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Charmides:

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Plato

Charmides

TO MY FORMER PUPILS

in Balliol College and in the University of Oxford who during fifty years have been the best of friends to me these volumes are inscribed in grateful recognition of their never failing attachment.

The additions and alterations which have been made, both in the Introductions and in the Text of this Edition, affect at least a third of the work.

Having regard to the extent of these alterations, and to the annoyance which is naturally felt by the owner of a book at the possession of it in an inferior form, and still more keenly by the writer himself, who must always desire to be read as he is at his best, I have thought that the possessor of either of the former Editions (1870 and 1876) might wish to exchange it for the present one. I have therefore arranged that those who would like to make this exchange, on depositing a perfect and undamaged copy of the first or second Edition with any agent of the Clarendon Press, shall be entitled to receive a copy of a new Edition at half-price.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The Text which has been mostly followed in this Translation of Plato is the latest 8vo. edition of Stallbaum; the principal deviations are noted at the bottom of the page.

I have to acknowledge many obligations to old friends and pupils. These are: – Mr. John Purves, Fellow of Balliol College, with whom I have revised about half of the entire Translation; the Rev. Professor Campbell, of St. Andrews, who has helped me in the revision of several parts of the work, especially of the Theaetetus, Sophist, and Politicus; Mr. Robinson Ellis, Fellow of Trinity College, and Mr. Alfred Robinson, Fellow of New College, who read with me the Cratylus and the Gorgias; Mr. Paravicini, Student of Christ Church, who assisted me in the Symposium; Mr. Raper, Fellow of Queen's College, Mr. Monro, Fellow of Oriel College, and Mr. Shadwell, Student of Christ Church, who gave me similar assistance in the Laws. Dr. Greenhill, of Hastings, has also kindly sent me remarks on the physiological part of the Timaeus, which I have inserted as corrections under the head of errata at the end of the Introduction. The degree of accuracy which I have been enabled to attain is in great measure due to these gentlemen, and I heartily thank them for the pains and time which they have bestowed on my work.

I have further to explain how far I have received help

from other labourers in the same field. The books which I have found of most use are Steinhart and Muller's German Translation of Plato with Introductions; Zeller's 'Philosophie der Griechen,' and 'Platonische Studien;' Susemihl's 'Genetische Entwicklung der Platonischen Philosophie;' Hermann's 'Geschichte der Platonischen Philosophie;' Bonitz, 'Platonische Studien;' Stallbaum's Notes and Introductions; Professor Campbell's editions of the 'Theaetetus,' the 'Sophist,' and the 'Politicus;' Professor Thompson's 'Phaedrus;' Th. Martin's 'Etudes sur le Timee;' Mr. Poste's edition and translation of the 'Philebus;' the Translation of the 'Republic,' by Messrs. Davies and Vaughan, and the Translation of the 'Gorgias,' by Mr. Cope.

I have also derived much assistance from the great work of Mr. Grote, which contains excellent analyses of the Dialogues, and is rich in original thoughts and observations. I agree with him in rejecting as futile the attempt of Schleiermacher and others to arrange the Dialogues of Plato into a harmonious whole. Any such arrangement appears to me not only to be unsupported by evidence, but to involve an anachronism in the history of philosophy. There is a common spirit in the writings of Plato, but not a unity of design in the whole, nor perhaps a perfect unity in any single Dialogue. The hypothesis of a general plan which is worked out in the successive Dialogues is an after-thought of the critics who have attributed a system to writings belonging to an age when system had not as yet taken possession of philosophy.

If Mr. Grote should do me the honour to read any portion of this work he will probably remark that I have endeavoured to approach Plato from a point of view which is opposed to his own. The aim of the Introductions in these volumes has been to represent Plato as the father of Idealism, who is not to be measured by the standard of utilitarianism or any other modern philosophical system. He is the poet or maker of ideas, satisfying the wants of his own age, providing the instruments of thought for future generations. He is no dreamer, but a great philosophical genius struggling with the unequal conditions of light and knowledge under which he is living. He may be illustrated by the writings of moderns, but he must be interpreted by his own, and by his place in the history of philosophy. We are not concerned to determine what is the residuum of truth which remains for ourselves. His truth may not be our truth, and nevertheless may have an extraordinary value and interest for us.

I cannot agree with Mr. Grote in admitting as genuine all the writings commonly attributed to Plato in antiquity, any more than with Schaarschmidt and some other German critics who reject nearly half of them. The German critics, to whom I refer, proceed chiefly on grounds of internal evidence; they appear to me to lay too much stress on the variety of doctrine and style, which must be equally acknowledged as a fact, even in the Dialogues regarded by Schaarschmidt as genuine, e.g. in the Phaedrus, or Symposium, when compared with the Laws. He who admits works so different in style and matter to have been

the composition of the same author, need have no difficulty in admitting the Sophist or the Politicus. (The negative argument adduced by the same school of critics, which is based on the silence of Aristotle, is not worthy of much consideration. For why should Aristotle, because he has quoted several Dialogues of Plato, have quoted them all? Something must be allowed to chance, and to the nature of the subjects treated of in them.) On the other hand, Mr. Grote trusts mainly to the Alexandrian Canon. But I hardly think that we are justified in attributing much weight to the authority of the Alexandrian librarians in an age when there was no regular publication of books, and every temptation to forge them; and in which the writings of a school were naturally attributed to the founder of the school. And even without intentional fraud, there was an inclination to believe rather than to enquire. Would Mr. Grote accept as genuine all the writings which he finds in the lists of learned ancients attributed to Hippocrates, to Xenophon, to Aristotle? The Alexandrian Canon of the Platonic writings is deprived of credit by the admission of the Epistles, which are not only unworthy of Plato, and in several passages plagiarized from him, but flagrantly at variance with historical fact. It will be seen also that I do not agree with Mr. Grote's views about the Sophists; nor with the low estimate which he has formed of Plato's Laws; nor with his opinion respecting Plato's doctrine of the rotation of the earth. But I 'am not going to lay hands on my father Parmenides' (Soph.), who will, I hope, forgive me for differing

from him on these points. I cannot close this Preface without expressing my deep respect for his noble and gentle character, and the great services which he has rendered to Greek Literature.

Balliol College, January, 1871.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND AND THIRD EDITIONS

In publishing a Second Edition (1875) of the Dialogues of Plato in English, I had to acknowledge the assistance of several friends: of the Rev. G.G. Bradley, Master of University College, now Dean of Westminster, who sent me some valuable remarks on the Phaedo; of Dr. Greenhill, who had again revised a portion of the Timaeus; of Mr. R.L. Nettleship, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, to whom I was indebted for an excellent criticism of the Parmenides; and, above all, of the Rev. Professor Campbell of St. Andrews, and Mr. Paravicini, late Student of Christ Church and Tutor of Balliol College, with whom I had read over the greater part of the translation. I was also indebted to Mr. Evelyn Abbott, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, for a complete and accurate index.

In this, the Third Edition, I am under very great obligations to Mr. Matthew Knight, who has not only favoured me with valuable suggestions throughout the work, but has largely extended the Index (from 61 to 175 pages) and translated the Eryxias and Second Alcibiades; and to Mr Frank Fletcher, of Balliol College, my Secretary. I am also considerably indebted to Mr. J.W. Mackail, late Fellow of Balliol College, who read over the Republic in the Second Edition and noted several

inaccuracies.

In both editions the Introductions to the Dialogues have been enlarged, and essays on subjects having an affinity to the Platonic Dialogues have been introduced into several of them. The analyses have been corrected, and innumerable alterations have been made in the Text. There have been added also, in the Third Edition, headings to the pages and a marginal analysis to the text of each dialogue.

At the end of a long task, the translator may without impropriety point out the difficulties which he has had to encounter. These have been far greater than he would have anticipated; nor is he at all sanguine that he has succeeded in overcoming them. Experience has made him feel that a translation, like a picture, is dependent for its effect on very minute touches; and that it is a work of infinite pains, to be returned to in many moods and viewed in different lights.

I. An English translation ought to be idiomatic and interesting, not only to the scholar, but to the unlearned reader. Its object should not simply be to render the words of one language into the words of another or to preserve the construction and order of the original; – this is the ambition of a schoolboy, who wishes to show that he has made a good use of his Dictionary and Grammar; but is quite unworthy of the translator, who seeks to produce on his reader an impression similar or nearly similar to that produced by the original. To him the feeling should be more important than the exact word. He should remember Dryden's

quaint admonition not to 'lacquey by the side of his author, but to mount up behind him.' (Dedication to the Aeneis.) He must carry in his mind a comprehensive view of the whole work, of what has preceded and of what is to follow, – as well as of the meaning of particular passages. His version should be based, in the first instance, on an intimate knowledge of the text; but the precise order and arrangement of the words may be left to fade out of sight, when the translation begins to take shape. He must form a general idea of the two languages, and reduce the one to the terms of the other. His work should be rhythmical and varied, the right admixture of words and syllables, and even of letters, should be carefully attended to; above all, it should be equable in style. There must also be quantity, which is necessary in prose as well as in verse: clauses, sentences, paragraphs, must be in due proportion. Metre and even rhyme may be rarely admitted; though neither is a legitimate element of prose writing, they may help to lighten a cumbrous expression (Symp.). The translation should retain as far as possible the characteristic qualities of the ancient writer – his freedom, grace, simplicity, stateliness, weight, precision; or the best part of him will be lost to the English reader. It should read as an original work, and should also be the most faithful transcript which can be made of the language from which the translation is taken, consistently with the first requirement of all, that it be English. Further, the translation being English, it should also be perfectly intelligible in itself without reference to the Greek, the English being really the

more lucid and exact of the two languages. In some respects it may be maintained that ordinary English writing, such as the newspaper article, is superior to Plato: at any rate it is couched in language which is very rarely obscure. On the other hand, the greatest writers of Greece, Thucydides, Plato, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Demosthenes, are generally those which are found to be most difficult and to diverge most widely from the English idiom. The translator will often have to convert the more abstract Greek into the more concrete English, or vice versa, and he ought not to force upon one language the character of another. In some cases, where the order is confused, the expression feeble, the emphasis misplaced, or the sense somewhat faulty, he will not strive in his rendering to reproduce these characteristics, but will re-write the passage as his author would have written it at first, had he not been 'nodding'; and he will not hesitate to supply anything which, owing to the genius of the language or some accident of composition, is omitted in the Greek, but is necessary to make the English clear and consecutive.

It is difficult to harmonize all these conflicting elements. In a translation of Plato what may be termed the interests of the Greek and English are often at war with one another. In framing the English sentence we are insensibly diverted from the exact meaning of the Greek; when we return to the Greek we are apt to cramp and overlay the English. We substitute, we compromise, we give and take, we add a little here and leave out a little there. The translator may sometimes be allowed to sacrifice minute

accuracy for the sake of clearness and sense. But he is not therefore at liberty to omit words and turns of expression which the English language is quite capable of supplying. He must be patient and self-controlled; he must not be easily run away with. Let him never allow the attraction of a favourite expression, or a sonorous cadence, to overpower his better judgment, or think much of an ornament which is out of keeping with the general character of his work. He must ever be casting his eyes upwards from the copy to the original, and down again from the original to the copy (Rep.). His calling is not held in much honour by the world of scholars; yet he himself may be excused for thinking it a kind of glory to have lived so many years in the companionship of one of the greatest of human intelligences, and in some degree, more perhaps than others, to have had the privilege of understanding him (Sir Joshua Reynolds' Lectures: Disc. xv.).

There are fundamental differences in Greek and English, of which some may be managed while others remain intractable. (1). The structure of the Greek language is partly adversative and alternative, and partly inferential; that is to say, the members of a sentence are either opposed to one another, or one of them expresses the cause or effect or condition or reason of another. The two tendencies may be called the horizontal and perpendicular lines of the language; and the opposition or inference is often much more one of words than of ideas. But modern languages have rubbed off this adversative and

inferential form: they have fewer links of connection, there is less mortar in the interstices, and they are content to place sentences side by side, leaving their relation to one another to be gathered from their position or from the context. The difficulty of preserving the effect of the Greek is increased by the want of adversative and inferential particles in English, and by the nice sense of tautology which characterizes all modern languages. We cannot have two 'buts' or two 'fors' in the same sentence where the Greek repeats (Greek). There is a similar want of particles expressing the various gradations of objective and subjective thought – (Greek) and the like, which are so thickly scattered over the Greek page. Further, we can only realize to a very imperfect degree the common distinction between (Greek), and the combination of the two suggests a subtle shade of negation which cannot be expressed in English. And while English is more dependent than Greek upon the apposition of clauses and sentences, yet there is a difficulty in using this form of construction owing to the want of case endings. For the same reason there cannot be an equal variety in the order of words or an equal nicety of emphasis in English as in Greek.

(2) The formation of the sentence and of the paragraph greatly differs in Greek and English. The lines by which they are divided are generally much more marked in modern languages than in ancient. Both sentences and paragraphs are more precise and definite – they do not run into one another. They are also more regularly developed from within. The sentence marks another

step in an argument or a narrative or a statement; in reading a paragraph we silently turn over the page and arrive at some new view or aspect of the subject. Whereas in Plato we are not always certain where a sentence begins and ends; and paragraphs are few and far between. The language is distributed in a different way, and less articulated than in English. For it was long before the true use of the period was attained by the classical writers both in poetry or prose; it was (Greek). The balance of sentences and the introduction of paragraphs at suitable intervals must not be neglected if the harmony of the English language is to be preserved. And still a caution has to be added on the other side, that we must avoid giving it a numerical or mechanical character.

(3) This, however, is not one of the greatest difficulties of the translator; much greater is that which arises from the restriction of the use of the genders. Men and women in English are masculine and feminine, and there is a similar distinction of sex in the words denoting animals; but all things else, whether outward objects or abstract ideas, are relegated to the class of neuters. Hardly in some flight of poetry do we ever endue any of them with the characteristics of a sentient being, and then only by speaking of them in the feminine gender. The virtues may be pictured in female forms, but they are not so described in language; a ship is humorously supposed to be the sailor's bride; more doubtful are the personifications of church and country as females. Now the genius of the Greek language is the opposite of this. The same tendency to personification which is seen

in the Greek mythology is common also in the language; and genders are attributed to things as well as persons according to their various degrees of strength and weakness; or from fanciful resemblances to the male or female form, or some analogy too subtle to be discovered. When the gender of any object was once fixed, a similar gender was naturally assigned to similar objects, or to words of similar formation. This use of genders in the denotation of objects or ideas not only affects the words to which genders are attributed, but the words with which they are construed or connected, and passes into the general character of the style. Hence arises a difficulty in translating Greek into English which cannot altogether be overcome. Shall we speak of the soul and its qualities, of virtue, power, wisdom, and the like, as feminine or neuter? The usage of the English language does not admit of the former, and yet the life and beauty of the style are impaired by the latter. Often the translator will have recourse to the repetition of the word, or to the ambiguous 'they,' 'their,' etc.; for fear of spoiling the effect of the sentence by introducing 'it.' Collective nouns in Greek and English create a similar but lesser awkwardness.

(4) To use of relation is far more extended in Greek than in English. Partly the greater variety of genders and cases makes the connexion of relative and antecedent less ambiguous: partly also the greater number of demonstrative and relative pronouns, and the use of the article, make the correlation of ideas simpler and more natural. The Greek appears to have had an

ear or intelligence for a long and complicated sentence which is rarely to be found in modern nations; and in order to bring the Greek down to the level of the modern, we must break up the long sentence into two or more short ones. Neither is the same precision required in Greek as in Latin or English, nor in earlier Greek as in later; there was nothing shocking to the contemporary of Thucydides and Plato in anacolutha and repetitions. In such cases the genius of the English language requires that the translation should be more intelligible than the Greek. The want of more distinctions between the demonstrative pronouns is also greatly felt. Two genitives dependent on one another, unless familiarised by idiom, have an awkward effect in English. Frequently the noun has to take the place of the pronoun. 'This' and 'that' are found repeating themselves to weariness in the rough draft of a translation. As in the previous case, while the feeling of the modern language is more opposed to tautology, there is also a greater difficulty in avoiding it.

(5) Though no precise rule can be laid down about the repetition of words, there seems to be a kind of impertinence in presenting to the reader the same thought in the same words, repeated twice over in the same passage without any new aspect or modification of it. And the evasion of tautology – that is, the substitution of one word of precisely the same meaning for another – is resented by us equally with the repetition of words. Yet on the other hand the least difference of meaning or the least change of form from a substantive to an adjective,

or from a participle to a verb, will often remedy the unpleasant effect. Rarely and only for the sake of emphasis or clearness can we allow an important word to be used twice over in two successive sentences or even in the same paragraph. The particles and pronouns, as they are of most frequent occurrence, are also the most troublesome. Strictly speaking, except a few of the commonest of them, 'and,' 'the,' etc., they ought not to occur twice in the same sentence. But the Greek has no such precise rules; and hence any literal translation of a Greek author is full of tautology. The tendency of modern languages is to become more correct as well as more perspicuous than ancient. And, therefore, while the English translator is limited in the power of expressing relation or connexion, by the law of his own language increased precision and also increased clearness are required of him. The familiar use of logic, and the progress of science, have in these two respects raised the standard. But modern languages, while they have become more exacting in their demands, are in many ways not so well furnished with powers of expression as the ancient classical ones.

Such are a few of the difficulties which have to be overcome in the work of translation; and we are far from having exhausted the list. (6) The excellence of a translation will consist, not merely in the faithful rendering of words, or in the composition of a sentence only, or yet of a single paragraph, but in the colour and style of the whole work. Equability of tone is best attained by the exclusive use of familiar and idiomatic words. But great care

must be taken; for an idiomatic phrase, if an exception to the general style, is of itself a disturbing element. No word, however expressive and exact, should be employed, which makes the reader stop to think, or unduly attracts attention by difficulty and peculiarity, or disturbs the effect of the surrounding language. In general the style of one author is not appropriate to another; as in society, so in letters, we expect every man to have 'a good coat of his own,' and not to dress himself out in the rags of another. (a) Archaic expressions are therefore to be avoided. Equivalents may be occasionally drawn from Shakspeare, who is the common property of us all; but they must be used sparingly. For, like some other men of genius of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age, he outdid the capabilities of the language, and many of the expressions which he introduced have been laid aside and have dropped out of use. (b) A similar principle should be observed in the employment of Scripture. Having a greater force and beauty than other language, and a religious association, it disturbs the even flow of the style. It may be used to reproduce in the translation the quaint effect of some antique phrase in the original, but rarely; and when adopted, it should have a certain freshness and a suitable 'entourage.' It is strange to observe that the most effective use of Scripture phraseology arises out of the application of it in a sense not intended by the author. (c) Another caution: metaphors differ in different languages, and the translator will often be compelled to substitute one for another, or to paraphrase them, not giving word for word, but diffusing

over several words the more concentrated thought of the original. The Greek of Plato often goes beyond the English in its imagery: compare Laws, (Greek); Rep.; etc. Or again the modern word, which in substance is the nearest equivalent to the Greek, may be found to include associations alien to Greek life: e.g. (Greek), 'jurymen,' (Greek), 'the bourgeoisie.' (d) The translator has also to provide expressions for philosophical terms of very indefinite meaning in the more definite language of modern philosophy. And he must not allow discordant elements to enter into the work. For example, in translating Plato, it would equally be an anachronism to intrude on him the feeling and spirit of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures or the technical terms of the Hegelian or Darwinian philosophy.

(7) As no two words are precise equivalents (just as no two leaves of the forest are exactly similar), it is a mistaken attempt at precision always to translate the same Greek word by the same English word. There is no reason why in the New Testament (Greek) should always be rendered 'righteousness,' or (Greek) 'covenant.' In such cases the translator may be allowed to employ two words – sometimes when the two meanings occur in the same passage, varying them by an 'or' – e.g. (Greek), 'science' or 'knowledge,' (Greek), 'idea' or 'class,' (Greek), 'temperance' or 'prudence,' – at the point where the change of meaning occurs. If translations are intended not for the Greek scholar but for the general reader, their worst fault will be that they sacrifice the general effect and meaning to the over-precise rendering of

words and forms of speech.

(8) There is no kind of literature in English which corresponds to the Greek Dialogue; nor is the English language easily adapted to it. The rapidity and abruptness of question and answer, the constant repetition of (Greek), etc., which Cicero avoided in Latin (*de Amicit*), the frequent occurrence of expletives, would, if reproduced in a translation, give offence to the reader. Greek has a freer and more frequent use of the Interrogative, and is of a more passionate and emotional character, and therefore lends itself with greater readiness to the dialogue form. Most of the so-called English Dialogues are but poor imitations of Plato, which fall very far short of the original. The breath of conversation, the subtle adjustment of question and answer, the lively play of fancy, the power of drawing characters, are wanting in them. But the Platonic dialogue is a drama as well as a dialogue, of which Socrates is the central figure, and there are lesser performers as well: – the insolence of Thrasymachus, the anger of Callicles and Anytus, the patronizing style of Protagoras, the self-consciousness of Prodicus and Hippias, are all part of the entertainment. To reproduce this living image the same sort of effort is required as in translating poetry. The language, too, is of a finer quality; the mere prose English is slow in lending itself to the form of question and answer, and so the ease of conversation is lost, and at the same time the dialectical precision with which the steps of the argument are drawn out is apt to be impaired.

II. In the Introductions to the Dialogues there have been

added some essays on modern philosophy, and on political and social life. The chief subjects discussed in these are Utility, Communism, the Kantian and Hegelian philosophies, Psychology, and the Origin of Language. (There have been added also in the Third Edition remarks on other subjects. A list of the most important of these additions is given at the end of this Preface.)

Ancient and modern philosophy throw a light upon one another: but they should be compared, not confounded. Although the connexion between them is sometimes accidental, it is often real. The same questions are discussed by them under different conditions of language and civilization; but in some cases a mere word has survived, while nothing or hardly anything of the pre-Socratic, Platonic, or Aristotelian meaning is retained. There are other questions familiar to the moderns, which have no place in ancient philosophy. The world has grown older in two thousand years, and has enlarged its stock of ideas and methods of reasoning. Yet the germ of modern thought is found in ancient, and we may claim to have inherited, notwithstanding many accidents of time and place, the spirit of Greek philosophy. There is, however, no continuous growth of the one into the other, but a new beginning, partly artificial, partly arising out of the questionings of the mind itself, and also receiving a stimulus from the study of ancient writings.

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