THE REPUBLIC By Plato Translated by Benjamin Jowett PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE. Socrates, who is the narrator. Glaucon. Adeimantus. Polemarchus. Cephalus. Thrasymachus. Cleitophon. And others who are mute auditors. The scene is laid in the house of Cephalus at the Pi aeus; and the whole dialogue is narrated by Socrates the day after it actually took place to Timaeus, Hermocrates, Critias, and a nameless person, who are introduced in the Timaeus. BOOK I. I went down yesterday to the Piraeus with Glaucon the son of Ariston, that I might offer up my prayers to the goddess (Bendis, the Thracian Artemis.); and also because I wanted to see in what manner they would celebrate the festival, which was a new thing. I was delighted with the procession of the inhabitants; but that of the Thracians was equally, if not more, beautiful. When we had finished our prayers and viewed the spectacle, we turned in the direction of the city; and at that instant Polemarchus the son of Cephalus chanced to catch sight of us from a distance as we were starting on our way home, and told his servant to run and bid us wait for him. The servant took hold of me by the cloak behind, and said: Polemarchus desires you to wait. I turned round, and asked him where his master was. There he is, said the youth, coming after you, if you will only wait. Certainly we will, said Glaucon; and in a few minutes Polemarc hus appeared, and with him Adeimantus, Glaucon's brother, Niceratus the son of Nicias, and several others who had been at the procession. Polemarchus said to me: I perceive, Socrates, that you and your companion are already on your way to the city. You are not far wrong, I said . But do you see, he rejoined, how many we are? Of course. And are you stronger than all these? for if not, you will have to remain where you are. May there not be the alternative, I said, that we may persuade you to let us go? But can you persuade us, if we refuse to listen to you? h e said. Certainly not, replied Glaucon. Then we are not going to listen; of that you may be assured. Adeimantus added: Has no one told you of the torch-race on horseback in honour of the goddess which will take place in the evening? With horses! I replied: That is a novelty. Will ho rsemen carry torches and pass them one to another during the race? Yes, said Polemarchus, and not only so, but a festival will be celebrated at night, which you certainly ought to see. Let us rise soon after supper and see this festival; there will be a gathering of young men, and w e will have a good talk. Stay then, and do not be perverse. Glaucon said: I suppose, since you insist, that we must. Very good, I replied. Accordingly we went with Polemarchus to his house; and there we found his brothers Lysias and Euthydemus, and with them Thrasymachus the Chalcedonian, Charmantides the Paeanian, and Cleitophon the son of Aristonymus. There too was Cephalus the father of Polemarchus, whom I had not seen for a long time, and I thought him very much aged. He was seated on a cushioned chair, and had a garland on his head, for he had been sacrificing in the court; and there were some other chairs in the room arranged in a semicircle, upon which we sat down by him. He saluted me eagerly, and then he said:-- You don't come to see me, Socrates, as often as you ought: If I were still able to go and see you I would not ask you to come to me. But at my age I can hardly get to the city, and therefore you should come oftener to the Piraeus. For let me tell you, that the more the pleasures of the body fade away, the greater to me is the pleasure and charm of conversation. Do not then deny m y request, but make our house your resort and keep company with these young men; we are old friends, and you will be quite at home with us. I replied: There is nothing which for my part I like better, Cephalus, than conversing with aged men; for I regard them as travellers who hav e gone a journey which I too may have to go, and of whom I ought to enquire, whether the way is smooth and easy, or rugged and difficult. And this is a question which I should like to ask of you who have arrived at that time which the poets call the 'threshold of old age'--Is life hard er towards the end, or what report do you give of it? I will tell you, Socrates, he said, what my own feeling is. Men of my age flock together; we are birds of a feather, as the old proverb says; and at our meetings the tale of my acquaintance commonly is--I cannot eat, I cannot drink; t he pleasures of youth and love are fled away: there was a good time once, but now that is gone, and life is no longer life. Some complain of the slights which are put upon them by relations, and they will tell you sadly of how many evils their old age is the cause. But to me, Socrates, these complainers seem to blame that which is not really in fault. For if old age were the cause, I too being old, and every other old man, would have felt as they do. But this is not my own experience, nor that of others whom I have known. How well I remember the aged poet Sopho cles, when in answer to the question, How does love suit with age, Sophocles,--are you still the man you were? Peace, he replied; most gladly have I escaped the thing of which you speak; I feel as if I had escaped from a mad and furious master. His words have often occurred to my mind since, and they seem as good to me now as at the time when he uttered them. For certainly old age has a great sense of calm and freedom; when the passions relax their hold, then, as Sophocles says, we are freed from the grasp not of one mad master only, but of many. The truth is, Socrates, that these regrets, and also the complaints about relations, are to be attributed to the same cause, which is not old age, but men's characters and tempers; for he who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposit e disposition youth and age are equally a burden. I listened in admiration, and wanting to draw him out, that he might go on--Yes, Cephalus, I said: but I rather suspect that people in general are not convinced by you when you speak thus; they think that old age sits lightly upon you, not because of your happy disposition, but because you are rich, and wealth is well known to be a great comforter. You are right, he replied; they are not convinced: and there is something in what they say; not, however, so much as they imagine. I might answer them as Themistoc les answered the Seriphian who was abusing him and saying that he was famous, not for his own merits but because he was an Athenian: 'If you had been a native of my country or I of yours, neither of us would have been famous.' And to those who are not rich and are impatient of old age, the same reply may be made; for to the good poor man old age cannot be a light burden, nor can a bad rich man ever have peace with himself. May I ask, Cephalus, whether your fortune was for the most part inherited or acquired by you? Acquired! Socrates; do you want t o know how much I acquired? In the art of making money I have been midway between my father and grandfather: for my grandfather, whose name I bear, doubled and trebled the value of his patrimony, that which he inherited being much what I possess now; but my father Lysania s reduced the property below what it is at present: and I shall be satisfied if I leave to these my sons not less but a little more than I received. That was why I asked you the question, I replied, because I see that you are indifferent about money, which is a characteristic rather of thos e who have inherited their fortunes than of those who have acquired them; the makers of fortunes have a second love of money as a creation of their own, resembling the affection of authors for their own poems, or of parents for their children, besides that natural love of it for the s ake of use and profit which is common to them and all men. And hence they are very bad company, for they can talk about nothing but the praises of wealth. That is true, he said. Yes, that is very true, but may I ask another question?--What do you consider to be the greatest blessin g which you have reaped from your wealth? One, he said, of which I could not expect easily to convince others. For let me tell you, Socrates, that when a man thinks himself to be near death, fears and cares enter into his mind which he never had before; the tales of a world below a nd the punishment which is exacted there of deeds done here were once a laughing matter to him, but now he is tormented with the thought that they may be true: either from the weakness of age, or because he is now drawing nearer to that other place, he has a clearer view of thes e things; suspicions and alarms crowd thickly upon him, and he begins to reflect and consider what wrongs he has done to others. And when he finds that the sum of his transgressions is great he will many a time like a child start up in his sleep for fear, and he is filled with dark for ebodings. But to him who is conscious of no sin, sweet hope, as Pindar charmingly says, is the kind nurse of his age: 'Hope,' he says, 'cherishes the soul of him who lives in justice and holiness, and is the nurse of his age and the companion of his journey;--hope which is mightiest to sway the restless soul of man.' How admirable are his words! And the great blessing of riches, I do not say to every man, but to a good man, is, that he has had no occasion to deceive or to defraud others, either intentionally or unintentionally; and when he departs to the world b elow he is not in any apprehension about offerings due to the gods or debts which he owes to men. Now to this peace of mind the possession of wealth greatly contributes; and therefore I say, that, setting one thing against another, of the many advantages which wealth has to give, to a man of sense this is in my opinion the greatest. Well said, Cephalus, I replied; but as concerning justice, what is it?--to speak the truth and to pay your debts--no more than this? And even to this are there not exceptions? Suppose that a friend when in his right mind has deposi ted arms with me and he asks for them when he is not in his right mind, ought I to give them back to him? No one would say that I ought or that I should be right in doing so, any more than they would say that I ought always to speak the truth to one who is in his condition. You are quite right, he replied. But then, I said, speaking the truth and paying your debts is not a correct definition of justice. Quite co rrect, Socrates, if Simonides is to be believed, said Polemarchus interposing. I fear, said Cephalus, that I must go now, for I have to look after the sacrifices, and I hand over the argument to Polemarchus and the company. Is not Polemarch us your heir? I said. To be sure, he answered, and went away laughing to the sacrifices. Tell me then, O thou heir of the argument, what did Simonides say, and according to you truly say, about justice? He said that the rep ayment of a debt is jus t, and in sa ying so he appears to me to be right. I should be sorry to doubt the word of such a wise and inspired man, but his meaning, though probably clear to you, is the reverse of clear to me. For he certainly does not mean, as we were j ust now saying, th at I ought to re turn a deposit of arms or of anything else to one who asks for it when he is not in his right senses; a nd yet a deposit cannot be denied to be a debt. True. Then when the person who asks me is not in his righ t mind I am by no means to make the retur n? Certainly not. When Simonides said that the repayment of a debt was justice, he did not mean to include that case? Certainly not; for he thinks that a friend ought always to do good to a fr iend an d never ev il. You m e an th at the return of a deposit of gold which is to the injury of the receiver, if the two parties are fr iends, is not the repayment of a debt,--that is what you would imagine him to say? Yes. An d are enemies a lso t o receive what we owe to t hem? To be sure, he said, they are to receive what we owe them, and an enemy, as I take it, owes to an enemy that which is due or proper to him--that is to say, evil. Simonides e giving to each man what is proper to him, and this he termed a debt. That must h , then, after th e ma n n e r of po ets, wo uld seem to h ave spoken darkly of the nature of justice; for he really meant to say that justice is th m, what answer do you think that he would make to us? He would surely reply t ave been his mean i ng , he sa i d. By hea ven! I r eplie d; and if we asked him what due or proper thing is given by medicine, and to who easoning to food. And what is that which justice gives, and to whom? If, Socr hat medicin e giv e s d ru g s and m ea t a nd drink to hu man bodies. And what due or proper thing is given by cookery, and to what? S evil to enemies. That is his meaning then? I think so. And who is best able ates, we ar e to b e g uided a t all by th e ana logy of the preceding instances, then justice is the art which gives good to friends and perils of the sea? The pilot. And in what sort of actions or with a view to to do goo d to hi s f r ie n ds an d evi l to his e ne mies in t ime of sickness? The physician. Or when they are on a voyage, amid the aking alliances with the other. But when a man is well, my dear Polem wh at res ult is t h e ju s t m a n mo s t abl e t o do har m to his enemy and good to his friend? In going to war against the one and in m stice will be of no use? I am very far from thinking so. You think tha archus, th ere is no nee d o f a ph y sic ia n ? No. And he who is not on a voyage has no need of a pilot? No. Then in time of peace ju on of shoes,--that is what you mean? Yes. And what similar use o t justice may be of use in pea ce as w ell a s i n w a r ? Yes . Like hus bandry fo r the acquisition of corn? Yes. Or like shoemaking for the acquisiti rships? Exactly. But is the just man or the skilful player a more r power of a cquis iti on has jus t i ce i n t ime of p ea ce? I n contrac ts, Socrates, justice is of use. And by contracts you mean partne useful an d b e tter p artn e r a t a g a m e o f d raughts? Th e skil ful playe r. And in the laying of bricks and stones is the just man a mor e useful or better partner than the builder? Quite the reverse. Then in w ha t sort of p artn ersh ip i s t he ju s t man a better pa rtner th an the harp-player, as in playing the harp the harp-player is certainly a better partner than the just man? In a money part nership. Ye s, P olemarchus , bu t su rely not i n the u se of mo ney; for you do not want a just man to be your counsellor in the purchase or sale of a horse; a man who is knowing about horses w ould be bet t e r f o r that, would he n ot? Cert ain l y. A nd wh en you want to buy a ship, the shipwright or the pilot would be better? True. Then what is that joint use of silver or gold in which the just ma n is to be p r e f erred? When y ou wan t a de p osit t o be kept safely. Y ou mea n when money is not wanted, but allowed to lie? Precis ely. That is to say, justice is useful when money is use less? T hat is th e i nf er ence. A nd whe n you w an t to keep a pru n ing-hook safe, then justice is useful to the individual and to the state; but when you want to use it, then the art of the vine-dresser? C le arly. And wh en yo u want to k ee p a s hiel d or a ly re, a nd not to use th em, y ou wou ld say that justice is useful; but when you want to u se them, then the art of the soldier or of the musicia n? Cert ainly. And so of all oth er things;--justice i s useful wh en th ey are usele ss, and use less w hen they are useful? That is the inference. Then jus tice is not good for much. But let us consider this further po int: Is not he wh o ca n bes t s trike a blow in a boxin g matc h or in any kind of fighting best able to ward off a blow? Certainly. And he who is most skilful in pre ve ntin g or escaping fro m a dis e ease is best able t o creat e one? True. And he is the best guard of a camp who is best able to steal a march upon the enemy? Cer tai nly. Th en he wh o is a go od keeper of anything is als o a go od thief? That, I suppose, is to be inferred. Then if the just man is good at keeping money, he is goo d at s te ali ng it. That is implied in the argu ment. T hen after all the just man has turned out to be a thief. And this is a lesson which I suspect yo u must ave le ar nt ou t of H omer; for he, speaking of Autoly cus, the maternal grandfather of Odysseus, who is a favourite of his, affirms that 'He was excell ent a b ove al l me n in theft and perjury.' And so, you a nd Ho mer and Simonides are agreed that justice i s an art of theft; to be practised however 'fo r the g ood of fr i e n d s an d fo r t h e ha rm of en emi es,'--that was what you were sayi ng? N o, certainly not that, though I do not now k now what I did say; but I still stand by the l att er w ords. Well, the r e i s anoth er qu es ti on: By fri ends and enemies do we mean those who are so really, or only in seeming? Surely, he sai d, a man may be expected to love those w hom h e thinks good, a nd to hate tho se w hom he thinks evil. Yes, but do not p erson s often err about good and evil: many wh o are not good seem to be so, and conve rs ely? That is true. Then to them the good will b e enemies and the evil wi ll be their friends? True. And in t hat ca se they will be right in doing good to the evil and evil to the good? Clearly. But th e good ar e just and wo u ld not d o an inju s t i ce? True . Then ac co rd ing to your argument it is just to i njure t hose who do no wrong? Nay, Socrates; the doctrine is immoral. Then I suppos e that we ought to do good t o the jus t an d harm to the u njust? I li k e th a t better. But see the conseque nce :-- Many a man who is ignorant of human nature has friends who are bad friends , a nd i n t hat case he ought to do h ar m to the m; a nd he h as go od enem i es w hom he ough t to benefit; but, if so , w e shall be saying the very opposite of that which we affirmed to be the mean ing of Si mo ni des. Very true, he said: a n d l t hink that we h ad bette r correct a n erro r into whi ch we see m to h ave fallen in the use of the words 'frie nd' and 'enemy.' What was the error, Po lem ar chu s ? I ask ed. We ass u me d that he is a fr iend who s eems to be or who i s thought g o od. And how is the error to be corrected ? We should rather say that he is a fr iend w ho is, as w e l l a s s ee m s, go o d; a nd that he who se ems only , a nd is not good , on ly seems to be and is not a friend; an d of an enemy the same may be said . You wo uld ar gu e t ha t t he good a re ou r fri ends and the bad our enemies? Yes. And inst ead o f saying simply as we did at first, th at it is just to do good to our friends a nd ha rm t o o ur en e mie s, we should f urth er say: It is just to do good to ou r fr ien ds wh en they are good and harm to our e nemies when they are evil? Yes, tha t appe ar s to me to be th e tru th. Bu t o ught th e just to injure any on e at all? Un d o ub tedly he ought to injure those who are both wicked and his enemies. W hen ho rs es a re i nju r ed, are th ey improv ed o r de teriorated? The latter. Deteriorated, t hat is to say, in the good qualities of ho rses, not of dogs? Yes, of horses. And do gs are d eteri o r ate d in the go od qualities of dogs, and not of horses? Of c ou rs e. And will not men who are injure d be deteriorated in that which is t he pro pe r v irtue of m a n ? Cert ainly . And t h a t hu man virtue is justice? To be sure. Then men who a re injured are of necessity made unjust? That is the result. But can th e m us ician by his art ma ke men unmusi ca l? Cer ta inly n o t. Or the horsem an by his art make them b ad? Assuredly not. Any the just by justice make men unju st, or s pe aki ng g enerally , can the good by vir t ue make th em b ad? A ssuredly not. Any m or e than heat can produce cold? It cannot. Or drought moisture? Cle arly n ot. Nor c an the g o o d harm any o ne? Impossibl e. And the just is the good ? Ce rtainly. Then to injure a friend or any one else is not the act of a jus t man , b ut of the opposit e, w ho is the unjust ? I t hin k th at what y ou sa y is qu ite true, Socra te s. Then if a man says that justice c onsists in the repayment of debts, a nd that good is the d e bt whi ch a just ma n o w es to his f riend s, and evil the debt w hi ch he owes to his enemies,--to s ay this is not wise; for it is not tru e, i f, a s has be en cle arly sh o wn , the inj urin g of another c an b e in no case ju st . I agree with you, said Polemarch us. Then you and I are prepared to t ake up arm s a g ain s t any o ne w ho attri butes su ch a say in g to Simonides o r Bi as or Pittacus, or any other wise man or seer? I am quite ready to d o battl e at y o ur s id e, he s aid. Shall I t e ll you wh ose I believe the sayi ng to be? Whose? I believe that Periander or Perdiccas or Xerxes or Ism enias the T heb a n, o r so me other ric h a nd mi ghty man, who ha d a great opinion of his own power, was the first to say that justice is ' do ing good to y o u r fr i e nds an d harm t o your ene m i es.' Most tr u e, he said. Yes, I said; but if this def inition of justice also breaks down , what othe r c a n be o ff e red ? Several time s i n t he c our se of the dis cu ssi on Thrasymachus had made an a ttempt to get the argument into his own hands, an d had b ee n p u t down by t h e re s t of th e co mpa ny, who wanted to hear the end. But when Polemarchus and I had d one sp eak ing and the re wa s a p ause , he coul d n o lo ng e r hold his p eac e; and, gathering himself up, he c ame at us like a wild beast, seeking to de vou r us . We wer e q ui te p an ic-stricke n a t t he si ght of him. He roar ed out to the whole company: Wh at folly, Socrates, has taken posses sion o f y ou a l l? An d w hy, sil ly bi ll ies, d o y o u kno ck und er to one a n oth er? I say that if you want really to know what justice is, you should no t only ask but a nswer, and y o u sho uld not see k h on our to y ourself from t he refutation of an opponent, but hav e your own answer; for there is man y a on e who can a sk an d c an not a nswer. And n o w I will n o t h ave you say that justice is duty or advantage or profit or gain or interes t, for t hi s so rt of n on sense w ill not do for me; i m u s t have c lea rness and accuracy. I was panic-st ricken at his words, and could not lo ok at h i m without t rembl i ng . Indeed I bel ie ve t h a t if I had no t fix ed my eye upon him, I should have been struck dumb: but when I saw hi s fury r is i ng, I lo ok ed a t him fi rs t, a n d w as t her e for e able to reply to him. Thrasymachu s, I said, with a quiver, don't be hard u po n u s. P o l e marchu s a nd I may ha ve b ee n g ui lt y of a li t tl e mistake in the argument, but I can assure you that the error was not inten tional. If w e we r e seeking for a pie ce of gold, y ou w o u ld not im a g in e that we were 'knocking under to on e another,' and so losing our chance of findin g it. A n d wh y , whe n we are se eking for just i ce , a t h ing mor e pre cious than many pieces of gold, do yo u say that we are weakly yielding to one anoth er and n o t d o i n g ou r u tmost to g et at the tr u th? Na y, my good friend, we are most willing and anxious to do so, but the fact is that we c annot. A nd if so , y o u pe o ple who know a ll t hi n g s s hould p ity u s and not be angry with us. How charac teristic of Socrates! he replied, with a bitt er laug h; - - th at's y o u r i ro nical s tyl e! Did I n o t f or e see--hav e I n ot already told you, that whatever he wa s asked he would refuse to answer, and try irony or an y other s h uffle , i n or der that he might avo id a nswering ? Y ou are a philosopher, Thrasymachus, I re plied, and well know that if you ask a perso n what nu mbe rs m a ke up t welve, taking c a re to pr ohibit him w hom you ask from answering twice six, or three times four, or six times two, or four tim es thre e, ' f or this sort o f n on sense wi ll not do fo r m e,'--the n o bviously, if that is your way of putting the question, no one can answer you. But suppos e that h e were to re to rt, ' Thra symachus, what do you m e an? If on e of these numbers which you interdict be the t rue answer to the question, am I falsely to say some o ther num b er w hi c h is not the right one?--is r m ea ning?'--How would you answer him? Just as i f the two cases were at all alike! he said. Why s hould t h ey not be? I re plie d; and even i f they a re app ear to be so to the person who is asked, ought he not to say what he thinks, whether you and I f orb id h im or n o t? I pr es ume t hen that y o u ar e going t o m ake one of the interdicted answers? I dare say t hat I may, notwithstanding the danger, if upon refl ect ion I ap pr ove of a n y o f them. But what if I g i v e you an a n swe r about justice other and better, he said, than an y of these? What do you deserve to have done to y ou? Do ne t o me !--a s bec o mes the ign o ran t , I must l e ar n from the wise--that is what I deserve to have do ne to me. What, and no payment! a pleasant notion! I wi ll p ay w he n I ha ve t he money, I repl ied . But you h av e, Socrates, said Glaucon: and you, Thrasymachus , need be under no anxiety about money, for we will al l make a c ontrib uti on for Socrates . Y es, he replied, and then Socrates will do as he always does--refuse to a nswer himself, but take and pull to pieces the answer of s ome on e els e. W hy, my g o o d friend, I said, how can any one answer who knows, and says that he knows, just nothing; and who, even if he has some faint notions of his own , is to ld by a man o f aut hority not to u tte r them? The natural thing is, that the speaker should be some one like yourself who professes to know and can tell w h at he kn o ws. Wi ll you the n kindly an s wer, for the edification of the company and of myself? Glauc on and the rest of the company joined in my request, and Th ra s ymachus, a s an y o ne might see, was in r eali ty eager to speak; for he thought that he had an excellent a nswer, and would distinguish himself. But at first he affected t o i ns is t o n my ans w er i ng ; at length h e c onsented to begin. Behold, he said, the wisdom of Socrates; he refuses to teach himself, and goes about learning of others, t o w ho m he ne ve r eve n s a ys Thank you. Tha t I learn of others, I replied, is quite true; but that I am ungrateful I whol ly deny. Money I have none, and therefore I pay in praise, which is al l l h ave; a nd h ow re ad y I am to praise a ny o ne who appears to me to speak well you will very soon find out when you answer; for I expect that you will answer well. Listen, then , h e said; I p ro claim t hat justice is no thi ng else than the interest of the stronger. And now why do you not praise me? But of course you won't. Let me first understand you, I repli ed. J ustice , a s you sa y, is the inte re st o f the stronger. What, Thrasymachus, is the meaning of this? You can not mean to say that because Polydamas, the pancratiast, is stronger tha n w e are, and fin ds the e ati ng o f beef conducive to his bodily strength, that to eat beef is therefore equ ally for our good who are weaker than he is, and right and just for us? That' s a bominabl e of you, Socrate s ; you take the words in the sense which is most damaging to the argument. Not at all, my good sir, I said; I am trying to understand them; and I wish that you wo u ld be a little cl eare r. Well, he said, have you never heard that forms of government differ; there are tyrannies, and there are democracies, and there are aristocracies? Yes, I know . A nd t he government is the ruling power in each state? Certainly. And the different forms of government make laws democratical, aristocratical, tyrannical, with a view to their se ve ra l in terests; and these laws, which are made by them for their own interests, are the just tice which they deliver to their subjects, and him who transgresses them they punish as a b re ak e r of t he law, and unjust. And that is what I mean when I say that in all states there is the sam e principle of justice, which is the interest of the government; and as the government must be s upp os ed t o have power, the only reasonable conclusion is, that everywhere there is one principle of j ustice, which is the interest of the stronger. Now I understand you, I said; and whether you are ri ght or n o t I will t ry to discover. But let me remark, that in defining justice you have yourself used the word 'inte rest' which you forbade me to use. It is true, however, that in your definition the words 'of the stronge r' are a dded . A smal l a dditio n, you must allow, he said. Great or small, never mind about that: we must first enquire whether wh at you are saying is the truth. Now we are both agreed that justice is interest of some sort, but you go on to say 'of t h e strong er'; about this addition I am not so sure, and must therefore consider further. Proceed. I will; and first tell me, Do you admit that it is just for subjects to obey their rulers? I do. But are the rulers of states absolutely infa llible, or are they so metimes liable to err? To be sure, he replied, they are liable to err. Then in making their laws they may sometim es make them rightly, and sometimes not? True. When they make them rightly, they make them agreeably to their intere st; when they are mistaken, contrary to their interest; you admit that? Yes. And the laws which they make must be obe yed by their subjects,--and that is what you call justice? Doubtless. Then justice, according to your argument, is not only obedien ce to the interest of the stronger but the reverse? What is that you are saying? he asked. I am only repeating what you are sayin g, I believe. But let us consider: Have we not admitted that the rulers may be mistaken about their own interest in what they command, and also that to obey them is justice? Has not that been admitted? Yes. Then you must also have acknowledged justice not to be for the interest of the stronger, when the rulers unintentionally command things to be done which are to their own injury. For if, as you say, justice is the obedience which the subject renders to their commands, in that case, O wisest of men, is there any escape from the conclusion that the weaker ar e commanded to do, not what is for the interest, but what is for the injury of the stronger? Nothing can be clearer, Socrates, said Polemarchus. Yes, said Cleitophon, interposing, if you are allowed to be his witness. But there is no need of any witness, said Polemarchus, for Thrasy machus himself acknowledges that rulers may sometimes command what is not for their own interest, and that for subjects to obey them is justice. Yes, Polemarchus,--Thrasymachus said that for subjects to do what was commanded by their rulers is just. Yes, Cleitophon, but he al so said that justice is the interest of the stronger, and, while admitting both these propositions, he further acknowledged that the stronger may command the weaker who are his subjects to do what is not for his own interest; whence follows that justice is the injury quite as much as the interest of the stronger. But, said Cleitophon, he meant by the interest of the stronger what the stronger thought to be his interest,--this was what the weaker had to do; and this was affirmed by him to be justice. Those were not his words, rejoined Polemarchus. Never mind, I re plied, if he now says that they are, let us accept his statement. Tell me, Thrasymachus, I said, did you mean by justice what the stronger thought to be his interest, whether really so or not? Certainly not, he said. Do you suppose that I call him who is mistaken the stronger at the tim e when he is mistaken? Yes, I said, my impression was that you did so, when you admitted that the ruler was not infallible but might be sometimes mistaken. You argue like an informer, Socrates. Do you mean, for example, that he who is mistaken about the sick is a physician in tha t he is mistaken? or that he who errs in arithmetic or grammar is an arithmetician or grammarian at the time when he is making the mistake, in respect of the mistake? True, we say that the physician or arithmetician or grammarian has made a mistake, but this is only a way of speaki ng; for the fact is that neither the grammarian nor any other person of skill ever makes a mistake in so far as he is what his name implies; they none of them err unless their skill fails them, and then they cease to be skilled artists. No artist or sage or ruler errs at the time when he is what his name implies; though he is commonly said to err, and I adopted the common mode of speaking. But to be perfectly accurate, since you are such a lover of accuracy, we should say that the ruler, in so far as he is a ruler, is unerring, and, being unerring, always commands th at which is for his own interest; and the subject is required to execute his commands; and therefore, as I said at first and now repeat, justice is the interest of the stronger. Indeed, Thrasymachus, and do I really appear to you to argue like an informer? Certainly, he replied. And do y ou suppose that I ask these questions with any design of injuring you in the argument? Nay, he replied, 'suppose' is not the word--I know it; but you will be found out, and by sheer force of argument you will never prevail. I shall not make the attempt, my dear man; but to avoid any misunderstanding occurring between us in future, let me ask, in what sense do you speak of a ruler or stronger whose interest, as you were saying, he being the superior, it is just that the inferior should execute--is he a ruler in the popular or in the strict sense of the term? In the str ictest of all senses, he said. And now cheat and play the informer if you can; I ask no quarter at your hands. But you never will be able, never. And do you imagine, I said, that I am such a madman as to try and cheat, Thrasymachus? I might as well shave a lion. Why, he said, you ma de the attempt a minute ago, and you failed. Enough, I said, of these civilities. It will be better that I should ask you a question: Is the physician, taken in that strict sense of which you are speaking, a healer of the sick or a maker of money? And remember that I am now speaking of t he true physician. A healer of the sick, he replied. And the pilot--that is to say, the true pilot--is he a captain of sailors or a mere sailor? A captain of sailors. The circumstance that he sails in the ship is not to be taken into account; neither is he to be called a sailor; the name pilot by which he is distinguished has nothing to do with sailing, but is significant of his skill and of his authority over the sailors. Very true, he said. Now, I said, every art has an interest? Certainly. For which the art has to consider and provide? Yes, that is the aim of art. And the interest of any art is the perfection of it--this and nothing else? What do you mean? I mean what I may illustrate negatively by the example of the body. Suppose you were to ask me whether the body is self-sufficing or has wants, I should reply: Certainly the body has wants; for the body may b e ill and require to be cured, and has therefore interests to which the art of medicine ministers; and this is the origin and intention of medicine, as you will acknowledge. Am I not right? Quite right, he replied. But is the art of medicine or any other art faulty or deficient in any quality i n the same way that the eye may be deficient in sight or the ear fail of hearing, and therefore requires another art to provide for the interests of seeing and hearing--has art in itself, I say, any similar liability to fault or defect, and does every art require another supplementary art to pr ovide for its interests, and that another and another without end? Or have the arts to look only after their own interests? Or have they no need either of themselves or of another?--having no faults or defects, they have no need to correct them, either by the exercise of their own art o r of any other; they have only to consider the interest of their subject-matter. For every art remains pure and faultless while remaining true--that is to say, while perfect and unimpaired. Take the words in your precise sense, and tell me whether I am not right. Yes, clearly. Then medic ine does not consider the interest of medicine, but the interest of the body? True, he said. Nor does the art of horsemanship consider the interests of the art of horsemanship, but the interests of the horse; neither do any other arts care for themselves, for they have no needs; they c are only for that which is the subject of their art? True, he said. But surely, Thrasymachus, the arts are the superiors and rulers of their own subjects? To this he assented with a good deal of reluctance. Then, I said, no science or art considers or enjoins the interest of the stronger or superior, but only the interest of the subject and weaker? He made an attempt to contest this proposition also, but finally acquiesced. Then, I continued, no physician, in so far as he is a physician, considers his own good in what he prescribes, but the good of his patient; for the true physician is also a ruler having the human body as a subject, and is not a mere money-maker; that has been admitted? Yes. And the pilot likewise, in the strict sense of the term, is a ruler of sailors and not a mere sailor? That has been admitted. And such a pilot and ruler will pr ovide and prescribe for the interest of the sailor who is under him, and not for his own or the ruler's interest? He gave a reluctant 'Yes.' Then, I said, Thrasymachus, there is no one in any rule who, in so far as he is a ruler, considers or enjoins what is for his own interest, but always what is for the interest of his subject or suitable to his art; to that he looks, and that alone he considers in everything which he says and does. When we had got to this point in the argument, and every one saw that the definition of justice had been completely upset, Thrasymachus, instead of replying to me, said: Tell me, Socrates, have you got a nurse? Why do you ask such a question, I said, when you ought rather to be answering? Because she leaves you to snivel, and never wipes your nose: she has not even taught you to know the shepherd from the she ep. What makes you say that? I replied. Because you fancy that the shepherd or neatherd fattens or tends the sheep or oxen with a view to their own good and not to the good of himself or his master; and you further imagine that the rulers of states, if they are true rulers, never thin k of their subjects as sheep, and that they are not studying their own advantage day and night. Oh, no; and so entirely astray are you in your ideas about the just and unjust as not even to know that justice and the just are in reality another's good; that is to say, the interest of the rul er and stronger, and the loss of the subject and servant; and injustice the opposite; for the unjust is lord over the truly simple and just: he is the stronger, and his subjects do what is for his interest, and minister to his happiness, which is very far from being their own. Consider furt her, most foolish Socrates, that the just is always a loser in comparison with the unjust. First of all, in private contracts: wherever the unjust is the partner of the just you will find that, when the partnership is dissolved, the unjust man has always more and the just less. Secondly, in their dealings with the State: when there is an income-tax, the just man will pay more and the unjust less on the same amount of income; and when there is anything to be received the one gains nothing and the other much. Observe also what happens when they take an office; ther