

The Republic of Plato. Translated by Alexander Kerr. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co. Parts I to VII.

We are accustomed to receive from these publishers paper-bound literature of a radical type, mostly by foreign authors, but rarely anything so revolu-

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tionary as this. The translator does not state what is the language of the original, and the author's name is not in "Who's Who," but he is presumably a young man, to judge from the rashness of his speculations and his evident desire to be up-to-date in all respects. He has adopted as a medium of expression for his political and educational theories the dialog form, which Dickinson, Mallock and Shaw have made popular. He is, of course, a Socialist, but so advanced in his views as to make Marx look like a back number. He has taken up with the eugenics idea, but, as usual, carries it to an extreme, advocating nothing less than the abolition of our present marriage system, which the British Eugenics Society is so careful to respect. We should be compelled to admit the justice of many of his criticisms of the educational methods now in vogue, but here again he goes too far. He would give natural sciences and physical culture almost a monopoly of the curriculum, thus crowding out entirely the ancient languages, literature and history. This shows that he is altogether ignorant of the generally accepted principle of our foremost educators that no one can use his native language with force and propriety who is not familiar with its historic development from antiquity. Mr. Plato shows himself too narrowly pragmatic when he refuses to admit any study for which he can see no use in actual life. He seems to have no conception of pure culture and he understands "science for science's sake" as little as he does "art for art's sake." But he is in accord with the best pedagogic practice of today when he insists that force should not be used in the school, that studies for children should be a sort of play, and that their natural aptitudes should be discovered and developed. He is emphatic in his warning against the tendency of the times to pay too much attention to the industrial and commercial applications of a study, to the neglect of its higher aspects. Astronomy as now taught, he says, turns men's eyes to the ground instead of upward. This sounds like one of Chesterton's paradoxical remarks, but we would not accuse our author of plagiarism without looking it up. Mr. Plato is a strong suffragist and says that it is as absurd to

exclude women from full citizenship as to argue that if bald men are cobblers, we must forbid men with hair to follow the same trade. But he is not blind to the faults which have developed in democratic government, and has evidently acquainted himself with the recent literature on mob-psychology. As we have indicated, Mr. Plato touches on a great variety of topics, and his observations are frequently brilliant and suggestive. But the book is calculated to be unsettling to immature minds, and college authorities will doubtless see that it is not admitted to their libraries. We could not conscientiously refrain from criticism, but we hope that nothing we have said will discourage the author from continuing his promising work. He is undeniably a man of talent, perhaps even with a spark of genius, and we shall await the rest of the series with interest.

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