

## PLATO'S WATCH DOG

**I**N a very charming book by a charming writer, "The Future in America," by Mr. H. G. Wells, I find the author auguring good for America in proportion to the attention given to political science in its Universities, and evil for America on the strength of the Greek alphabet which he also found inscribed upon the blackboards of some of the same Universities.

Now this is a hard augury. I have been reading Greek letters, chiefly in Plato, for a third of a century and more, and I have been reading Mr. Wells for a third of that time, and I thought until I came across that augury that I was reading in *pari materia*. I fancied Plato a forerunner of Mr. Wells and Mr. Wells a later Plato. I had supposed, therefore, that Mr. Wells would welcome the study of Plato in America, as leading directly to that scientific socialistic Utopia, to which he also devotes himself; his ability, his imagination, and his charm of style. He is strangely ungrateful to the H. G. Wells of Athens.

However, it is of Plato that I am writing here. Plato's mission, said Emerson, is to raise in Athens all the problems which are still interesting thoughtful men. Among these is the problem of incompatible virtues, the problem of virtue casting out virtue, or of Satan also being divided against Satan.

For Plato is at once confronted with this problem when he starts out to found an Ideal State: the first requisite for any state or family or individual, as I understand him, is that virtue which was Virtue to the ancient world; Virtus, manliness, self-reliance, aggressiveness; the power of government and organization; and the spirit of adventure; the Imperial or the Roman spirit, as it has been called since his