PART FIVE

JUSTICE IN STATE AND INDIVIDUAL

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§1. JUSTICE IN THE STATE

The State which we have founded must possess the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, discipline, and justice. It will have wisdom because of the knowledge possessed by the Rulers, courage because of the courage of the Auxiliaries, and discipline because of the harmony between all three Classes and their common agreement 'about who ought to rule'. Finally, Justice is the principle which has in fact been followed throughout, the principle of one man one job, of 'minding one's own business', in the sense of doing the job for which one is naturally fitted and not interfering with other people.

'WELL, we seem to have got your city founded for you, Adeimantus,' I said. 'Now you must get your brother and Polemarchus and the rest of them to see if they can help you throw any light on the problem where we shall find justice and injustice in it, how they differ from each other, and which of them anyone who is to be happy needs, irrespective of whether gods or men think he has it or not.'

'Nonsense, Socrates,' said Glaucon. 'You promised to deal with the problem yourself, because you said it would be wrong for you not to support justice for all you were worth.'

'That's true,' I said; 'I remember. I must do as I said, but you must all help.'

'Yes, we will,' he said.

'I think we shall probably find what we want as follows. If we have founded it properly, our state is presumably perfect.'

'It must be.'

'Then it will obviously have the virtues of wisdom, courage, discipline, and justice.'[1]

'Obviously.'

1. 'This is apparently the first passage in Greek literature where the doctrine of four cardinal virtues ... is expressly enunciated.' Adam.

'Then if we can identify some of these qualities in it, the ones that are left will be the ones we are still looking for.'

'Yes.' 428

'So suppose us to be looking for one of any four things. If we can find it at once, well and good. But if we find the other three first, by so doing we have in effect identified the object of our search, which must obviously be the one left over.'

'That's true.'

'Should we not therefore follow this method in the present case, where again there are four things at issue?'

'Obviously.'

'The first of the four that is apparent is wisdom, and there is one odd feature about it.'

'What?' he asked.

'The state we have described seems to me to be genuinely wise. For its judgement is good, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'And the quality of good judgement is clearly a form of knowledge or skill, as it is because of knowledge and not because of ignorance that we judge well.'

'Clearly.'

'But there are many different kinds of skill in our city.'

'Of course there are.'

'And do we say it has wisdom and judgement because of the skill of its carpenters?'

'Certainly not – that merely makes it good at carpentry.'

'So it's not called wise because it has the highest degree of skill in woodwork?'

'No.'

'The same is presumably true of bronze and other materials. And I expect you would agree that skill in farming merely makes it good at agriculture.'

'Yes.'

'Well then,' I said, 'is there any form of skill to be found among any of the citizens in the state we've just founded which is exercised not on behalf of any particular interest but on behalf of the city as a whole, in such a way as to benefit the state both internally and externally?'

'There is.'

'What is it, and where shall we find it?' I asked.

'It is the Guardians' skill,' he answered, 'and is to be found with those we called Guardians in the full sense.'

'And how do you describe the state because of it?'

'I say it has judgement and wisdom.'

'And which do you think that there will be more of in our state, metal-workers or Guardians in this sense?'

'Many more metal-workers,' he said.

'Won't the Guardians, in fact, be far fewer in number than those in any other skilled trade you can name?'

'Yes.'

'So the state founded on natural principles is wise as a whole in virtue of the knowledge inherent in its smallest constituent
429 class, which exercises authority over the rest. And the smallest class is the one which naturally possesses that form of knowledge which alone of all others deserves the title of wisdom.'

'That is all perfectly true,' he agreed.

'Well, then we have somehow or other managed to find this one of our four virtues and where it belongs.'

'And as far as I'm concerned I'm quite satisfied with our findings,' he said.

'And it's not very difficult,' I went on, 'to see where the virtue of courage lies, which makes us call our state brave. We shall say it's brave or cowardly with sole reference to the part which does its fighting and campaigning.'

'That is all that need be considered.'

'Because I don't think that members of other classes are competent, by being cowardly or brave, to make the state one or the other.'

'No, they aren't.'

'Our city is therefore brave too in virtue of a part of itself. That part retains in all circumstances the ability to judge rightly about the nature and extent of dangers in accordance with the standards laid down by law in its education. For that, I take it, is what you mean by courage.'

'I didn't quite understand what you said,' he answered; 'say it again.'

'I say,' I replied, 'that courage is a sort of retentiveness.'

'What sort?'

'The sort that will retain the opinion inculcated by the established education about what is dangerous and why. And by retaining it in "all circumstances" I meant retaining it steadfastly in pleasure and pain, desire and fear. If you like, I'll give you an analogy.'

'Yes, do.'

'Well, take dyeing,' I said. 'You know that, when they want to dye wool purple, they are very particular about the colour of the material, which must be white; they then subject it to an elaborate process to prepare it to take the dye before they actually dip it. And the colour of anything dyed by this process remains fast, and the dye won't come out if you wash the material, whether you use soap or not; but if they start with wool of any other colour or don't give it this treatment – well, you know what happens to it.'

'Yes – the colour washes out and it looks absurd' he said.

'Assume, then,' I said, 'that this was the sort of result we were doing our best to achieve in choosing our soldier-class, and in educating them physically and mentally. Our whole ob- 430
ject was to steep them in the spirit of our laws like a dye, so that nature and nurture might combine to fix in them indelibly their convictions about what is dangerous, and about all other topics, and prevent them being washed out by those most powerful solvents, pleasure, so much more effective than soap and chemicals, and pain and fear and desire, the most effective of all. This kind of ability to retain in all circumstances a judgement about danger which is correct by established standards is what I propose to call courage, unless you have any alternative to suggest.'

'No,' he replied, 'I haven't. For I imagine that you would not regard mere uninstructed judgement, such as an animal or slave might have on these matters, as being in accordance with tradition, even if right, and that you would use some other name for it.'

'You are quite right,' I said.

'Then I accept your definition of courage.'

'Accept it as a definition of the ordinary citizen's courage, and you won't be far wrong,' I replied; 'we will go into it more fully later, if you like.[1] For the moment it's justice not courage we are looking for, and for this purpose I think the definition's adequate.'

'That is fair enough.'

'Well, we are left with two virtues to look for in our state,' I said, 'discipline and the real object of our whole inquiry, justice.'

'Yes, we are.'

'I wonder if we could find justice without having to bother further about discipline.'

'Personally,' he said, 'I don't know, and I shouldn't want to find it, if it meant we were to give up looking for discipline. What I should like you to do is to look for discipline first.'

'And I should not like to refuse you,' I said.

'Then carry on,' he said.

'I will,' I replied. 'At first sight, discipline looks more like some sort of harmony or concord than the other virtues did.'

'In what way?'

'Discipline,' I said, 'is surely a kind of order, a control of certain desires and appetites. So people use "being master of oneself" (whatever that means) and similar phrases as indications of it. Isn't that so?'

'Certainly.'

'But "master of oneself" is an absurd phrase. For if you're master *of* yourself you're presumably also subject *to* yourself,
431 and so *both* master *and* subject. For there is only one person in question throughout.'

'Undoubtedly.'

'What the expression is intended to mean, I think, is that

1. Strictly speaking, only the Rulers can have true courage, because true courage must be based on full knowledge, which only they have. This will appear more fully later.

there is a better and a worse element in the character of each individual, and that when the naturally better element controls the worse then the man is said to be "master of himself", as a term of praise. But when (as a result of bad upbringing or bad company) one's better element is overpowered by the numerical superiority of one's worse impulses, then one is criticized for not being master of oneself and for lack of self-control.'

'Which is quite reasonable.'

'Then look at our newly founded state,' I said, 'and you will find the first of these descriptions applies to it. For you will admit that it is right to call it master of itself, if we speak of discipline and self-mastery where the better part rules the worse.'

'Yes, I see; that's quite true.'

'And, what is more, the greatest variety of desires and pleasures and pains is generally to be found in children and women and slaves, and in the less reputable majority of so-called free men.'

'Certainly.'

'While the simple and moderate desires, guided by reason and judgement and reflection, you will find in a minority who have the advantages of natural gifts and good education.'

'True.'

'This feature too you can see in our state, where the desires of the less reputable majority are controlled by the desires and the wisdom of the superior minority. And so if any city is to be said to be master of its pleasures and desires, and of itself, ours must be.'

'That is certainly true.'

'Then on all these counts we can surely say it has discipline.'

'We can indeed,' he said.

'And of our state, if of any, it will be true that government and subjects will agree about who ought to rule. Or don't you think so?'

'I'm quite sure of it,' he said.

'In these circumstances, of which class do you think discipline is characteristic, rulers or subjects?'

'Of both, I suppose,' he replied.

'So you can see how right we were to guess just now that discipline was like a kind of harmony.'

'Why?'

'Because, unlike courage and wisdom, which made our state
432 brave and wise by being present in a particular part of it, discipline operates by being diffused throughout the whole of it. It produces a concord between its strongest and weakest and middle elements, whether you define them by the standard of good sense, or of strength, or of numbers or money or the like. And so we are quite justified in regarding discipline as this sort of natural harmony and agreement between higher and lower about which of them is to rule in state and individual.'

'I entirely agree.'

'Good,' said I; 'it looks as if we had spotted three of the qualities we are looking for in our state. What about the fourth element in its goodness? It must obviously be justice.'

'Obviously.'

'Then we must stand like hunters round a covert and make sure that justice does not escape us and disappear from view. It must be somewhere about. Try and see if you can catch sight of it before I can, and tell me where it is.'

'I wish I could,' he said. 'It's about as much as I can manage to follow your lead and see things when you point them out.'

'Then follow me and hope for the best.'

'I will,' he said; 'lead on.'

'It looks to me,' I said, 'as if we were in a pretty difficult and obscure spot; it's dark and I can't see my way through it. But we must push on all the same.'

'Yes, we must,' he agreed.

I cast about a bit and then cried, 'Tally ho, Glaucon! I think we are on the track, and our quarry won't altogether escape us.'

'That's good news.'

'We really are being a bit slow.'

'In what way?'

'Our quarry is right under our noses all the time, and we haven't seen it but have been making perfect fools of ourselves. We are like people looking for something they have in their hands all the time; we're looking in all directions except at the thing we want, which is probably why we haven't found it.'

'How do you mean?'

'I mean that it seems to me that we have failed to understand that we have in a sort of way been talking about it all through our discussion.'

'You are a long time leading up to what you've got to say; I'm getting impatient.'

'Well, then listen, and see if you think I'm talking sense. I 433 believe justice is the principle we laid down at the beginning and have consistently followed in founding our state, or else some variant of it. We laid down, if you remember, and have often repeated, that in our state one man was to do one job, the job he was naturally most suited for.'

'Yes, we did.'

'And further, we have often heard and often said that justice consists in minding your own business and not interfering with other people.' [1]

'Yes.'

'So perhaps justice is, in a certain sense, just this minding one's own business. Do you know why I think so?'

'No; why?'

'Because I think that the virtue left over, now that we have discussed discipline, courage and wisdom, must be what makes their existence possible and preserves them by its presence.[2] And we agreed that it would be justice that was left over if we found the other three.'

'It must be.'

'Now, if we were asked to judge which of these virtues by its presence contributed most to the goodness of our state, we should find it a difficult decision to make. Is it the agreement

1. The reference is to ordinary conversation, and not to any earlier passage in the dialogue.

2. Reading *παρέχει* with Adam.

between rulers and subjects? Is it the retention by our soldiers of a proper judgement about what is and is not dangerous? Is it the Guardians' ability to govern wisely? Or is it the ability of the individual – child or woman, slave, free man or artisan, ruler or subject – to get on with his own job and not interfere with other people?'

'A difficult decision, I agree.'

'At any rate, wisdom, discipline, courage, and the ability to mind one's own business are all comparable in this respect; and we can regard justice as making a contribution to the goodness of our city comparable with that of the rest.'

'Yes, certainly.'

'Look at it again this way. I assume that you will make it the duty of our rulers to administer justice?'

'Of course.'

'And won't they try to follow the principle that men should not take other people's belongings or be deprived of their own?'

'Yes, they're bound to.'

'Their reason presumably being that it is *just*.'

'Yes.'

'So we reach again by another route the conclusion that justice is keeping to what belongs to one and doing one's own
434 job.'

'That is true.'

'There's another point on which I should like your agreement. Suppose a builder and a shoemaker tried to exchange jobs, each taking on the tools and the prestige of the other's trade, or suppose alternatively the same man tried to do both jobs, would this and other exchanges of the kind do great harm to the state?'

'Not much.'

'But if someone who belongs by nature to the class of artisans and business men is puffed up by wealth or popular support or physical strength or any similar quality, and tries to do an Auxiliary's job; or if an Auxiliary who is not up to it tries to take on the functions and decisions of a Ruler and exchange tools and prestige with him; or if a single individual

tries to do all these jobs at the same time – well, I think you'll agree that this sort of mutual interchange and interference spells destruction to our state.'

'Certainly.'

'Interference by the three classes with each other's jobs, and interchange of jobs between them, therefore, does the greatest harm to our state, and we are entirely justified in calling it the worst of evils.'

'Absolutely justified.'

'But will you not agree that the worst of evils for a state is injustice?'

'Of course.'

'Then that gives us a definition of injustice. And conversely, when each of our three classes (businessmen, Auxiliaries, and Guardians) does its own job and minds its own business, that, by contrast, is justice and makes our city just.'

'I entirely agree with what you say,' he said.

'Don't let's be too emphatic about it yet,' I replied. 'If we find that the same definition of justice applies to the individual, we can finally agree to it – there will be nothing to prevent us; if not, we shall have to think again. For the moment let us finish our investigation.'

§2. THE ELEMENTS IN MENTAL CONFLICT

Plato starts by reasserting the parallel between state (society) and individual; 'since the qualities of a community are those of the component individuals, we may expect to find three corresponding elements in the individual soul. All three will be present in every soul; but the structure of society is based on the fact that they are developed to different degrees in different types of character' (*Cornford, p.* 126). *After a warning that in what follows we must not expect too much philosophic precision, Plato proceeds to examine the conflict of motives in the individual, and concludes that we cannot, without contradiction, assume the existence of less than three types of motive or impulse in the mind. First there is reason, the faculty that calculates and decides: second there is desire or appetite, in the sense of bare physical and instinctive*

craving. There is also a third type of motive, covering, as noted above (p. 109), such characteristics as pugnacity, enterprise, ambition, indignation, which are often found in conflict with unthinking impulse.

This is often referred to as Plato's doctrine of 'the three parts of the soul'. Two main questions arise in understanding it: (1) To what extent and in what sense does Plato think of separate 'parts' of the soul or mind? In the present passage the words he uses most commonly (eidos, genos) mean 'kinds', 'types', 'forms', though he does on occasion use the Greek word for part (meros); the word 'element' used in the translation is deliberately indeterminate. Elsewhere Plato sometimes speaks as if the soul or mind had three distinct parts, as in the Phaedrus and Timacus, sometimes as if there were a single stream of mental energy manifesting itself in different activities, as in the Symposium. We perhaps do well, first, to remember that he has warned us that he is not speaking with scientific precision, but rather on the level of ordinary conversation; and, second, to bear in mind that he is concerned with morals and not with psychology, with a general classification of the main motives or impulses to action, rather than a scientific analysis of the mind. He is, in fact, probably always conscious that in speaking of 'parts' ('elements' or what not) of the soul he is using a metaphor. (2) What exactly are the three 'elements' that Plato describes? There is little difficulty with two of them. By 'appetite' Plato means the purely instinctive desires in their simplest form; it is easy enough, on a common-sense level, to recognize them. 'Reason' includes not only the ability to understand and to think before we act, the faculty of calculation and foresight, but also the ability to make up one's mind, the faculty of decision. The third element at first appears more miscellaneous, including, as we have seen, such qualities as indignation, courage, determination, spirit, and so on. Two illustrations may help us to understand it. First the distinction, still commonly made, between 'heart' and 'head'. When we make that distinction we do not include under 'heart' the mere animal instincts; we perhaps include more of the 'feelings' than Plato, but our meaning is not far from his second 'part of the soul'. (In the Timaeus reason is located in the head, 'spirit' in the breast, i.e. heart, and appetite in the belly.) Second, when Butler analysed the motives of moral action he found them threefold. Conscience, a rational faculty capable of judgement and having authority: particular passions, like hunger and thirst: and 'self-love', or, as we

should call it to-day, the 'self-regarding instinct'.[1] *Each of these two analyses recognizes a rational, controlling, authoritative part of the mind; each recognizes animal instinct; but each also recognizes a third element, one which is not easy to define, but which is perhaps most comprehensively described as self-regard, and which ranges from self-assertion, through self-respect, to our relations with others (Butler coupled 'self-love' and 'benevolence') and our concern for our reputation and good name.*

Plato uses two words, thumos *and* thumoeides, *for this element in the mind. Neither is easy to translate. I have used 'anger', 'indignation', 'spirit' as seemed to suit the context best. Plato, in any case, never developed a precise terminology.*

'We thought it would be easier to see justice in the individual if we looked for it first in a larger field. We thought the state provided this, and so we set about founding an ideal state, being sure we should find justice in it. Let us therefore transfer our findings to the individual, and if they fit him, well and good; on the other hand, if we find justice in the individual is something different, we will return to the state and test our new definition. So by a process of comparison we may 435
strike a spark which will illuminate justice for us, and once we see it clearly we can establish it among ourselves.'

'That is the right method; let us follow it,' he said.

'Then when we apply the same epithet to two things, one large and the other small, will they not be similar in respect of that to which the common epithet is applied?'

'Yes.'

'So there will be no difference between a just man and a just city, so far as the characteristic of justice goes.'

'None.'

'But we agreed that a city was just when its three natural constituents were each doing their job, and that it was disciplined and brave and wise in virtue of certain other states and dispositions of those constituents.'

'That is so,' he said.

1. Cf. Field, *Plato* (H.U.L.), p. 96; for Butler see Duncan-Jones, *Butler's Moral Philosophy* (Pelican).

'Well, then,' I continued, 'we shall expect the individual to have the same three constituents in his character and to be affected similarly, if we are to be justified in attributing the same virtues to him.'

'That must follow.'

'Another nice little inquiry we've tumbled into!' I exclaimed. 'Has the character these three constituents or not?'

'I shouldn't call it a little inquiry,' he said; 'but it's probably true enough that, as the saying goes, anything that's worthwhile is difficult.'

'So it seems. And I assure you that in my opinion we shall never find an exact answer by the method of argument we are using now – to get one we should have to go much further afield[1]; but we can probably find one that will satisfy the standards of our present discussion.'

'That's good enough,' he replied; 'at any rate, it would suit me for the present.'

'And it will be quite enough for me.'

'Then press on with the investigation.'

'Well, we are bound to admit that the qualities that characterize a state must also exist in the individuals that compose it. There is nowhere else for them to come from. It would be absurd to suppose that the vigour and energy for which northern people like the Thracians and Scythians have a reputation aren't due to their individual citizens; and similarly with in-
436 telligence, which is characteristic of our own part of the world, or with the commercial instinct which one attributes particularly to the Phoenicians and Egyptians.'

'That's perfectly true.'

'Here, then, we have a fact which is not particularly difficult to recognize. What is difficult is to see whether we perform all our functions with the same part of us, or each with a different part. Do we learn with one part of us, feel angry with another, and desire the pleasures of eating and sex with another? Or do we employ our mind as a whole when our energies are em-

1. Plato refers to this longer treatment again in Bk VI (p. 267), and, in fact, gives it in Bks VI–VII.

ployed in any of these ways? These are questions it's difficult to answer satisfactorily.'

'I agree,' he said.

'Then let us try to decide whether the faculties concerned are the same or different.'

'How are we to do it?'

'Clearly one and the same thing cannot act or be affected in opposite ways at the same time in the same part of it and in relation to the same object; so if we meet these contradictions, we shall know we are dealing with more than one faculty.'

'Granted.'

'Then look – can a thing be at rest and in motion at the same time and in the same part of itself?'

'No.'

'Let us be even more precise, to avoid ambiguities later on. If we were told that a man, who was standing still but moving his hands and his head, was both at rest and in motion, we should not accept that as a proper statement of the case, but say that part of him was standing still and part of him in motion. Isn't that so?'

'Yes.'

'We might have a still more ingenious case put to us. It might plausibly be argued that a top, spinning round a fixed axis, is both at rest and in motion as a whole, as indeed is any body in circular motion on the same spot. We should not agree, but argue that it is not the same *parts* of such bodies that are at rest and in motion; they have both an axis and a circumference, and their axis, as it has no inclination in any direction, is at rest, but their circumference is in motion. And further, if their axis inclines in any direction, right or left, up or down, while they are still spinning, then they are not at rest at all.'

'That is quite correct,' he agreed.

'We shan't, then, be shaken by instances of this kind into believing that the same thing can act or be affected in opposite ways, or have opposite qualities, at the same time in the same part of itself and in relation to the same thing.' 437

'*I* certainly shan't.'

'Anyway,' I said, 'we don't want to have to examine all such

objections and prove at length they aren't true, so let us proceed on the assumption we are right, it being understood that if we see reason to change our minds all the consequences of our assumption will fall to the ground.'

'Yes, that's the thing to do.'

'Then would you not class assent and dissent, impulse and aversion, attraction and repulsion and the like as *opposite* actions or states – no matter which?'

'Yes,' he said, 'I should.'

'And what about hunger and thirst and the desires generally,' I went on, 'or, again, willing and wishing, don't they all fall into one of the two groups of opposites just mentioned? When a man's mind desires anything, has he not an *impulse* towards it? If he wishes to get anything, does he not feel *attraction* for it? And if he wills to have a want satisfied, is it not as a result of *assent* given to an inward question prompted by his longing for it?'

'I agree.'

'And what about disinclination, unwillingness and dislike? Shouldn't we put them in the opposite group, with repulsion and rejection?'

'Of course.'

'That being so, we can say that the desires form a class, of which those we call thirst and hunger are the clearest examples.'

'Yes.'

'And thirst is the desire for drink, hunger for food?'

'Yes.'

'Then is thirst, in so far as it is thirst, the desire for anything more than simply drink? Is it thirst for hot drink or cold, for a lot to drink or a little, or for any particular kind of drink at all? Isn't it rather that if you are hot as well as thirsty you want a cold drink, while if you're cold you want a hot one; and if your thirst is great you want a lot to drink, if it's small you only want a little? Simple thirst, on the other hand, is the desire for its natural object, drink, without qualification: and the same is true of hunger and food.'

'In that case,' he said, 'each desire is directed simply towards its own natural object, and any qualification is an addition.'

'And we must beware,' I went on, 'of letting ourselves be 438
upset by the objection that no one simply desires drink, but drink that is good for him, and similarly food that is good for him. For – so runs the argument – all men desire what is good for them, and therefore, if thirst is a desire, it will be the desire for drink (or what not) that is good for one; and the same is true of the other desires.'[1]

'It's an argument which perhaps has some force,' he said.

'Yes,' I answered, 'but among correlative terms either both must be qualified or both unqualified.'

'I don't understand.'

'Well, you can understand that "greater" must always mean greater than something which is *smaller*.'

'Yes.'

'And *much* greater means *much* greater than something *much* smaller. Agreed?'

'Yes.'

'And the same is true of greater and smaller *in the past* or *in the future*.'

'Of course. What then?'

'And is not the same also true of more and less, double and half and the like, of heavier and lighter, quicker and slower, of hot and cold, and indeed of all relative terms?'

'Yes, it is.'

'But what about knowledge? Isn't the same thing true again? Knowledge unqualified is knowledge of an object (or whatever you like to call it); knowledge of a particular kind and type is knowledge of a particular kind and type of object. For example, when men discovered how to make houses, this was a form of knowledge differing from others, and was called building. And wasn't it so called because it is knowledge

1. The object here, and in the following argument is 'to distinguish thirst as a mere blind craving for drink, from a more complex desire whose object includes the pleasure or health expected to result from drinking' (Cornford, p. 131). In particular, there is the Socratic argument, referred to in this passage, that all desire is directed towards 'the good'. 'It is necessary to insist that we do experience blind cravings which can be isolated from any judgement about the goodness of their object' (Cornford, *loc. cit.*).

of a certain *type*, different from all other kinds of knowledge?'

'Yes.'

'And isn't it knowledge of a certain type because it has a certain type of object? And is not the same true of all forms of knowledge and technique?'

'Yes, that is so.'

'I hope you can see now,' I said, 'that that is what I meant when I said that among correlative terms both must be unqualified or both qualified. And I don't mean that you can transfer the epithet simply from one term to the other, saying for example that the knowledge of health and disease is healthy and diseased, or that the knowledge of good and evil is itself good and evil. What I mean is that when the object of knowledge is of a particular kind, for example health or disease, then the knowledge itself must also be of a particular kind and is in consequence no longer called knowledge simply, but medical knowledge, which has a particular kind of object.'

'I understand; and I think you are right.'

439 'Then isn't thirst a relative term?' I asked. 'For it is, of course, the desire –'

'– for drink; I agree,' he said.

'And for a particular *kind* of drink there will be a particular kind of thirst. But thirst in itself is the desire not for a lot or a little to drink, or for good drink or bad, or, in a word, for any *kind* of drink at all, but for drink pure and simple.'

'Exactly.'

'The mind of the thirsty man, therefore, in so far as he is thirsty, simply wants to drink, and it is to that end that its energies are directed.'

'Clearly.'

'If therefore there is something in it that resists its thirst, it must be some part of it other than the thirsty impulse which is dragging it like a wild animal to drink. For we have agreed that the same thing cannot act in opposite ways with the same part of itself towards the same object.'

'That is impossible.'

'For instance, it is not fair to say that an archer's hands are pulling and pushing the bow at the same time, but that one hand is pushing it, the other pulling.'

'Certainly.'

'Now, can we say that men are sometimes unwilling to drink even though they are thirsty?'

'Oh yes; that is often true,' he said.

'Then how are we to describe such cases?' I asked. 'Must we not say that there is one element in their minds which bids them drink, and a second which prevents them and masters the first?'

'I suppose so.'

'And isn't the element of control, when present, due to our reason, while the urges and impulses are due to our feelings and unhealthy cravings?'

'Clearly so.'

'Then we shan't be without justification if we recognize these two elements as distinct. We can call the reflective element in the mind the reason, and the element with which it feels hunger and thirst, and the agitations of sex and other desires, the irrational appetite – an element closely connected with pleasure and satisfaction.'

'That is a perfectly reasonable distinction,' he agreed.

'Well, we've defined two elements in the mind, then,' I said. 'Now, is indignation, and the part in which we feel it, a third element, or is it of the same nature as one of the two we have defined?'

'Maybe it's the same as appetite,' he said.

'I rely on a story I once heard,' I answered. 'It's about Leontion, son of Aglaion, who was on his way up from the Peiraeus, outside the north wall, when he noticed some corpses lying on the ground with the executioner standing by them. He wanted to go and look at them, and yet at the same time held himself back in disgust. For a time he struggled with himself and averted his eyes, but in the end his desire got the better of him and he ran up to the corpses, opening his eyes wide and saying to them, "There you are, curse you – a lovely sight! Have a real good look!"' 440

'I've heard the story too.'

'And it shows,' I said 'that anger is different from desire and sometimes opposes it.'

'Yes, it does.'

'And don't we often see a man whose desires are trying to force him to do something his reason disapproves of cursing himself and getting indignant with them? It's like a struggle between political factions, with indignation fighting on the side of reason. But I don't suppose you've ever observed indignation, either in yourself or in anyone else, taking the side of the desires once reason has decided a course is wrong.' [1]

'No, certainly not.'

'And what about a man who feels he's in the wrong? The more honest he is, the less angry he feels at hunger or thirst or any similar suffering which he thinks is inflicted on him with justification. He simply refuses to feel indignant about it.'

'Quite true.'

'But it's quite different if he thinks he's being wronged. Then his heart boils with indignation and fights obstinately for what he thinks right, persevering and winning through hunger and cold and all similar trials. It won't give up the struggle till death or victory, or till reason calls it back to heel like a shepherd calls his dog.'

'That describes it exactly,' he agreed; 'and,' he went on, 'in our state we said the Auxiliaries were to be like watchdogs

1. As it stands this sentence overstates the case. A few sentences below Plato makes the proviso that the second element is reason's 'natural auxiliary, unless corrupted by bad upbringing'. It is an essential feature of his moral theory that different elements predominate to different degrees in different types of character (see Books VIII–IX), and that the control of reason is not always perfect. Reason's 'natural auxiliary' may be 'corrupted', and the three elements in the mind may 'interfere with each other' and try to 'do each other's business'. Perhaps in such cases reason is 'corrupted' too; it is not easy to define Plato's meaning precisely. But this should not prevent us from seeing the simple moral fact that he is trying to describe; and moralists have commonly insisted that 'self-love', 'self-regard', and 'self-interest', if 'enlightened', will lead to moral conduct – self-love, said Butler, in general 'coincides with virtue'. Unfortunately 'self-love' is all too often not enlightened; the fact is clear, though it may be difficult to say why and how.

obeying the Rulers, who were the shepherds of the community.'

'I see you quite understand what I mean. But there's another point.'

'What?'

'That we've changed our mind about this third element in the mind. We were wondering if it was something like appetite; now we have gone to the other extreme and are saying that, when there's a conflict in the mind, it's more likely to fight for reason.'

'That's quite true.'

'Then is it different from reason? Or is it a species of reason, and are there not three, but only two elements in the mind, reason and appetite? The state was made up of three classes, 441
businessmen, auxiliaries, and governors; is the mind like it in having spirit as a third element, which, unless corrupted by bad upbringing, is reason's natural auxiliary?'

'There must be a third element.'

'Yes there must,' I said, 'if spirit can be shown to be distinct from reason, as it is from appetite.'

'But that's not difficult to prove,' he answered. 'You can see it in children, who are full of spirit as soon as they're born; but some never seem to become reasonable, and most of them only at a late stage.'

'That puts it very well,' I agreed; 'and you can see the same thing in animals. There is further evidence in the passage from Homer we quoted before,[1] where Odysseus "strikes himself on the chest and calls his heart to order". It is clear enough that Homer here makes one element rebuke another, distinguishing the power to reflect about good and evil from unreasoning passion.'

'You are absolutely right.'

§3. JUSTICE IN THE INDIVIDUAL

Justice in the individual is now defined analogously to justice in the state. The individual is wise and brave in virtue of his reason and

1. 390 d: *Odyssey*, xx, 17.

'spirit' respectively: he is disciplined when 'spirit' and appetite are in proper subordination to reason. He is just in virtue of the harmony which exists when all three elements of the mind perform their proper function and so achieve their proper fulfilment; he is unjust when no such harmony exists.

'Well, it's been a rough passage, but we've got there all right and are pretty well agreed that there are the same three elements in the individual as in the state.'

'True.'

'Must it not follow, then, that the individual is wise in the same way and with the same part of himself as the state? And similarly with courage and with all the other virtues?'

'It must.'

'And so, my dear Glaucon,' I went on, 'we shall also say that the individual man is just in the same way that the state is just.'

'That must follow too.'

'And I suppose we have not forgotten that the state was just when the three elements within it each minded their own business.'

'No, I don't think we've forgotten that.'

'Then we must remember that each of us will be just, and do his duty, only if each part of him is performing its proper function.'

'Yes, we must certainly remember that.'

'So the reason ought to rule, having the ability and foresight to act for the whole, and the spirit ought to obey and support it. And this concord between them is effected, as we said, by a combination of intellectual and physical training,
442 which tunes up the reason by intellectual training and tones down the crudeness of natural high spirits by harmony and rhythm.'

'Certainly.'

'When these two elements have been brought up and trained to their proper function, they must be put in charge of appetite, which forms the greater part of each man's make-up and is naturally insatiable. They must prevent it taking its fill

of the so-called physical pleasures, for otherwise it will get too large and strong to mind its own business and will try to subject and control the other elements, which it has no right to do, and so wreck life entirely.'

'True.'

'At the same time,' I went on, 'won't these two elements be the best defence that mind and body have against external enemies? One of them will do the thinking, the other will fight under the orders of its superior and provide the courage to carry its decisions into effect.'

'Yes, I agree.'

'And we call an individual brave, I think, when he has the spirit to obey reason in danger, in spite of pleasure and pain?'

'That is quite right.'

'And we call him wise in virtue of that small part of him which is in control and issues the orders, knowing as it does what is best for each of the three elements and for the whole.'

'Yes, I agree.'

'Then don't we call him self-controlled when all these three elements are in harmonious agreement, when reason and its subordinates are all agreed that reason should rule and there is no dissension?'

'That is exactly what we mean by self-control or discipline in a city or in an individual.'

'And a man will be just in virtue of the principle we have referred to so often.'

'That must be so.'

'Well, then,' I said, 'is our picture in any way indistinct? Does it look as if justice in the individual were different from what we found it to be in the state?'

'I can't see any difference,' he answered.

'If there are still any doubts in anyone's mind,' I said, 'a few elementary examples should finally convince them.'

'What sort of examples?'

'Well, suppose for instance we were asked whether our state or a man of corresponding nature and training would

embezzle money. Do you think we should reckon him more
443 likely to do it than other people?'

'He would be the last person to do such a thing.'

'And wouldn't it be out of the question for him to commit sacrilege or theft, or to betray his friends or his country?'

'Out of the question.'

'And he would never break any promise or agreement, and be most unlikely to commit adultery, dishonour his parents or be irreligious.'

'Most unlikely.'

'And is not the reason for all this that each element within him is performing its proper function, whether it is giving or obeying orders?'

'Yes, that is the reason.'

'Are you now convinced, then, that justice is the quality that produces men and states of this character?'

'Yes, I am quite convinced,' he said.

'So our dream has come true, and, as we guessed, we have been lucky enough to run across an elementary type of justice right at the beginning of the foundation of our state.'

'Yes, we have.'

'In fact the provision that the man naturally fitted to be a shoemaker, or carpenter, or anything else, should stick to his own trade has turned out to be a kind of image of justice – hence its usefulness.'

'So it seems.'

'Justice, therefore, we may say, is a principle of this kind; but its real concern is not with external actions, but with a man's inward self. The just man will not allow the three elements which make up his inward self to trespass on each other's functions or interfere with each other, but, by keeping all three in tune, like the notes of a scale (high, middle, and low, or whatever they be), will in the truest sense set his house in order, and be his own lord and master and at peace with himself. When he has bound these elements into a single controlled and orderly whole, and so unified himself, he will be ready for action of any kind, whether personal, financial, political or

commercial, and whenever he calls any course of action just and fair, he will mean that it contributes to and helps to maintain this disposition of mind, and will call the knowledge which controls such action wisdom Similarly, by injustice he will mean any action destructive of this disposition, and by ignorance the ideas which control such action.' 444

'That is all absolutely true, Socrates.'

'Good,' I said. 'So we shan't be very far wrong if we claim to have discerned what the just man and the just state are, and in what their justice consists.'

'Certainly not'

'Shall we make the claim, then?'

'Yes'

'So much for that,' I said. 'And next, I suppose, we ought to consider injustice'

'Obviously'

'It must be some kind of internal quarrel between these same three elements, when they interfere with each other and trespass on each other's functions, or when one of them sets itself up to control the whole when it has no business to do so, because its natural role is one of subordination to the control of its superior. This sort of situation, when the elements of the mind are in confusion, is what produces injustice, indiscipline, cowardice, ignorance and vice of all kinds.'

'Yes, that's so'

'And if we know what injustice and justice are, it's clear enough, isn't it, what is meant by acting unjustly and doing wrong or, again, by acting justly?'

'How do you mean?'

'Well,' I said, 'there is an analogy here with physical health and sickness'

'How?'

'Healthy activities produce health, and unhealthy activities produce sickness.'

'True.'

'Well, then, don't just actions produce justice, and unjust actions injustice?'

'They must.'

'And as health is produced by establishing a natural order of control and subordination among the constituents of the body, disease by the opposite process, so justice is produced by establishing in the mind a similar order of control and subordination among its constituents, and injustice by the opposite process.'

'Certainly.'

'It seems, then, that virtue is a kind of mental health or beauty or fitness, and vice a kind of illness or deformity or weakness.'

'That is so.'

'And virtue and vice are in turn the result of one's practice, good or bad.'

'They must be.'

§4. CONCLUSION

The definition of justice has now been given; but Socrates has been asked (p. 99 above) not only to define it, but to show that it pays better in all circumstances than injustice. This, says Glaucon, is now as self-evident as that health is preferable to disease. But Socrates objects that it cannot be fully seen until our study of the good state and the good man, now complete, is supplemented by a study of the different forms of bad state and corresponding bad character. Of these there are four, and Socrates is about to describe them, when he is interrupted. He does not return to the description until Book VIII.

'We are left, then, I suppose, with the question whether it pays to act justly and do right and be just irrespective of ap-
445 pearances, or to do wrong and be unjust provided you escape punishment and consequent improvement.'

'I think we have already shown the question to be an absurd one, Socrates,' he replied. 'Men don't reckon that life is worth living when their physical health breaks down, even though they have all the food and drink and wealth and power in the