

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPIRIT IN PLATONISM.

AMONG the value-distinctions recognized by Greek thought, one of the most frequently emphasized in the Platonic Dialogues is the distinction between private and public spirit. It is applied to almost every phase of Greek life, and to discuss in adequate detail all cases of this distinction is impracticable. For the purposes of the present study, it will perhaps be sufficient if we examine carefully some five 'sample' cases, so as to build up a generalization wide enough to apply to all cases in which this value-distinction is found in the Dialogues. We shall select arbitrarily¹ from the vast field before us: (1) Eating and drinking, (2) Farming, (3) Business and commercial life, (4) Schooling, and (5) Politics. The aim of our examination is to discover on what grounds community eating and drinking, community farming, and business, etc., are regarded as an improvement upon eating and drinking in private, private enterprise in farming and business, etc., and eventually to construct a generalization which can be extended so as to cover all types of cases discussed in the Dialogues.

1. *Eating and Drinking.*—The body is naturally subject to the action of physical elements in the external environment, and, in the action and reaction which thus occur, tends to disintegrate.

¹ (1), (2), and (3) have not hitherto received special treatment at the hands of Plato-students. (4) and (5) were selected on account of their obvious importance. They have not, so far as the writer knows, been treated at length from this point of view. The five cases are so various as approximately to cover the field of Platonic thought.