@@> Plato, Phædo. p. 60 a. Op. i. p. 135.

@@@\* Plato Crito, p. 48, c. Op. i. p. 111.

*@@@\* 'Hμaτi κtv τριτάτια φι)iηv ipιβωλθf* tκoιo.