

general source of skepticism. ANAXIMANDROS (610–547 B.C.), pupil and companion of Thales, was like him an astronomer, geographer, and physicist, seeking for a first principle (for which he may or may not have invented the name¹); rejecting the idea of a single primordial element such as water; affirming an infinite material cause, without beginning and indestructible,² with an infinite number of worlds; and—still showing the Chaldean impulse—speculating remarkably on the descent of man from something aquatic, as well as on the form and motion of the earth (figured by him as a cylinder³), the nature and motions of the solar system, and thunder and lightning.⁴ It seems doubtful whether, as affirmed by Eudemus, he taught the doctrine of the earth's motion; but that this doctrine was derived from the Babylonian schools of astronomy is so probable that it may have been accepted in Miletos in his day. Only by inferring a prior scientific development of remarkable energy can we explain the striking force of the sayings of Anaximandros which have come down to us. His doctrine of evolution stands out for us to-day like the fragment of a great ruin, hinting obscurely of a line of active thinkers. The thesis that man must have descended from a different species because, "while other animals quickly found food for themselves, man alone requires a long period of suckling: had he been originally such as he is now, he could never have survived," is a quite masterly anticipation of modern evolutionary science. We are left asking, how came an early Ionian Greek to think thus, outgoing the assimilative power of the later age of Aristotle? Only a long scientific evolution can readily account for it; and only in the Mesopotamian world could such an evolution have taken place.⁵

ANAXIMENES (fl. 548 B.C.), yet another Milesian, pupil or at least follower in turn of Anaximandros, speculates similarly, making his infinite and first principle the air, in which he conceives the earth to be suspended; theorizes on the rainbow, earthquakes, the nature and the revolution of the heavenly bodies (which, with the earth, he supposed to be broad and flat); and affirms the eternity of

¹ Cp. Burnet, p. 57.

² Fairbanks, pp. 9–10. Mr. Benn (*Greek Philosophers*, i, 9) decides that the early philosophers, while realizing that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, had not grasped the complementary truth that nothing can be annihilated. But even if the teaching ascribed to Anaximandros be set aside as contradictory (since he spoke of generation and destruction within the infinite), we have the statement of Diogenes Laërtius (bk. ix, ch. 9, § 57) that Diogenes of Apollonia, pupil of Anaximenes, gave the full Lucretian formula.

³ Diogenes Laërtius, however (ii, 2), makes him agree with Thales.

⁴ Fairbanks, pp. 9–16. Diogenes makes him the inventor of the gnomon and of the first map and globe, as well as a maker of clocks. Cp. Grote, i, 330, *note*.

⁵ See below, p. 158, as to Demokritos' statement concerning the Eastern currency of scientific views which, when put by Anaxagoras, scandalized the Greeks.

motion and the perishableness of the earth.¹ The Ionian thought of the time seems thus to have been thoroughly absorbed in problems of natural origins, and only in that connection to have been concerned with the problems of religion. No dogma of divine creation blocked the way: the trouble was levity of hypothesis or assent. Thales, following a Semitic lead, places the source of all things in water. Anaximandros, perhaps following another, but seeking a more abstract idea, posited an infinite, the source of all things; and Anaximenes in turn reduces that infinite to the air, as being the least material of things. He cannot have anticipated the chemical conception of the reduction of all solids to gases: the thesis was framed either à priori or in adaptation of priestly claims for the deities of the elements; and others were to follow with the guesses of earth and fire and heat and cold. Still, the speculation is that of bold and far-grasping thinkers, and for these there can have been no validity in the ordinary God-ideas of polytheism.

There is reason to think that these early "schools" of thought were really constituted by men in some way banded together,² thus supporting each other against the conservatism of religious ignorance. The physicians were so organized; the disciples of Pythagoras followed the same course; and in later Greece we shall find the different philosophic sects formed into societies or corporations. The first model was probably that of the priestly corporation; and in a world in which many cults were chronically disendowed it may well have been that the leisured old priesthoods, philosophizing as we have seen those of India and Egypt and Mesopotamia doing, played a primary part in initiating the work of rational secular thought.

The recent work of Mr. F. M. Cornford, *From Philosophy to Religion* (1912), puts forth an interesting and ingenious theory to the effect that early Greek philosophy is a reduction to abstract terms of the practice of totemistic tribes. On this view, when the Gods are figured in Homer as subject to *Moirai* (Destiny), there has taken place an impersonation of *Nomos*, or Law; and just as the divine cosmos or polity is a reflection of the earthly, so the established conception of the absolute compulsoriness of tribal law is translated into one of a Fate which overrules the Gods (p. 40 sq.). So, when Anaximandros posits the doctrine of four elements [he did not use the word, by the way; that comes later; see Burnet, ch. i, p. 56, citing

¹ Fairbanks, pp. 17-22.

² See Windelband, *Hist. of Anc. Philos.* Eng. tr. 1900, p. 25, citing Diels and Wilamowitz-Möllendorf. Cp. Burnet, introd. § 14.

Diels], "we observe that this type of cosmic structure corresponds to that of a totemic tribe containing four clans" (p. 62). On the other hand, the totemistic stage had long before been broken down. The "notion of the group-soul" had given rise to the notion of God (p. 90); and the primitive "magical group" had dissolved into a system of families (p. 93), with individual souls. On this prior accumulation of religious material early philosophy works (p. 138).

It does not appear why, thus recognizing that totemism was at least a long way behind in Thales's day, Mr. Cornford should trace the Ionian four elements straight back to the problematic four clans of the totemistic tribe. Dr. Frazer gives him no data whatever for Aryan totemism; and the Ionian cities, like those of Mesopotamia and Egypt, belong to the age of commerce and of monarchies. It would seem more plausible, on Mr. Cornford's own premises, to trace the rival theories of the four elements to religious philosophies set up by the priests of four *Gods* of water, earth, air, and fire. If the early philosophers "had nothing but theology behind them" (p. 138), why not infer theologies for the old-established deities of Mesopotamia? Mr. Cornford adds to the traditional factors that of "the temperaments of the individual philosophers, which made one or other of those schemes the more congenial to them." Following Dr. F. H. Bradley, he pronounces that "almost all philosophic arguments are invented afterwards, to recommend, or defend from attack, conclusions which the philosopher was from the outset bent on believing before he could think of any arguments at all. That is why philosophical reasonings are so bad, so artificial, so unconvincing."

Upon this very principle it is much more likely that the philosophic cults of water, earth, air, and fire originated in the worships of Gods of those elements, whose priests would tend to magnify their office. It is hard to see how "temperament" could determine a man's bias to an air-theory in preference to a water-theory. But if the priests of Ea the Water-God and those of Bel the God of Air had framed theories of the kind, it is conceivable that family or tribal ties and traditions might set men upon developing the theory quasi-philosophically when the alien Gods came to be recognized by thinking men as mere names for the elements.¹ (Compare Flaubert's *Salammbô* as to the probable rivalry of priests of the Sun and Moon.) A pantheistic view, again, arose as we saw among various priest-hoods in the monarchies where syncretism arose out of political aggregations.

What is clear is that the religious or theistic basis had ceased to

¹ It will be observed that Mr. Cornford's book, though somewhat loosely speculative, is very freshly suggestive. It is well worth study, alongside of the work of Prof. Burnet, by those interested in the scientific presentation of the evolution of thought.

exist for many educated Greeks in that environment. The old God-ideas have disappeared, and a quasi-scientific attitude has been taken up. It is apparently conditioned, perhaps fatally, by prior modes of thought; but it operates in disregard of so-called religious needs, and negates the normal religious conception of earthly government or providence. Nevertheless, it was not destined to lead to the rationalization of popular thought; and only in a small number of cases did the scientific thinkers deeply concern themselves with the enlightenment of the mass.

In another Ionian thinker of that age, indeed, we find alongside of physical and philosophical speculation on the universe the most direct and explicit assault upon popular religion that ancient history preserves. XENOPHANES of Kolophon (? 570-470), a contemporary of Anaximandros, was forced by a Persian invasion or by some revolution to leave his native city at the age of twenty-five; and by his own account his doctrines, and inferribly his life, had gone "up and down Greece"—in which we are to include Magna Graecia—for sixty-seven years at the date of writing of one of his poems.¹ This was presumably composed at Elea (Hyela or Velia), founded about 536 B.C., on the western Italian coast, south of Paestum, by unsubduable Phokaians seeking a new home after the Persian conquest, and after they had been further defeated in the attempt to live as pirates in Corsica.² Thither came the aged Xenophanes, perhaps also seeking freedom. He seems to have lived hitherto as a rhapsode, chanting his poems at the courts of tyrants as the Homerids did the Iliad. It is hard indeed to conceive that his recitations included the anti-religious passages which have come down to us; but his resort in old age to the new community of Elea is itself a proof of a craving and a need for free conditions of life.³

Setting out on his travels, doubtless, with the Ionian predilection for a unitary philosophy, he had somewhere and somehow attained a pantheism which transcended the concern for a "first principle"—if, indeed, it was essentially distinct from the doctrine of Anaximandros.⁴ "Looking wistfully upon the whole heavens," says Aristotle,⁵ "he affirms that unity is God." From the scattered

¹ Diog. Laërt. ix, 19; Fairbanks, p. 76.

² Herodotos, i, 163-67; Grote, iii, 421; Meyer, ii, § 438.

³ Cp. Guillaume Bréton, *Essai sur la poésie philosophique en Grèce*, 1882, pp. 23-25. The life period of Xenophanes is still uncertain. Meyer (ii, § 466) and Windelband (*Hist. of Anc. Philos.* Eng. tr. p. 47) still adhere to the chronology which puts him in the century 570-470, making him a young man at the foundation of Elea.

⁴ Cousin, developed by G. Bréton, work cited, p. 31 *sq.*, traces Xenophanes's doctrine of the unity of things to the school of Pythagoras. It clearly had antecedents. But Xenophanes is recorded to have argued against Pythagoras as well as Thales and Epimenides (Diog. Laërt. ix, 2, §§ 18, 20).

⁵ *Metaphysics*, i, 5; cp. Fairbanks, pp. 79-80.

quotations which are all that remain of his lost poem, *On Nature* (or *Natural Things*),¹ it is hard to deduce any full conception of his philosophy; but it is clear that it was monistic; and though most of his later interpreters have acclaimed him as the herald of monotheism, it is only in terms of pantheism that his various utterances can be reconciled. It is clearly in that sense that Aristotle and Plato² commemorate him as the first of the Eleatic monists. Repeatedly he speaks of "the Gods" as well as of "God"; and he even inculcates the respectful worship of them.³ The solution seems to be that he thinks of the forces and phenomena of Nature in the early way as Gods or Powers, but resolves them in turn into a whole which includes all forms of power and intelligence, but is not to be conceived as either physically or mentally anthropomorphic. "His contemporaries would have been more likely to call Xenophanes an atheist than anything else."⁴

The common verdict of the historians of philosophy, who find in Xenophanes an early and elevated doctrine of "Monotheism," is closely tested by J. Freudenthal, *Ueber die Theologie des Xenophanes*, 1886. As he shows, the bulk of them (cited by him, pp. 2-7) do violence to Xenophanes's language in making him out the proclaimer of a monotheistic doctrine to a polytheistic world. That he was essentially a pantheist is now recognized by a number of writers. Cp. Windelband, as cited, p. 48; Decharme, as cited, p. 46 sq. Bréton, *Poésie philos. en Grèce*, pp. 47, 64 sq., had maintained the point, against Cousin, in 1882, before Freudenthal. But Freudenthal in turn glosses part of the problem in ascribing to Xenophanes an acceptance of polytheism (cp. Burnet, p. 142), which kept him from molestation throughout his life; whereas Anaxagoras, who had never attacked popular belief with the directness of Xenophanes, was prosecuted for atheism. Anaxagoras was of a later age, dwelling in an Athens in which popular prejudice took readily to persecution, and political malice resorted readily to religious pretences. Xenophanes could hardly have published with impunity in Perikleian Athens his stinging impeachments of current God-ideas; and it remains problematic whether he ever proclaimed them in face of the multitude. It is only from long subsequent students that we get them as quotations from his poetry; there is no record of their effect on his contemporaries. That his God-idea was pantheistic is sufficiently established by his attacks on anthropomorphism, taken in connection with his doctrine of the All.

¹ One of several so entitled in that age. Cp. Burnet, introd. § 7.

² *Metaph.*, as cited; Plato, *Soph.* 242 D.

³ Long fragment in Athenæus, xi, 7; Burnet, p. 130.

⁴ Burnet, p. 141.

Whether as teaching meant for public currency or as a philosophic message for the few, the pantheism of Xenophanes expressed itself in an attack on anthropomorphic religion, no less direct and much more ratiocinative than that of any Hebrew prophet upon idolatry. "Mortals," he wrote, in a famous passage, "suppose that the Gods are born, and wear man's clothing,¹ and have voice and body. But if cattle or lions had hands, so as to paint with their hands and make works of art as men do, they would paint their Gods and give them bodies like their own—horses like horses, cattle like cattle." And again: "Ethiopians make their Gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say theirs have reddish hair and blue eyes; so also they conceive the spirits of the Gods to be like themselves."² On Homer and Hesiod, the myth-singers, his attack is no less stringent: "They attributed to the Gods all things that with men are of ill-fame and blame; they told of them countless nefarious things—thefts, adulteries, and deception of each other."³ It is recorded of him further that, like Epicurus, he absolutely rejected all divination.⁴ And when the Eleans, perhaps somewhat shaken by such criticism, asked him whether they should sacrifice and sing a dirge to Leukothea, the child-bereft Sea-Goddess, he bade them not to sing a dirge if they thought her divine, and not to sacrifice if she were human.⁵

Beside this ringing radicalism, not yet out of date, the physics of the Eleatic freethinker is less noticeable. His resort to earth as a material first principle was but another guess or disguised theosophy added to those of his predecessors, and has no philosophic congruity with his pantheism. It is interesting to find him reasoning from fossil-marks that what was now land had once been sea-covered, and been left mud; and that the moon is probably inhabited.⁶ Yet, with all this alertness of speculation, Xenophanes sounds the note of merely negative skepticism which, for lack of fruitful scientific research, was to become more and more common in Greek thought:⁷ "no man," he avows in one verse, "knows truly anything, and no man ever will."⁸ More fruitful was his pantheism or pankosmism.

¹ Cp. Burnet, p. 131.

² Fairbanks, p. 67, Fr. 5, 6; Clem. Alex. *Stromata*, bk. v, Wilson's tr. ii, 285-86. Cp. bk. vii, c. 4.

³ Fairbanks, Fr. 7.

⁴ Cicero, *De divinatione*, i, 3, 5; Aetius, *De placitis reliquiæ*, in Fairbanks, p. 85.

⁵ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ii, 23, § 27. A similar saying is attributed to Herakleitos, on slight authority (Fairbanks, p. 54).

⁶ Cicero, *Academica*, ii, 39; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* iii, 23. Anaxagoras and Demokritos held the same view. Diog. Laërt, bk. ii, ch. iii, iv (§ 8); Pseudo-Plutarch, *De placitis philosoph.* ii, 25.

⁷ Cp. Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, i, 340.

⁸ Diog. Laërt. in life of Pyrrho, bk. ix, ch. xi, 8 (§ 72). The passage, however, is uncertain. See Fairbanks, p. 70.

"The All (ὅλον)," he declared, "sees, thinks, and hears."¹ "It was thus from Xenophanes that the doctrine of Pankosmism first obtained introduction into Greek philosophy, recognizing nothing real except the universe as an indivisible and unchangeable whole."² His negative skepticism might have guarded later Hellenes against baseless cosmogony-making if they had been capable of a systematic intellectual development. His sagacity, too, appears in his protest³ against that extravagant worship of the athlete which from first to last kept popular Greek life-philosophy unprogressive. But here least of all was he listened to.

It is after a generation of such persistent questioning of Nature and custom by pioneer Greeks that we find in HERAKLEITOS of Ephesus (fl. 500 B.C.)—still in the Ionian culture-sphere—a positive and unsparing criticism of the prevailing beliefs. No sage among the Ionians (who had already produced a series of powerful thinkers) left a deeper impression than he of massive force and piercing intensity: above all of the gnomic utterances of his age, his have the ring of character and the edge of personality; and the gossiping Diogenes, after setting out by calling him the most arrogant of men, concedes that the brevity and weight of his expression are not to be matched. It was due rather to this, probably, than to his metaphysic—though that has an arresting quality—that there grew up a school of Herakliteans calling themselves by his name. And though doubt attaches to some of his sayings, and even to his date, there can be small question that he was mordantly freethinking, though a man of royal descent. He has stern sayings about "bringing forth untrustworthy witnesses to confirm disputed points," and about eyes and ears being "bad witnesses for men, when their souls lack understanding."⁴ "What can be seen, heard, and learned, this I prize," is one of his declarations; and he is credited with contemning book-learning as having failed to give wisdom to Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hekataios.⁵ The belief in progress, he roundly insists, stops progress.⁶ From his cryptic utterances it may be gathered that he too was a pantheist;⁷ and from his insistence on the immanence of strife in all things,⁸ as from others of his sayings, that he was of the Stoic mood. It was

¹ Fairbanks, Fr. 1. Fairbanks translates with Zeller: "The whole [of God]." Grote: "The whole Kosmos, or the whole God." It should be noted that the original in Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* ix, 144) is given without the name of Xenophanes, and the ascription is modern.

² Grote, as last cited, p. 18.

³ Fairbanks, Fr. 19. In Athenæus, x, 413.

⁴ Polybius, iv, 40; Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, viii, 126; Fairbanks, pp. 25, 27; Frag. 4, 14. Cp. 92, 111, 113.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. ix, i, 2.

⁶ Fairbanks, Fr. 134.

⁷ *Id.* Frag. 36, 67.

⁸ *Id.* Frag. 43, 44, 46, 62.

doubtless in resentment of immoral religion that he said¹ Homer and Archilochos deserved flogging; as he is severe on the phallic worship of Dionysos,² on the absurdity of prayer to images, and on popular pietism in general.³ One of his sayings, ἦθος ἀνθρώπου δαίμων,⁴ "character is a man's dæmon," seems to be the definite assertion of rationalism in affairs as against the creed of special providences.

A confusion of tradition has arisen between the early Herakleitos, "the Obscure," and the similarly-named writer of the first century of our era, who was either one Herakleides or one using the name of Herakleitos. As the later writer certainly allegorized Homer—reducing Apollo to the Sun, Athenê to Thought, and so on—and claimed thus to free him from the charge of impiety, it seems highly probable that it is from him that the scholiast on the Iliad, xv, 18, cites the passage scolding the atheists who attacked the Homeric myths. The theme and the tone do not belong to 500 B.C., when only the boldest—as Herakleitos—would be likely to attack Homer, and when there is no other literary trace of atheism. Grote, however (i, 374, note), cites the passages without comment as referring to the early philosopher, who is much more probably credited, as above, with denouncing Homer himself. Concerning the later Herakleitos or Herakleides, see Dr. Hatch's Hibbert Lectures on *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, pp. 61, 62.

But even apart from the confusion with the late Herakleides, there is difficulty in settling the period of the Ephesian thinker. Diogenes Laërtius states that he flourished about the 69th Olympiad (504–500 B.C.). Another account, preserved by Eusebius, places him in the 80th or 81st Olympiad, in the infancy of Sokrates, and for this date there are other grounds (Ueberweg, i, 40); but yet other evidences carry us back to the earlier. As Diogenes notes five writers of the name—two being poets, one a historian, and one a "serio-comic" personage—and there is record of many other men named Herakleitos and several Herakleides, there is considerable room for false attributions. The statement of Diogenes that the Ephesian was "wont to call opinion the sacred disease" (i, 6, § 7) is commonly relegated to the spurious sayings of Herakleitos, and it suggests the last mentioned of his namesakes. But see Max Müller, Hibbert Lectures on *Indian Religion*, p. 6, for the opinion that it is genuine, and that by "opinion" was meant "religion."

¹ Diog. Laërt. last cited. This saying is by some ascribed to the later Herakleides (see Fairbanks, Fr. 119 and note); but it does not seem to be in his vein, which is wholly pro-Homeric.

² Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* ch. 2, Wilson's tr. p. 41. The passage is obscure, but Mr. Fairbanks's translation (Fr. 127) is excessively so.

³ Clemens, as cited, p. 32; Fairbanks, Fr. 124, 125, 130. Cp. Burnet, p. 139.

⁴ Fairbanks, Fr. 21.

The saying, says Dr. Müller, "seems to me to have the massive, full, and noble ring of Herakleitos." It is hardly for rationalists to demur.

Much discussion has been set up by the common attribution to Herakleitos in antiquity of the doctrine of the ultimate conflagration of all things. But for this there is no ground in any actual passage preserved from his works; and it appears to have been a mere misconception of his doctrine in regard to Fire. His monistic doctrine was, in brief, that all the opposing and contrasted things in the universe, heat and cold, day and night, evil and good, imply each other, and exist only in the relation of contrast; and he conceived fire as something in which opposites were solved.¹ Upon this stroke of mysticism was concentrated the discussion which might usefully have been turned on his criticism of popular religion; his negative wisdom was substantially ignored, and his obscure speculation, treated as his main contribution to thought, was misunderstood and perverted.

A limit was doubtless soon set to free speech even in Elea; and the Eleatic school after Xenophanes, in the hands of his pupil PARMENIDES (fl. 500 B.C.), ZENO (fl. 464), MELISSOS of Samos (fl. 444), and their successors, is found turning first to deep metaphysic and then to verbal dialectic, to discussion on being and not being, the impossibility of motion, and the trick-problem of Achilles and the tortoise. It is conceivable that thought took these lines because others were socially closed. Parmenides, a notably philosophic spirit (whom Plato, meeting him in youth, felt to have "an exceptionally wonderful depth of mind," but regarded as a man to be feared as well as revered),² made short work of the counter-sense of not being, but does not seem to have dealt at close quarters with popular creeds. Melissos, a man of action, who led a successful sally to capture the Athenian fleet,³ was apparently the most pronounced freethinker of the three named,⁴ in that he said of the Gods "there was no need to define them, since there was no knowledge of them."⁵ Such utterance could not be carried far in any Greek community; and there lacked the spirit of patient research which

¹ Cp. Burnet, pp. 175-90.

² *Theaetetus*, 180 D. See good estimates of Parmenides in Benn's *Greek Philosophers*, i, 17-19, and *Philosophy of Greece in Relation to the Character of its People*, pp. 83-95; in J. A. Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 3rd ed. 1893, vol. i, ch. 6; and in Zeller, i, 580 sq.

³ Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 26.

⁴ Mr. Benn finally gives very high praise to Melissos (*Philos. of Greece*, pp. 91-92); as does Prof. Burnet (*Early Gr. Philos.* p. 378). He held strongly by the Ionian conception of the eternity of matter. Fairbanks, p. 125.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. bk. ix. ch. iv, 3 (§ 24).

might have fruitfully developed the notable hypothesis of Parmenides that the earth is spherical in form.¹ But he too was a loose guesser, adding categories of fire and earth and heat and cold to the formative and material "principles" of his predecessors; and where he divagated weaker minds could not but lose themselves. From Melissos and Parmenides there is accordingly a rapid descent in philosophy to professional verbalism, popular life the while proceeding on the old levels.

It was in this epoch of declining energy and declining freedom that there grew up the nugatory doctrine, associated with the Eleatic school,² that the only realities are mental,³ a formula which eluded at once the problems of Nature and the crudities of religion, and so made its fortune with the idle educated class. Meant to support the cause of reason, it was soon turned, as every slackly-held doctrine must be, to a different account. In the hands of Plato it developed into the doctrine of ideas, which in the later Christian world was to play so large a part, as "Realism," in checking scientific thought; and in Greece it fatally fostered the indolent evasion of research in physics.⁴ Ultimately this made for supernaturalism, which had never been discarded by the main body even of rationalizing thinkers.⁵ Thus the geographer and historian HEKATAIOS of Miletos (fl. 500 B.C.), living at the great centre of rationalism, while rejecting the mass of Greek fables as "ridiculous," and proceeding in a fashion long popular to translate them into historical facts, yet affected, in the poetic Greek fashion, to be of divine descent.⁶ At the same time he held by such fables as that of the floating island in the Nile and that of the supernormal Hyperboreans. This blending of old and new habits of mind is indeed perhaps the strongest ground for affirming the genuineness of his fragments, which has been disputed.⁷ But from his time forward there are many signs of a broad movement of criticism, doubt, inquiry, and reconstruction, involving an extensive discussion of historical as well as religious tradition.⁸ There had begun, in short, for the rapidly-developing Greeks, a "discovery of man" such as is ascribed in later times to the age of the Italian Renaissance. In the next generation came the father of humanists, Herodotos, who

¹ Diog. Laërt. ix, 3 (§ 21).

² As to this see Windelband, *Hist. Anc. Philos.* pp. 91-92.

³ Cp. Mackay, *Progress of the Intellect*, i, 340.

⁴ "The difference between the Ionians and Eleatæ was this: the former endeavoured to trace an idea among phenomena by aid of observation; the latter evaded the difficulty by dogmatically asserting the objective existence of an idea" (Mackay, as last cited).

⁵ Cp. Mackay, i, 352-53, as to the survival of veneration of the heavenly bodies in the various schools.

⁶ Grote, i, 350.

⁷ Meyer, ii, 9, 759 (§§ 5, 465).

⁸ *Id.* §§ 6, 466.

implicitly carries the process of discrimination still further than did Hekataios; while Sophocles [496–405 B.C.], without ever challenging popular faith, whether implicitly as did Æschylus, or explicitly as did Euripides, "brought down the drama from the skies to the earth; and the drama still follows the course which Sophocles first marked out for it. It was on the Gods, the struggles of the Gods, and on destiny that Æschylus dwelt; it is with man that Sophocles is concerned."¹

Still, there was only to be a partial enlightenment of the race, such as we have seen occurring, perhaps about the same period, in India. Sophocles, even while dramatizing the cruel consequences of Greek religion, never made any sign of being delivered from the ordinary Greek conceptions of deity, or gave any help to wiser thought. The social difference between Greece and the monarchic civilizations was after all only one of degree: there, as elsewhere, the social problem was finally unsolved; and the limits to Greek progress were soon approached. But the evolution went far in many places, and it is profoundly interesting to trace it.

§ 5

Compared with the early Milesians and with Xenophanes, the elusive PYTHAGORAS (fl. 540–510 B.C.) is not so much a rationalistic as a theosophic freethinker; but to freethought his name belongs insofar as the system connected with it did rationalize, and discarded mythology. If the biographic data be in any degree trustworthy, it starts like Milesian speculation from oriental precedents.² Pythagoras was of Samos in the Ægean; and the traditions have it that he was a pupil of Pherekydes the Syrian, and that before settling at Krôton, in Italy, he travelled in Egypt, and had intercourse with the Chaldean Magi. Some parts of the Pythagorean code of life, at least, point to an eastern derivation.

The striking resemblance between the doctrine and practice of the Pythagoreans and those of the Jewish Essenes has led Zeller to argue (*Philos. der Griechen*, Th. iii, Abth. 2) that the latter were a branch of the former. Bishop Lightfoot, on the other hand, noting that the Essenes did not hold the specially prominent Pythagorean doctrines of numbers and of the transmigration of souls, traces Essenism to Zoroastrian influence (Ed. of *Colossians*, App. on the Essenes, pp. 150–51; rep. in *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age*, 1892, pp. 369–72). This

¹ Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* 1886, p. 210.

² Compare Meyer, ii, § 502, as to the close resemblances between Pythagoreanism and Orphicism.

raises the issue whether both Pythagoreanism and Essenism were not of Persian derivation; and Dr. Schürer (*Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Div. II, vol. ii, p. 218) pronounces in favour of an oriental origin for both. The new connection between Persia and Ionia just at or before the time of Pythagoras (fl. 530 B.C.) squares with this view; but it is further to be noted that the phenomenon of monasticism, common to Pythagoreans and Essenes, arises in Buddhism about the Pythagorean period; and as it is hardly likely that Buddhism in the sixth century B.C. reached Asia Minor, there remains the possibility of some special diffusion of the new ideal from the Babylonian sphere after the conquest by Cyrus, there being no trace of a Persian monastic system. The resemblances to Orphicism likewise suggest a Babylonian source, as does the doctrine of numbers, which is not Zoroastrian. As to Buddhism, the argument for a Buddhist origin of Essenism shortly before our era (cp. A. Lillie, *Buddhism in Christendom* and *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*; E. Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah; or, Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians*—all three to be read with much caution) does not meet the case of the Pythagorean precedents for Essenism. Prof. Burnet (*Early Greek Philos.* 2nd ed. p. 102) notes close *Indian* parallels to Pythagoreanism, but overlooks the intermediate Persian parallels, and falls back very unnecessarily on the bald notion that "the two systems were independently evolved from the same primitive systems."

As regards the mystic doctrine that numbers are, as it were, the moving principle in the cosmos—another thesis not unlikely to arise in that Babylonian world whence came the whole system of numbers for the later ancients¹—we can but pronounce it a development of thought *in vacuo*, and look further for the source of Pythagorean influence in the moral and social code of the movement, in its science, in its pantheism,² its contradictory dualism,³ and perhaps in its doctrine of transmigration of souls. On the side of natural science, its absurdities⁴ point to the fatal lack of observation which so soon stopped progress in Greek physics and biology.⁵ Yet in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and the science of sound the school seems to have done good scientific work; being indeed praised by the critical Aristotle for doing special service in that way.⁶ It is recorded that Philolaos, the successor of Pythagoras,

¹ Meyer, i. 186; ii, 535.

² *Id.* p. 143.

² Fairbanks, pp. 145, 151, 155, etc.

⁴ *Id.* p. 154.

⁵ Prof. Burnet insists (introd. p. 30) that "the" Greeks must be reckoned good observers because their later sculptors were so. As well say that artists make the best men of science.

⁶ *Metaph.* i, 5; Fairbanks, p. 136. "It is quite safe to attribute the substance of the First Book of Euclid to Pythagoras." Burnet, *Early Greek Philos.* 2nd ed. p. 117.

was the first to teach openly (about 460 B.C.) the doctrine of the motion of the earth¹—which, however, as above noted, was also said to have been previously taught by Anaximandros² (from whom some incline to derive the Pythagorean theory of numbers in general³) and by Hiketas or Iketas (or Niketas) of Syracuse.⁴ Ekphantos, of that city, is also credited with asserting the revolution of the earth on its axis; and he too is grouped with the Pythagoreans, though he seems to have had a pantheism of his own.⁵ Philolaos in particular is said to have been prosecuted for his teaching,⁶ which for many was a blasphemy; and it may be that this was the reason of its being specially ascribed to him, though current in the East long before his day. In the fragments ascribed to him is affirmed, in divergence from other Pythagoreans, the eternity of the earth; and in other ways he seems to have been an innovator.⁷ In any case, the Pythagorean conception of the earth's motion was a speculative one, wide of the facts, and not identical with the modern doctrine, save insofar as Pythagoras—or Philolaos—had rightly conceived the earth as a sphere.⁸

It is noteworthy, however, that in conjecturing that the whole solar system moves round a "central fire," Pythagoras carried his thought nearly as far as the moderns. The fanciful side of his system is seen in his hypothesis of a counter-earth (*Anti-chthon*) invented to bring up the number of celestial bodies in our system to ten, the "complete" number. (Berry, as cited.) Narrien (p. 163) misses this simple explanation of the idea.

As to politics, finally, it seems hard to solve the anomaly that Pythagoras is pronounced the first teacher of the principle of community of goods,⁹ and that his adherents at Krôton formed an aristocratic league, so detested by the people for its anti-democratism that its members were finally massacred in their meeting-place, their leader, according to one tradition, being slain with them, while according to a better grounded account he had withdrawn and died at Metapontion. The solution seems to be

¹ Diog. Laërt. *Philolaos* (bk. viii, ch. 7).

² L. U. K. *Hist. of Astron.* p. 20; A. Berry's *Short Hist. of Astron.* 1898, p. 25; Narrien's *Hist. Acc. of the Orig. and Prog. of Astron.* 1850, p. 163.

³ See Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, i, 11.

⁴ Diog. Laërt. in life of *Philolaos*; Cicero, *Academica*, ii, 39. Cicero, following Theophrastus, is explicit as to the teaching of Hiketas.

⁵ Hippolytos, *Ref. of all Heresies*, i, 13. Cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. anc.* i, 201, 205, 238-39.

⁶ Pseudo-Plutarch, *De Placitis Philosoph.* iii, 13, 14.

⁷ Ueberweg, i, 49. Cp. Tertullian (*Apol.* ch. 11), who says Pythagoras taught that the world was uncreated; and the contrary statement of Aetius (in Fairbanks, pp. 146-47).

⁸ Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.* pp. 22, 25. The question is ably handled by Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 199-205.

⁹ Diog. Laërt., viii, i, 8.

that the early movement was in no way monastic or communistic; that it was, however, a secret society; that it set up a kind of puritanism or "methodism" which repelled conservative people; and that, whatever its doctrines, its members were mostly of the upper class.¹ If they held by the general rejection of popular religion attributed to Pythagoras, they would so much the more exasperate the demos; for though at Krôton, as in the other Grecian colonial cities, there was considerable freedom of thought and speech, the populace can nowhere have been freethinking.² In any case, it was after its political overthrow, and still more in the Italian revival of the second century B.C., that the mystic and superstitious features of Pythagoreanism were most multiplied; and doubtless the master's teachings were often much perverted by his devotees. It was only too easy. He had laid down, as so many another moralist, that justice consisted in reciprocity; but he taught of virtue in terms of his theory of numbers³—a sure way of putting conduct out of touch with reality. Thus we find some of the later Pythagoreans laying it down as a canon that no story once fully current concerning the Gods was to be disbelieved⁴—the complete negation of philosophical freethought and a sharp contradiction of the other view which represented the shade of Pythagoras as saying that he had seen in Tartaros the shade of Homer hanged to a tree, and that of Hesiod chained to a pillar of brass, for the monstrous things they had ascribed to the Gods.⁵ It must have taken a good deal of decadence to bring an innovating sect to that pass; and even about 200 B.C. we find the freethinking Ennius at Rome calling himself a Pythagorean;⁶ but the course of things in Magna Graecia was mostly downward after the sixth century; the ferocious destruction of Sybaris by the Krotoniates helping to promote the decline.⁷ Intellectual life, in Magna Graecia as in Ionia, obeyed the general tendency.

An opposite view of the Pythagorean evolution is taken by Professor Burnet. He is satisfied that the long list of the Pythagorean taboos, which he rightly pronounces to be "of

¹ The whole question is carefully sifted by Grote, iv, 76-94. Prof. Burnet (*Early Greek Philos.* 2nd ed. pp. 96-98) sums up that the Pythagorean Order was an attempt to overrule or supersede the State.

² Cp. Burnet, p. 97, note 3. Prof. Burnet speaks of the Pythagorean Order as a "new religion" appealing to the people rather than the aristocrats, who were apt to be "freethinking." But on the next page he pictures the "plain man" as resenting precisely the religious neology of the movement. The evidence for the adhesion of aristocrats seems pretty strong.

³ Fairbanks, p. 143.

⁴ Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates*, ed. 1885, iv, 163.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. bk. viii, ch. i, 19 (§ 21).

⁶ Ennius, *Fragmenta*, ed. Hesselius, 1707, pp. 1, 4-7; Horace, *Epist.* ii, i, 52; Persius, *Sat.* vi.

⁷ Grote, *History*, iv, 97.

a thoroughly primitive type" (p. 105), and not at all the subtle "symbols" which they were latterly represented to be, were really the lore of Pythagoras. It is not easy thus to conceive a thinker of the great Ionian age as holding by thoroughly primitive superstitions. Perhaps the solution lies in Aristotle's statement that Pythagoras was first a mathematician, and only in later life a Pherekydean miracle-monger (Burnet, p. 107, note 3). He may actually have started the symbolic view of the taboos which he imposed.

Before the decadence comes, however, the phenomenon of rationalism occurs on all sides in the colonial cities, older and younger alike; and direct criticism of creed kept pace with the indirect. About 520 B.C. THEAGENES of Rhegion, in Southern Italy, had begun for the Greeks the process of reducing the unacceptable God-stories in Homer and Hesiod—notably the battle of the Gods in the Iliad—to mere allegories of the cosmic elements¹—a device natural to and practised by liberal conservatives in all religious systems under stress of skeptical attack, and afterwards much employed in the Hellenic world.² Soon the attack became more stringent. At Syracuse we find the great comic dramatist EPICHARMOS, about 470 B.C., treating the deities on the stage in a spirit of such audacious burlesque³ as must be held to imply unbelief. Aristophanes, at Athens, indeed, shows a measure of the same spirit while posing as a conservative in religion; but Epicharmos was professedly something of a Pythagorean and philosopher,⁴ and was doubtless protected by Hiero, at whose court he lived, against any religious resentment he may have aroused. The story of SIMONIDES'S answer to Hiero's question as to the nature of the Gods—first asking a day to think, then two days, then four, then avowing that meditation only made the problem harder⁵—points to the prevalent tone among the cultured.

§ 6

At last the critical spirit finds utterance, in the great Periklean period, at Athens, but first by way of importation from Ionia, where Miletos had fallen in the year 494. ANAXAGORAS of Klazomenai (fl. 480–450 B.C.; d. 428) is the first freethinker historically known to have been legally prosecuted and condemned⁶ for his freethought;

¹ Scholiast on Iliad, xx, 67; Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 48 (31); W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Literatur*, 3te Aufl. p. 63; Grote, ch. xvi (i, 374).

² See above, p. 145.

³ K. O. Müller, *Dorians*, Eng. tr. ii, 365–68; Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome*, Eng. tr. ed. 1894, iii, 113.

⁴ Grote, i, 338, note.

⁵ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 22.

⁶ Philolaos, as we saw, is said to have been prosecuted, but is not said to have been condemned.

and it was in the Athens of Perikles, despite Perikles's protection, that the attack was made. Coming of the Ionian line of thinkers, and himself a pupil of Anaximenes of Miletos, he held firmly by the scientific view of the cosmos, and taught that the sun, instead of being animated and a deity as the Athenians believed, was "a red-hot mass many times larger than the Peloponnesos"¹—and the moon a fiery (or earthy) solid body having in it plains and mountains and valleys—this while asserting that infinite mind was the source and introducer of all the motion in the infinite universe;² infinite in extent and infinitely divisible. This "materialistic" doctrine as to the heavenly bodies was propounded, as Sokrates tells in his defence, in books that in his day anyone could buy for a drachma; and Anaxagoras further taught, like Theagenes, that the mythical personages of the poets were mere abstractions invested with name and gender.³ Withal he was no brawler; and even in pious Athens, where he taught in peace for many years, he might have died in peace but for his intimacy with the most renowned of his pupils, Perikles.

The question of the deity of the sun raised an interesting sociological question. Athenians saw no blasphemy in saying that Gê (Gaia) or Dêmêter was the earth: they had always understood as much; and the earth was simply for them a Goddess; a vast living thing containing the principle of life. They might similarly have tolerated the description of the sun as a kind of red-hot earth, provided that its divinity were not challenged. The trouble lay rather in the negative than in the positive assertion, though the latter must for many have been shocking, inasmuch as they had never been wont to think about the sun as they did about the earth.

It is told of Perikles (499–429 B.C.) by the pious Plutarch, himself something of a believer in portents, that he greatly admired Anaxagoras, from whom he "seems to have learned to despise those superstitious fears which the common phenomena of the heavens produce in those who, ignorant of their cause, and knowing nothing about them, refer them all to the immediate action of the Gods."⁴ And even the stately eloquence and imperturbable bearing of the great statesman are said to have been learned from the Ionian master, whom he followed in "adorning his oratory with apt illustrations from physical science."⁵ The old philosopher, however,

¹ Fairbanks, pp. 245, 255, 261; Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iii, 4 (§ 8).

² Fairbanks, pp. 239–45. Cp. Grote, *Plato*, i, 54, and Ueberweg, i, 66, as to nature of the *Nous* of Anaxagoras.

³ Grote, i, 374; Hesychius, s.v. AGAMEMNONA; cp. Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iii, 7 (§ 11); Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 37 (21).

⁴ Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 6.

⁵ *Id.* chs. 5, 8.

whom men called "Nous" or Intelligence because of the part the name played in his teaching, left his property to go to ruin in his devotion to ideas; and it is told, with small probability, that at one time, old and indigent, he covered his head with his robe and decided to starve to death; till Perikles, hearing of it, hastened to beseech him to live to give his pupil counsel.¹

At length it occurred to the statesman's enemies to strike at him through his guide, philosopher, and friend. They had already procured the banishment of another of his teachers, Damon, as "an intriguer and a friend of despotism";² and one of their fanatics, Diopieithes, a priest and a violent demagogue,³ laid the way for an attack on Anaxagoras by obtaining the enactment of a law that "prosecutions should be laid against all who disbelieved in religion and held theories of their own about things on high."⁴ Anaxagoras was thus open to indictment on the score alike of his physics and of his mythology; though, seeing that his contemporary Diogenes of Apollonia (who before Demokritos taught "nothing out of nothing: nothing into nothing," and affirmed the sphericity of the earth) was also in some danger of his life at Athens,⁵ it is probable that the prosecution was grounded on his physicist teaching. Saved by Perikles from the death punishment, but by one account fined five talents,⁶ he either was exiled or chose to leave the intolerant city; and he made his home at Lampsakos, where, as the story runs, he won from the municipality the favour that every year the children should have a holiday in the month in which he died.⁷ It is significant of his general originality that he was reputed the first Greek who wrote a book in prose.⁸

Philosophically, however, he counted for less than he did as an innovating rationalist. His doctrine of *Nous* amounted in effect to a reaffirmation of deity; and he has been not unjustly described⁹ as the philosophic father of the dualistic deism or theism which, whether from within or from without the Christian system, has been the prevailing form of religious philosophy in the modern world. It was, in fact, the only form of theistic philosophy capable of winning any wide assent among religiously biassed minds; and it is the more remarkable that such a theist should have been prosecuted

¹ *Id.* c. 16. The old man is said to have uttered the reproach: "Perikles, those who want to use a lamp supply it with oil."

² Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 4.

³ Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iv, 277.

⁴ Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 32.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. ix (§ 57), citing the *Defence of Sokrates* by Demetrius Phalereus.

⁶ *Id.* bk. ii, ch. iii, 9 (§ 12), citing Sotion. Another writer of philosophers' lives, Hermippus (same cit.), said he had been thrown into prison; and yet a third, Hieronymus, said he was released out of pity because of his emaciated appearance when produced in court by Perikles.

⁷ Diog. Laërt. last cit. 10 (§ 14).

⁸ *Id.* 8 (§ 11).

⁹ Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus im Altertum*, p. 205.

because his notion of deity was mental, and excluded the divinization of the heavenly bodies.

In the memorable episode of his expulsion from Athens we have a finger-post to the road travelled later by Greek civilization. At Athens itself the bulk of the free population was ignorant and bigoted enough to allow of the law being used by any fanatic or malignant partisan against any professed rationalist; and there is no sign that Perikles dreamt of applying the one cure for the evil—the systematic bestowal of rationalistic instruction on all. The fatal maxim of ancient skepticism, that religion is a necessary restraint upon the multitude, brought it about that everywhere, in the last resort, the unenlightened multitude became a restraint upon reason and freethought.¹ In the more aristocratically ruled colonial cities, as we have seen, philosophic speech was comparatively free: it was the ignorant Athenian democracy that brought religious intolerance into Greek life, playing towards science, in form of law, the part that the fanatics of Egypt and Palestine had played towards the worshippers of other Gods than their own.

With a baseness of which the motive may be divided between the instincts of faction and of faith, the anti-Perikleian party carried their attack yet further; and on their behalf a comic playwright, Hermippos, brought a charge of impiety against the statesman's unwedded wife, ASPASIA.² There can be no doubt that that famous woman cordially shared the opinions and ideals of her husband, joining as she habitually did in the philosophic talk of his home circle. As a Milesian she was likely enough to be a freethinker; and all that was most rational in Athens acknowledged her culture and her charm.³ Perikles, who had not taken the risk of letting Anaxagoras come to trial, himself defended Aspasia before the dikastery, his indignation breaking through his habitual restraint in a passion of tears, which, according to the jealous Æschines,⁴ won an acquittal.

Placed as he was, Perikles could but guard his own head and heart, leaving the evil instrument of a religious inquisition to subsist. How far he held with Anaxagoras we can but divine.⁵ There is probably no truth in Plutarch's tale that "whenever he ascended

¹ Even in the early progressive period "the same time which set up rationalism developed a deep religious influence in the masses." (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 728. Cp. iii, 425; also Grote, vii, 30; and Benn, *Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, pp. 69-70.)

² Plutarch, *Perikles*, ch. 32.

³ Cp. Grote, v, 24; Curtius, ii, 208-209.

⁴ Plutarch, as cited. Plutarch also states, however, that the only occasion on which Perikles gave way to emotion in public was that of the death of his favourite son.

⁵ Holm (*Griechische Geschichte*, ii, 335) decides that Perikles sought to *Ionise* his fellow Athenians; and Dr. Burnet, coinciding (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 1892, p. 277), suggests that he and Aspasia brought Anaxagoras to Athens with that aim.

the tribune to speak he used first to pray to the Gods that nothing unfitted for the occasion might fall from his lips."¹ But as a party leader he, as a matter of course, observed the conventions; and he may have reasoned that the prosecutions of Anaxagoras and Aspasia, like that directed against Pheidias, stood merely for contemporary political malice, and not for any lasting danger to mental freedom. However that might be, Athens continued to remain the most aggressively intolerant and tradition-mongering of Hellenic cities. So marked is this tendency among the Athenians that for modern students Herodotos, whose history was published in 445 B.C., is relatively a rationalist in his treatment of fable,² bringing as he did the spirit of Ionia into things traditional and religious. But even Herodotos remains wedded to the belief in oracles or prophecies, claiming fulfilment for those said to have been uttered by Bakis;³ and his small measure of spontaneous skepticism could avail little for critical thought. To no man, apparently, did it occur to resist the religious spirit by systematic propaganda: that, like the principle of representative government, was to be hit upon only in a later age.⁴ Not by a purely literary culture, relating life merely to poetry and myth, tradition and superstition, were men to be made fit to conduct a stable society. And the spirit of pious persecution, once generated, went from bad to worse, crowning itself with crime, till at length the overthrow of Athenian self-government wrought a forlorn liberty of scientific speech at the cost of the liberty of political action which is the basis of all sound life.

Whatever may have been the private vogue of freethinking at Athens in the Periklean period, it was always a popular thing to attack it. Some years before or after the death of Perikles there came to Athens the alien HIPPO, the first specifically named atheist⁵ of Greek antiquity. The dubious tradition runs that his tomb bore the epitaph: "This is the grave of Hippo, whom destiny, in destroying him, has made the equal of the immortal Gods."⁶ If, as seems likely, he was the Hippo of Rhegion mentioned by Hippolytos,⁷ he speculated as to physical origins in the manner of Thales, making water generate fire, and that in turn produce the world.⁸ But this

¹ *Perikles*, ch. 8.

² "Der Kleinasiatische Rationalist Herodot" is the exaggerated estimate of A. Bauer, in Ilberg's *Neue Jahrbuch für das klassische Altertum*, ix (1902), 235, following Eduard Meyer (iv, § 448), who, however (§ 447), points to the lack of scientific thought or training in Herodotos as in Thukydidēs. Ignorance of Nature remained a Greek characteristic.

³ Bk. viii, ch. 77. Cp. viii, 20, 96; ix, 43.

⁴ Cp. Meyer, iv, § 446, as to the inadequacy of Athenian culture, and the unchanging ignorance of the populace on matters of physical science.

⁵ Plutarch, *Against the Stoics*, ch. 31; Simplicius, *Physica*, i, 6.

⁶ Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. 4.

⁷ *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 14.

⁸ Cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i, 3; *De anima*, i, 2.

is uncertain. Upon him the comic muse of Athens turned its attacks very much as it did upon Socrates. The old comic poet Kratinos, a notorious wine-bibber, produced a comedy called *The Panoptai* (the "all-seers" or "all eyes"), in which it would appear that the chorus were made to represent the disciples of Hippo, and to wear a mask covered with eyes.¹ Drunkenness was a venial vault in comparison with the presumption to speculate on physics and to doubt the sacred lore of the populace. The end of the rule of ignorance was that a theistic philosopher who himself discouraged scientific inquiry was to pay a heavier penalty than did the atheist Hippo.

§ 7

While Athens was gaining power and glory and beauty without popular wisdom, the colonial city of Abdera, in Thrace, founded by Ionians, had like others carried on the great impulse of Ionian philosophy, and had produced in the fifth century some of the great thinkers of the race. Concerning the greatest of these, DEMOKRITOS, and the next in importance, PROTAGORAS, we have no sure dates;² but it is probable that the second, whether older or younger, was influenced by the first, who indeed has influenced all scientific philosophy down to our own day. How much he learned from his master LEUKIPPOS cannot now be ascertained.³ The writings which went under his name appear to have been the productions of the whole Abderite school;⁴ and Epicurus declared that Leukippos was an imaginary person.⁵ What passes for his teaching was constructive science of cardinal importance; for it is the first clear statement of the atomic theory; the substitution of a real for an abstract foundation of things. Whoever were the originator of the theory, there is no doubt as to the assimilation of the principle by Demokritos, who thus logically continued the non-theistic line of thought, and developed one of the most fruitful of all scientific principles. That this idea again is a direct development from Babylonian science is not impossible; at least there seems to be no doubt that Demokritos had travelled far and wide,⁶ whether or not he had been brought up, as the tradition goes, by Persian magi;⁷ and that he told how the cosmic views of Anaxagoras,

¹ Decharme, *Critique des trad. relig.* p. 137, citing scholiast on Aristoph., *Clouds*, 96.

² See the point discussed by Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 128-29, 131-32, notes 10 and 31 (Eng. tr. i, 15, 39). Ritter and Preller say "Protagoras floret circa a. 450-430"; "Democritus natus circa a. 460 floret a. 430-410, obit. circa a. 357."

³ Cp. Ueberweg, i, 68-69; Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. anc.* i, 238.

⁴ Burnet, p. 381.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. x, 13.

⁶ Lange, i, 10-11 (tr. p. 17); Clem. Alex. *Stromata*, i, 15; Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, § 35.

⁷ On this also see Lange, i, 128 (tr. p. 15, note).

which scandalized the Athenians, were current in the East.¹ But he stands out as one of the most original minds in the whole history of thought. No Greek thinker, not Aristotle himself, has struck so deep as he into fundamental problems; though the absurd label of "the laughing philosopher," bestowed on him by some peculiarly unphilosophic mind, has delayed the later recognition of his greatness, clear as it was to Bacon.² The vital maxim, "Nothing from nothing: nothing into nothing," derives substantially from him.³

His atomic theory, held in conjunction with a conception of "mind-stuff" similar to that of Anaxagoras, may be termed the high-water mark of ancient scientific thought; and it is noteworthy that somewhat earlier in the same age EMPEDOKLES of Agrigentum, another product of the freer colonial life, threw out a certain glimmer of the Darwinian conception—perhaps more clearly attained by Anaximandros—that adaptations prevail in nature just because the adaptations fit organisms to survive, and the non-adapted perish.⁴ In his teaching, too, the doctrine of the indestructibility of matter is clear and firm;⁵ and the denial of anthropomorphic deity is explicit.⁶ But Empedokles wrought out no solid system: "half-mystic and half-rationalist, he made no attempt to reconcile the two inconsistent sides of his intellectual character";⁷ and his explicit teaching of metempsychosis⁸ and other Pythagoreanisms gave foothold for more delusion than he ever dispelled.⁹ On the whole, he is one of the most remarkable personalities of antiquity, moving among men with a pomp and gravity which made them think of him as a God, denouncing their sacrifices, and no less their eating of flesh; and checking his notable self-exaltation by recalling the general littleness of men. But he did little to enlighten them; and Aristotle passed on to the world a fatal misconception of his thought by ascribing to him the notion of automatism where he was asserting a "necessity" in terms of laws which he avowedly could not explain.¹⁰ Against such misconception he should have provided. Demokritos, however, shunned dialectic and discussion, and founded no school;¹¹ and although his atomism was later adopted by Epicurus, it was no

¹ Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. vii, 2 (§ 34). Cp. Renouvier, i, 239-41.

² See in particular the *De principiis atque originibus* (Works, Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 649-50).

³ Meyer, who dwells on his scientific shortcomings (*Gesch. des Alt.* v. § 910), makes no account of this, his vital doctrine.

⁴ Fairbanks, pp. 189-91. The idea is not put by Empedokles with any such definiteness as is suggested by Lange, i, 23-25 (tr. pp. 33-35), and Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.* Eng. tr. i, 62, n. But Ueberweg's exposition is illuminating.

⁵ Fairbanks, pp. 136, 169.

⁷ Benn, i, 28.

⁶ *Id.* p. 201.

⁸ Fairbanks, p. 205.

⁹ See a good study of Empedokles in J. A. Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 3rd ed. 1893, vol. i, ch. 7; and another in Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 163-82.

¹⁰ Cp. Grote, *Plato*, i, 73, and note.

¹¹ Cp. Renouvier, i, 239-62; Lange, p. 11 (tr. p. 17).

more developed on a basis of investigation and experiment than was the biology of Empedokles. His ethic, though wholly rationalistic, leant rather to quietism and resignation than to reconstruction,¹ and found its application only in the later static message of Epicurus. Greek society failed to set up the conditions needed for progress beyond the point gained by its unguided forces.

Thus when Protagoras ventured to read, at the house of the freethinking Euripides, a treatise of his own, beginning with the avowal that he offered no opinion as to the existence of the Gods, life being too short for the inquiry,² the remark got wind, and he had to fly for his life, though Euripides and perhaps most of the guests were very much of the same way of thinking.³ In the course of his flight, the tradition goes, the philosopher was drowned;⁴ and his book was publicly burned, all who possessed copies being ordered by public proclamation to give them up—the earliest known instance of “censorship of the press.”⁵ Partisan malice was doubtless at work in his case as in that of Anaxagoras; for the philosophic doctrine of Protagoras became common enough. It is not impossible, though the date is doubtful, that the attack on him was one of the results of the great excitement in Athens in the year 415 B.C. over the sacrilegious mutilation of the figures of Hermes, the familial or boundary-God, in the streets by night. It was about that time that the poet DIAGORAS of Melos was proscribed for atheism, he having declared that the non-punishment of a certain act of iniquity proved that there were no Gods.⁶ It has been surmised, with some reason, that the iniquity in question was the slaughter of the Melians by the Athenians in 416 B.C.,⁷ and the Athenian resentment in that case was personal and political rather than religious.⁸ For some time after 415 the Athenian courts made strenuous efforts to punish every discoverable case of impiety; and parodies of the Eleusinian mysteries (resembling the mock Masses of Catholic Europe) were alleged against Alkibiades and others.⁹ Diagoras, who was further charged with divulging the Eleusinian and other mysteries, and with making firewood of an image of Herakles, telling the God thus to perform his thirteenth labour by cooking

¹ Cp. Meyer, § 911.

² Diogenes Laërtius, bk. ix, ch. viii, § 3 (51); cp. Grote, vii, 49, *note*.

³ For a defence of Protagoras against Plato, see Grote, vii, 43-54.

⁴ Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, ix, 56.

⁵ Beckmann, *History of Inventions*, Eng. tr. 1846, ii, 513.

⁶ Diod. Sic. xiii, 6; Hesychius, cit. in Cudworth, ed. Harrison, i, 131.

⁷ Ueberweg, i, 80; Thukydides, v, 116. The bias of Sextus Empiricus is further shown in his account of Diagoras as moved in his denunciation by an injury to himself.

⁸ It is told by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* ix, 53) that Diagoras is said to have invented the dithyramb (in praise of Iacchos), and to have begun a poem with the words, “All things come by the daimon and fortune.” But Sextus writes with a fixed skeptical bias.

⁹ Grote, vi, 13, 32, 33, 42-45.

turnips,¹ became thenceforth one of the proverbial atheists of the ancient world,² and a reward of a silver talent was offered for killing him, and of two talents for his capture alive;³ despite which he seems to have escaped. But no antidote to the bane of fanaticism was found or sought; and the most famous publicist in Athens was the next victim.

The fatality of the Athenian development is seen not only in the direct hostility of the people to rational thought, but in their loss of their hold even on their public polity. For lack of political judgment, moved always by the passions which their literary culture cherished, they so mishandled their affairs in the long and demoralizing Peloponnesian war that they were at one time cowed by their own aristocracy, on essentially absurd pretexts, into abandoning the democratic constitution. Its restoration was followed at the final crisis by another tyranny, also short-lived, but abnormally bloody and iniquitous; and though the people at its overthrow showed a moderation in remarkable contrast to the cruelty and rapacity of the aristocrats, the effect of such extreme vicissitude was to increase the total disposition towards civic violence and coercion. And while the people menaced freethinking in religion, the aristocracies opposed freethinking in politics. Thus under the Thirty Tyrants all intellectual teaching was forbidden; and Kritias, himself accused of having helped Alkibiades to parody the mysteries, sharply interdicted the political rationalism of Sokrates,⁴ who according to tradition had been one of his own instructors.

It was a result of the general movement of mind throughout the rest of the Hellenic world that freethinkers of culture were still numerous. ARCHELAOS of Miletos, the most important disciple of Anaxagoras; according to a late tradition, the master of Sokrates; and the first systematic teacher of Ionic physical science in Athens, taught the infinity of the universe, grasped the explanation of the nature of sound, and set forth on purely rationalistic lines the social origin and basis of morals, thus giving Sokrates his practical lead.⁵

¹ Athenagoras, *Apol.*, ch. 4; Clem. Alex., *Protrept.* ch. 2. See the documentary details in Meyer, iv, 105.

² Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 1, 23, 42; iii, 37 (the last reference gives proof of his general rationalism); Lactantius, *De ira Dei*, c. 9. In calling Sokrates "the Melian," Aristophanes (*Clouds*, 830) was held to have virtually called him "the atheist."

³ Diod. xiii, 6; Suidas, s.v. DIAGORAS; Aristophanes, *Birds*, 1073. It is noteworthy that in their fury against Diagoras the Athenians put him on a level of common odium with the "tyrants" of past history. Cp. Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 355.

⁴ Grote, vi, 476-77. As to the freethinking of Kritias, see Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* ix, 54. According to Xenophon (*Memorabilia*, i, 2), Kritias made his decree in revenge for Sokrates's condemnation of one of his illicit passions. Prof. Decharme (pp. 122-24) gives a good account of him.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iv; Hippolytos, *Refutation of all Heresies*, i, 8; Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 233-37.

Another disciple of Anaxagoras, METRODOROS of Lampsakos (not to be confounded with Metrodoros of Chios, and the other Metrodoros of Lampsakos who was the friend of Epicurus, both also freethinkers), carried out zealously his master's teaching as to the deities and heroes of Homer, resolving them into mere elemental combinations and physical agencies, and making Zeus stand for mind, and Athenê for art.¹ And in the *belles lettres* of Athens itself, in the dramas of EURIPIDES [480-406 B.C.], who is said to have been the ardent disciple of Anaxagoras,² to have studied Herakleitos,³ and to have been the friend of Sokrates and Protagoras, there emerge traces enough of a rationalism not to be reconciled with the old belief in the Gods. If Euripides has nowhere ventured on such a terrific paradox as the *Prometheus*, he has in a score of passages revealed a stress of skepticism which, inasmuch as he too uses all the forms of Hellenic faith,⁴ deepens our doubt as to the beliefs of Æschylus. Euripides even gave overt proof of his unbelief, beginning his *Melanippe* with the line: "Zeus, whoever Zeus be, for I know not, save by report," an audacity which evoked a great uproar. In a later production the passage was prudently altered;⁵ but he never put much check on his native tendency to analyse and criticize on all issues—a tendency fostered, as we have seen,⁶ by the constant example of real and poignant dialectic in the Athenian dikastery, and the whole drift of the Athenian stage. In his case the tendency even overbalances the artistic process;⁷ but it has the advantage of involving a very bold handling of vital problems. Not satisfied with a merely dramatic presentment of lawless Gods, Euripides makes his characters impeach them as such,⁸ or, again, declare that there can be no truth in the "miserable tales of poets" which so represent them.⁹ Not content with putting aside as idle such a fable as that of the sun's swerving from his course in horror at the crime of Atreus,¹⁰ and that of the Judgment of Paris,¹¹ he

¹ Cp. Cudworth, *Intellectual System*, ed. Harrison, i, 32; Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 233, 289; ii, 268, 292; Tatian, *Adv. Græcos*, c. 48 (31); Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. iii, 7 (§ 11); Grote, i, 374, 395, note; Hatch, *Infl. of Greek Ideas*, p. 60.

² Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 206. Cp. Burnett, p. 278.

³ Diog. Laërt. bk. ii (§ 22).

⁴ "He never so utterly abandoned the religion of his country as to find it impossible to acquiesce in at least some part of traditional religion." Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* 1886, p. 222.

⁵ Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, 1889, p. 316.

⁶ Above, p. 133.

⁷ "He had also acquired in no small degree that love of dexterous argumentation and verbal sophistry which was becoming fashionable in the Athens of the fifth century. Not unfrequently he exhibits this dexterity when it is clearly out of place." Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, p. 235. Cp. Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* p. 223. Schlegel is much more censorious.

⁸ *Ion*, 436-51, 885-922; *Andromache*, 1161-65; *Electra*, 1245-46; *Hercules Furens*, 339-47; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 35, 711-15.

⁹ *Hercules Furens*, 344, 1341-46; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 380-91.

¹⁰ *Electra*, 737-45.

¹¹ *Troades*, 969-90.

attacks with a stringent scorn the whole apparatus of oracles, divination, and soothsaying.¹ And if the Athenian populace cried out at the hardy opening of the *Melanippe*, he nonetheless gave them again and again his opinion that no man knew anything of the Gods.² Of orthodox protests against freethinking inquiry he gives a plainly ironical handling.³ As regards his constructive opinions, we have from him many expressions of the pantheism which had by his time permeated the thought of perhaps most of the educated Greeks.⁴

Here again, as in the case of Æschylus, there arises the problem of contradiction; for Euripides, too, puts often in the mouths of his characters emphatic expressions of customary piety. The conclusion in the two cases must be broadly the same—that whereas an unbelieving dramatist may well make his characters talk in the ordinary way of deity and of religion, it is unintelligible that a believing one should either go beyond the artistic bounds of his task to make them utter an unbelief which must have struck the average listener as strange and noxious, or construct a drama of which the whole effect is to insist on the odiousness of the action of the Supreme God. And the real drift of Euripides is so plain that one modern and Christian scholar has denounced him as an obnoxious and unbelieving sophist who abused his opportunity as a producer of dramas under religious auspices to “shake the groundworks of religion”⁵ and at the same time of morals;⁶ while another and a greater scholar, less vehement in his orthodoxy, more restrainedly condemns the dramatist for employing myths in which he did not believe, instead of inventing fresh plots.⁷ Christian scholars are thus duly unready to give him credit for his many-sided humanity, nobly illustrated in his pleas for the slave and his sympathy with suffering barbarians.⁸ Latterly the recognition of Euripides’s freethinking has led to the description of him as “Euripides the Rationalist,” in a treatise which represents him as a systematic assailant of the religion of his day. Abating somewhat of that thesis, which imputes more of system to the Euripidean

¹ *Ion*, 374-78, 685; *Helena*, 744-57; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 570-75; *Electra*, 400; *Phœnissæ*, 772; *Fragm.* 793; *Bacchæ*, 255-57; *Hippolytus*, 1059. It is noteworthy that even Sophocles (*Ed. Tyr.*, 387) makes a character taunt Tiresias the soothsayer with venality.

² *Philoctetes*, fr. 793; *Helena*, 1137-43; *Bellerophon*, fr. 288.

³ *Bacchæ*, 200-203.

⁴ *Helena*, 1013; *Fragm.* 890, 905, 935; *Troades*, 848-88.

⁵ A. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, Bohn tr. p. 117.

⁶ This charge is on a par with that of Hygiainon, who accused Euripides of impiety on the score that one of his characters makes light of oaths. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, iii, 15.

⁷ K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece*, 1847, p. 359. The complaint is somewhat surprising from such a source. The only play with an entirely invented plot mentioned by Aristotle is Agathon’s *Flower* (Aristotle, *Poetic*, ix); and such plays would not have been eligible for representation at the great festivals.

⁸ Cp. Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* pp. 223-24.

drama than it possesses, we may sum up that the last of the great tragedians of Athens, and the most human and lovable of the three, was assuredly a rationalist in matters of religion. It is noteworthy that he used more frequently than any other ancient dramatist the device of a *deus ex machina* to end a play.¹ It was probably because for him the conception had no serious significance.² In the *Alkestis* its [non-mechanical] use is one of the most striking instances of dramatic irony in all literature. The dead Alkestis, who has died to save the life of her husband, is brought back from the Shades by Herakles, who figures as a brawling bully. Only the thinkers of the time could realize the thought that underlay such a tragedy-comedy.

Dr. Verrall's *Euripides the Rationalist*, 1897, is fairly summed up by Mr. Haigh (*Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, pp. 262, 265, notes): "He considers that Euripides was a skeptic of the aggressive type, whose principal object in writing tragedy was to attack the State religion, but who, perceiving that it would be dangerous to pose as an open enemy, endeavoured to accomplish his ends by covert ridicule.....His plays.....contain in reality two separate plots—the ostensible and superficial plot, which was intended to satisfy the orthodox, and the rationalized modification which lay half concealed beneath it, and which the intelligent skeptic would easily detect." For objections to this thesis see Haigh, as cited; Jevons, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* p. 222, note; and Dr. Mozley's article in the *Classical Review*, Nov. 1895, pp. 407-13. As to the rationalism of Euripides in general see many of the passages cited by Bishop Westcott in his *Essays in the Hist. of Relig. Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 102-27. And cp. Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, pp. 46-49; Grote, *Hist.* i, 346-48; Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 231; Murray, *Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 256, 264-66.

Over the latest play of Euripides, the *Bacchæ*, as over one of the last plays of Æschylus, the *Prometheus*, there has been special debate. It was probably written in Macedonia (cp. ll, 408, 565), whither the poet had gone on the invitation of King Archelaos, when, according to the ancient sketch of his life, "he had to leave Athens because of the malicious exultation over him of nearly all the city." The trouble, it is conjectured, "may have been something connected with his prosecution for impiety, the charge on which Socrates was put to death a few years after" (Murray, *Euripides translated into English Rhyming Verse*, 1902, introd. essay, p. lii). Inasmuch as the play glorifies Dionysos, and the "atheist" Pentheus (l. 995)

¹ Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, p. 191. Cp. Müller, pp. 362-64.

² See, however, the æsthetic theorem of Prof. Murray, *Euripides and his Age*, pp. 221-27.

who resists him is slain by the maddened Bacchantes, led by his own mother, it is seriously argued that the drama "may be regarded as in some sort an *apologia* and an *eirenicon*, or as a confession on the part of the poet that he was fully conscious that in some of the simple legends of the popular faith there was an element of sound sense (!) which thoughtful men must treat with forbearance, resolved on using it, if possible, as an instrument for inculcating a truer morality, instead of assailing it with a presumptuous denial" (J. E. Sandys, *The Bacchæ of Euripides*, 1880, introd. pp. lxxv-vi). Here we have the conformist ethic of the average English academic brought to bear on, and ascribed to, the personality of the Greek dramatist.

An academic of the same order, Prof. Mahaffy, similarly suggests that "among the half-educated Macedonian youth, with whom literature was coming into fashion, the poet *may* have met with a good deal of that insolent second-hand skepticism which is so offensive to a deep and serious thinker, and he *may* have wished to show them that he was not, as they *doubtless* hailed him, the apostle of this random speculative arrogance" (*Euripides* in *Class. Writ. Ser.* 1879, p. 85). As against the eminently "random" and "speculative arrogance" of this particular passage—a characteristic product of the obscurantist functions of some British university professors in matters of religion, and one which may fitly be pronounced offensive to honest men—it may be suggested on the other hand that, if Euripides got into trouble in Athens by his skepticism, he would be likely in Macedonia to encounter rather a greater stress of bigotry than a freethinking welcome, and that a non-critical presentment of the savage religious legend was forced on him by his environment.

Much of the academic discussion on the subject betrays a singular slowness to accept the dramatic standpoint. Even Prof. Murray, the finest interpreter of Euripides, dogmatically pronounces (introd. cited p. lvii) that "there is in the *Bacchæ* *real and heartfelt* glorification of Dionysus," simply because of the lyrical exaltation of the Bacchic choruses. But lyrical exaltation was in character here above all other cases; and it was the dramatist's business to present it. To say that "again and again in the lyrics you feel that the Mænads are no longer merely observed and analysed: the poet has entered into them and they into him," is nothing to the purpose. That the words which fall from the Chorus or its Leader are at times "not the words of a raving Bacchante, but of a gentle and deeply musing philosopher," is still nothing to the purpose. The same could be said of Shakespeare's handling of Macbeth. What, in sooth, would the real words of a raving Bacchante be like? If Milton lent dignity to Satan in Puritan England, was Euripides to do

less for Dionysos in Macedonia? That he should make Pentheus unsympathetic belongs to the plot. If he had made a noble martyr of the victim as well as an impassive destroyer of the God, he might have had to leave Macedonia more precipitately than he left Athens.

Prof. Murray recognizes all the while that "Euripides never palliates things. He leaves this savage story as savage as he found it"; that he presents a "triumphant and *hateful* Dionysus," who gives "a helpless fatalistic answer, abandoning the moral standpoint," when challenged by the stricken Agavê, whom the God has moved to dismember her own son; and that, in short, "Euripides is, as usual, critical or even hostile to the myth that he celebrates" (as cited, pp. liv-lvi). To set against these solid facts, as does Mr. Sandys (as cited, pp. lxxiii-iv), some passages in the choruses (ll. 395, 388, 427, 1002), and in a speech of Dionysos (1002), enouncing normal platitudes about the wisdom of thinking like other people and living a quiet life, is to strain very uncritically the elastic dramatic material. So far from being "not entirely in keeping" with the likely sentiments of a chorus of Asiatic women, the first-cited passages—telling that cleverness is not wisdom, and that true wisdom acquiesces in the opinions of ordinary people—are just the kind of mock-modest ineptitudes always current among the complacent ignorant; and the sage language ascribed to the heartless God is simply a presentment of deity in the fashion in which all Greeks expected to have it presented.

The fact remains that the story of the *Bacchæ*, in which the frenzied mother helps to tear to pieces her own son, and the God can but say it is all fated, is as revolting to the rational moral sense as the story of the *Prometheus*. If this be an *eirenicon*, it is surely the most ironical in literary history. To see in the impassive delineation of such a myth an acceptance by the poet of popular "sound sense," and "a desire to put himself right with the public in matters on which he had been misunderstood," seems possible only to academics trained to a particular handling of the popular creed of their own day. This view, first put forward by Tyrwhitt (*Conjecturæ in Æschylum, etc.* 1822), was adopted by Schoone (p. 20 of his ed. cited by Sandys). Lobeck, greatly daring wherever rationalism was concerned, suggested that Euripides actually wrote against the rationalists of his time, in commendation of the Bacchic cult, and to justify the popular view in religious matters as against that of the cultured (*Aglaophamus*—passages quoted by Sandys, p. lxxvi). Musgrave, following Tyrwhitt, makes the play out to be an attack on Kritias, Alkibiades, and other freethinkers, including even Sokrates! K. O. Müller, always ineptly conventional in such matters, finds Euripides in this play "converted into a positive believer, or, in other words, convinced that

religion should not be exposed to the subtleties of reasoning; that the understanding of man cannot subvert ancestral traditions which are as old as time," and so on; and in the Polonius-platitudes of Tiresias and the worldly-wise counsels of Cadmus he finds "great impressiveness" (*Hist. Lit. Anc. Greece*, p. 379).

The bulk of the literature of the subject, in short, suggests sombre reflections on the moral value of much academic thinking. There are, however, academic suffrages on the side of common sense. Mr. Haigh (*Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, pp. 313-14) gently dismisses the "recantation" theory; Hartung points out (*Euripides restitutus*, 1844, ii, 542, cited by Sandys) that Euripides really treats the legend of Pentheus very much as he treats the myth of Hippolytos thirty years earlier, showing no change of moral attitude. E. Pfander (cited by Sandys) took a similar view; as did Mr. Tyrrell in his edition of the play (1871), though the latter persisted in taking the commonplaces of the chorus about true wisdom (395) for the judgments of the dramatist. Euripides could hardly have been called "the philosopher of the stage" (Athenæus, iv, 48) on the strength of sentiments which are common to the village wiseacres of all ages. The critical method which ascribes to Euripides a final hostility to rationalism would impute to Shakespeare the religion of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, when the talk of the Duke as a friar counselling a condemned man is wholly "pagan" or unbelieving.

In his admirable little book, *Euripides and his Age* (1913), Prof. Murray repeats his account of the *Bacchæ* with some additions and modifications. He adheres to the "heartfelt glorification of Dionysus," but adds (p. 188): "No doubt it is Dionysus in some private sense of the poet's own..... some spirit of.....inspiration and untrammelled life. The presentation is not consistent, however magical the poetry." As to the theory that "the veteran free-lance of thought..... now saw the error of his ways and was returning to orthodoxy," he pronounces that "Such a view strikes us now as almost childish in its incompetence" (p. 190). He also reminds us that "the whole scheme of the play is given by the ancient ritual.....All kinds of small details which seemed like..... rather fantastic invention on the part of Euripides are taken straight from Æschylus or the ritual, or both.....The *Bacchæ* is not free invention; it is tradition" (pp. 182-84). And in sum: "It is well to remember that, for all his lucidity of language, Euripides is not lucid about religion" (p. 190).

In conclusion we may ask, How could he be? He wrote plays for the Greek stage, which had its very roots in religious tradition, and was run for the edification of a crudely believing

populace. It is much that in so doing Euripides could a hundred times challenge the evil religious ethic given him for his subject-matter; and his lasting vogue in antiquity showed that he had a hold on the higher Greek conscience which no other dramatist ever possessed.

But while Euripides must thus have made a special appeal to the reflecting minority even in his own day, it is clear that he was not at first popular with the many; and his efforts, whatever he may have hoped to achieve, could not suffice to enlighten the democracy. The ribald blasphemies of his enemy, the believing Aristophanes,¹ could avail more to keep vulgar religion in credit than the tragedian's serious indictment could effect against it; and they served at the same time to belittle Euripides for the multitude in his own day. Aristophanes is the typical Tory in religion; non-religious himself, like Swift, he hates the honestly anti-religious man; and he has the crowd with him. The Athenian faith, as a Catholic scholar remarks,² "was more disposed to suffer the buffooneries of a comedian than the serious negation of a philosopher." The average Greek seemed to think that the grossest comic impiety did no harm, where serious negation might cause divine wrath.³ And so there came no intellectual salvation for Athens from the drama which was her unique achievement. The balance of ignorance and culture was not changed. Evidently there was much rationalism among the studious few. Plato in the *Laws*⁴ speaks both of the man-about-town type of freethinker and of those who, while they believe in no Gods, live well and wisely and are in good repute. But with Plato playing the superior mind and encouraging his fellow-townsmen to believe in the personality of the sun, moon, and planets, credulity could easily keep the upper hand.⁵ The people remained politically unwise and religiously superstitious, the social struggle perpetuating the division between leisure and toil, even apart from the life of the mass of slaves; while the eternal pre-occupation of militarism left even the majority of the upper class at the intellectual level natural to military life in all ages. There came, however, a generation of great intellectual

¹ It seems arguable that the aversion of Aristophanes to Euripides was primarily artistic, arising in dislike of some of the features of his style. On this head his must be reckoned an expert judgment. The old criticism found in Euripides literary vices; the new seems to ignore the issue. But a clerical scholar pronounces that "Aristophanes was the most unreasoning *laudator temporis acti*. Genius and poet as he was, he was the sworn foe to intellectual progress." Hence his hatred of Euripides and his championship of Æschylus. (Rev. Dr. W. W. Merry, introd. to Clar. Press ed. of *The Frogs*, 1892.)

² Girard, *Essai sur Thucydide*, 1884, pp. 258-59.

³ Cp. Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, p. 315. In the same way Ktesilochos, the pupil of Apelles, could with impunity make Zeus ridiculous by exhibiting him pictorially in child-bed, bringing forth Dionysos (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv, 40, § 15).

⁴ Bk. x, *ad init.*

⁵ Cp. Benn, *Philos. of Greece*, p. 171.

splendour following on that of the supreme development of drama just before the fall of Greek freedom. Athens had at last come into the heritage of Greek philosophic thought; and to the utterance of that crowning generation the human retrospect has turned ever since. This much of renown remains inalienable from the most renowned democracy of the ancient world.

§ 8

The wide subject of the teaching of SOKRATES, PLATO, and ARISTOTLE must here be noticed briefly, with a view only to our special inquiry. All three must be inscribed in any list of ancient freethinkers; and yet all three furthered freethought only indirectly, the two former being in different degrees supernaturalists, while the last touched on religious questions only as a philosopher, avoiding all question of practical innovation.

The same account holds good of the best of the so-called Sophists, as GORGIAS the Sicilian (? 485-380), who was a nihilistic skeptic; HIPPIAS of Elis, who, setting up an emphatic distinction between Nature and Convention, impugned the political laws and prejudices which estranged men of thought and culture; and PRODIKOS of Kos (fl. 435), author of the fable of Herakles at the Parting of the Ways, who seems to have privately criticized the current Gods as mere deifications of useful things and forces, and was later misconceived as teaching that the things and forces were Gods. Cp. Cicero, *De nat. Deorum*, i, 42; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mathematicos*, ix, 52; Ueberweg, vol. i, p. 78; Renouvier, i, 291-93. Cicero saw very well that if men came to see in Démêtêr merely a deification of corn or bread, in Dionysos wine, in Hephaistos fire, and in Poseidon only water, there was not much left in religion. On the score of their systematic skepticism, that is, their insistence on the subjectivity of all opinion, Prof. Drews pronounces the Sophists at once the "Aufklärer" and the Pragmatists of ancient Greece (*Gesch. des Monismus*, p. 209). But their thought was scarcely homogeneous.

1. SOKRATES [468-399] was fundamentally and practically a freethinker, insofar as in most things he thought for himself, definitely turning away from the old ideal of mere transmitted authority in morals.¹ Starting in all inquiries from a position of professed ignorance, he at least repudiated all dogmatics.² Being, however, preoccupied with public life and conduct, he did not carry

¹ Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 227; Hegel, as there cited Grote, *Plato*, ed. 1885, i, 423.

² Cp. Owen, *Evenings with the Sceptics*, i, 181 sq., 291, 293, 299, etc

his critical thinking far beyond that sphere. In regard to the extension of solid science, one of the prime necessities of Greek intellectual life, he was quite reactionary, drawing a line between the phenomena which he thought intelligible and traceable and those which he thought past finding out. "Physics and astronomy, in his opinion, belonged to the divine class of phenomena in which human research was insane, fruitless, and impious."¹ Yet at the same time he formulated, apparently of his own motion, the ordinary design argument.² The sound scientific view led up to by so many previous thinkers was set forth, even in religious phraseology, by his great contemporary Hippokrates,³ and he opposed it. While partially separating himself in practice from the popular worships, he held by the belief in omens, though not in all the ordinary ones; and in one of the Platonic dialogues he is made to say he holds by the ordinary versions of all the myths, on the ground that it is a hopeless task to find rational explanations for them.⁴ He hoped, in short, to rationalize conduct without seeking to rationalize creed—the dream of Plato and of a thousand religionists since.

He had indeed the excuse that the myth-rationalizers of the time after Hekataios, following the line of least psychic resistance, like those of England and Germany in the eighteenth century, explained away myths by reducing them to hypothetical history, thus asking credence for something no better verified than the myth itself. But the rationalizers were on a path by which men might conceivably have journeyed to a truer science; and Sokrates, by refusing to undertake any such exploration,⁵ left his countrymen to that darkening belief in tradition which made possible his own execution. There was in his cast of mind, indeed—if we can at all accept Plato's presentment of him—something unfavourable to steady conviction. He cannot have had any real faith in the current religion; yet he never explicitly dissented. In the *Republic* he accepts the new festival to the Thracian Goddess Bendis; and there he is made by Plato to inculcate a quite orthodox acceptance of the Delphic oracle as the source of all religious practice. But it is impossible to say how much of the teaching of the Platonic Sokrates is Sokratic. And as to Plato there remains the problem of how far *his* conformities were prudential, after the execution of Sokrates for blasphemy.

¹ Grote, *History*, i, 334; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, i, 1, §§ 6-9.

² Cp. Benn, *The Philosophy of the Greeks*, 1898, p. 160.

³ Grote, i, 334-35; Hippocrates, *De Aeribus*, *Aquis*, *Locis*, c. 22 (49).

⁴ Plato, *Phædrus*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. i, 434; Grote, *History*, i, 393.

⁵ Compare, however, the claim made for him, as promoting "objectivity," by Prof. Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus im Altertum*, 1913, p. 213.

The long-debated issue as to the real personality of Sokrates is still open. It is energetically and systematically handled by Prof. August Döring in *Die Lehre des Sokrates als sociales Reformsystem* (1895), and by Dr. Hubert Röck in *Der unverfälschte Sokrates* (1903). See, in particular, Döring, pp. 51-79, and Röck, pp. 357-96. From all attempts to arrive at a conception of a consistent Sokrates there emerges the impression that the real Sokrates, despite a strong critical bent of mind, had no clearly established body of opinions, but was swayed in different directions by the itch for contradiction which was the driving power of his dialectic. For the so-called Sokratic "method" is much less a method for attaining truth than one for disturbing prejudice. And if in Plato's hands Sokrates seldom reaches a conclusion that his own method might not overthrow, we are not entitled to refuse to believe that this was characteristic of the man.

Concerning Sokrates we have Xenophon's circumstantial account¹ of how he reasoned with Aristodemos, "surnamed the Little," who "neither prayed nor sacrificed to the Gods, nor consulted any oracle, and ridiculed those who did." Aristodemos was a theist, believing in a "Great Architect" or "Artist," or a number of such powers—on this he is as vague as the ancient theists in general—but does not think the heavenly powers need his devotions. Sokrates, equally vague as to the unity or plurality of the divine, puts the design argument in the manner familiar throughout the ages,² and follows it up with the plea, among others, that the States most renowned for wisdom and antiquity have always been the most given to pious practices, and that probably the Gods will be kind to those who show them respect. The whole philosopheme is pure empiricism, on the ordinary plane of polytheistic thought, and may almost be said to exhibit incapacity for the handling of philosophic questions, evading as it does even the elementary challenge of Aristodemos, against whom Sokrates parades pious platitudes without a hint of "Sokratic" analysis. Unless such a performance were regarded as make-believe, it is difficult to conceive how Athenian pietists could honestly arraign Sokrates for irreligion while Aristodemos and others of his way of thinking went unmolested.

Taken as illustrating the state of thought in the Athenian community, the trial and execution of Sokrates for "blasphemy" and "corrupting the minds of the young" go far to prove that there

¹ *Memorabilia*, i, 4.

² "The predominatingly theistic character of philosophy ever since has been stamped on it by Sokrates, as it was stamped on Sokrates by Athens" (Benn, *Philos. of Greece*, p. 168).

prevailed among the upper class in Athens nearly as much hypocrisy in religious matters as exists in the England of to-day. Doubtless he was liable to death from the traditionally orthodox Greek point of view,¹ having practically turned aside from the old civic creed and ideals; but then most educated Athenians had in some degree done the same.² Euripides, as we have seen, is so frequently critical of the old theology and mythology in his plays that he too could easily have been indicted; and Aristophanes, who attacked Euripides in his comedies as scurrilously as he did Sokrates, would no doubt have been glad to see him prosecuted.³ The psychology of Aristophanes, who freely ridiculed and blasphemed the Gods in his own comedies while reviling all men who did not believe in them, is hardly intelligible save in the light of parts of the English history of our own time, when unbelieving indifferentists on the Conservative side have been seen ready to join in turning the law against a freethinking publicist for purely party ends. In the case of Sokrates the hostility was ostensibly democratic, for, according to Æschines, Sokrates was condemned because he had once given lessons to Kritias,⁴ one of the most savage and unscrupulous of the Thirty Tyrants. Inasmuch as Kritias had become entirely alienated from Sokrates, and had even put him to silence, such a ground of hostility would only be a fresh illustration of that collective predilection of men to a gregarious iniquity which is no less noteworthy in the psychology of groups than their profession of high moral standards. And such proclivities are always to be reckoned with in such episodes. Anytos, the leading prosecutor, seems to have been a typical bigot, brainless, spiteful, and thoroughly self-satisfied. Not only party malice, however, but the individual dislikes which Sokrates so industriously set up,⁵ must have counted for much in securing the small majority of the dikastery that pronounced him guilty—281 to 276; and his own clear preference for death over any sort of compromise did the rest.⁶ He was old, and little

¹ Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, as cited, p. 231. The case against Sokrates is bitterly urged by Forchhammer, *Die Athenen und Sokrates*, 1837; see in particular pp. 8-11. Cp. Grote, *Hist.* vii, 81.

² "Had not all the cultivated men of the time passed through a school of rationalism which had entirely pulled to pieces the beliefs and the morals of their ancestors?" Zeller, as last cited, pp. 231-33. Cp. Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 261.

³ See Aristophanes's *Frogs*, 888-94.

⁴ Æschines, *Timarchos*, cited by Thirlwall, iv, 277. Cp. Xenophon, *Mem.* i, 2.

⁵ "Nothing could well be more unpopular and obnoxious than the task which he undertook of cross-examining and convicting of ignorance every distinguished man whom he could approach." Grote, vii, 95. Cp. pp. 141-44. Cp. also Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, ed. 1881, p. 316; and Renouvier, *Manuel de la philos. anc.* l. iv, § iii. See also, however, Benn, *Phil. of Greece*, pp. 162-63. For a view of Sokrates's relations to his chief accuser, which partially vindicates or whitewashes the latter, see Prof. G. Murray's *Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 176-77. There is a good monograph by H. Bleekly, *Socrates and the Athenians: An Apology*, 1884, which holds the balances fairly.

⁶ On the desire of Sokrates to die see Grote, vii, 152-64.

hopeful of social betterment; and the temperamental obstinacy which underlay his perpetual and pertinacious debating helped him to choose a death that he could easily have avoided. But the fact remains that he was not popular; that the mass of the voters as well as of the upper class disliked his constant cross-examination of popular opinion,¹ which must often have led logical listeners to carry on criticism where he left off; and that after all his ratiocination he left Athens substantially irrational, as well as incapable of justice, on some essential issues. His dialectic method has done more to educate the later world than it did for Greece.

Upon the debate as to the legal punishability of Sokrates turns another as to the moral character of the Athenians who forced him to drink the hemlock. Professor Mahaffy, bent on proving the superiority of Athenian culture and civilization to those of Christendom, effectively contrasts the calm scene in the prison-chamber of Sokrates with the hideous atrocities of the death penalty for treason in the modern world and the "gauntness and horror of our modern executions" (*Social Life in Greece*, 3rd. ed. pp. 262-69); and Mr. Bleekly (*Socrates and the Athenians*, 1884, pp. 55-63) similarly sets against the pagan case that of the burning of heretics by the Christian Church, and in particular the *auto da fé* at Valladolid in 1559, when fifteen men and women—the former including the conscientious priests who had proposed to meet the hostility of Protestant dissent in the Netherlands by reforms in the Church: the latter including delicately-nurtured ladies of high family—were burned to death before the eyes of the Princess Regent of Spain and the aristocracy of Castile. It is certainly true that this transaction has no parallel in the criminal proceedings of pagan Athens. Christian cruelty has been as much viler than pagan, culture for culture, as the modern Christian environment is uglier than the Athenian. Before such a test the special pleaders for the civilizing power of Christianity can but fall back upon alternative theses which are the negation of their main case. First we are told that "Christianity humanizes men"; next that where it does *not* do so it is because they are too inhuman to be made Christians.

But while the orthodoxy of pagan Athens thus comes very well off as against the frightful crime-roll of organized Christianity, the dispassionate historian must nonetheless note the dehumanizing power of religion in Athens as in Christendom. The pietists of Athens, in their less brutish way, were as hope-

¹ The assertion of Plutarch that after his death the prosecutors of Sokrates were socially excommunicated, and so driven to hang themselves (*Moralia: Of Envy and Hatred*), is an interesting instance of moral myth-making. It has no historic basis; though Diogenes (ii, 23 § 43) and Diodorus Siculus (xiv, 37), late authorities both, allege an Athenian reaction in Sokrates' favour. Probably the story of the suicide of Judas was framed in imitation of Plutarch's.

lessly denaturalized as those of Christian Europe by the dominion of a traditional creed, held as above reason. It matters not whether or not we say with Bishop Thirlwall (*Hist. of Greece*, 2nd ed. iv, 556) that "there never was a case in which murder was more clearly committed under the forms of legal procedure than in the trial of Socrates," or press on the other side the same writer's admission that in religious matters in Athens "there was no canon, no book by which a doctrine could be tried; no living authority to which appeal could be made for the decision of religious controversies." The fact that Christendom had "authorities" who ruled which of two sets of insane dogmas brought death upon its propounder, does not make less abominable the slaying of Bruno and Servetus, or the immeasurable massacre of less eminent heretics. But the less formalized homicides sanctioned by the piety of Periklean Athens remain part of the proof that unreasoning faith worsens men past calculation. If we slur over such deeds by generalities about human frailty, we are but asserting the impossibility of rationally respecting human nature. If, putting aside all moral censure, we are simply concerned to trace and comprehend causation in human affairs, we have no choice but to note how upon occasion religion on one hand, like strong drink on another, can turn commonplace men into murderers.

In view of the limitations of Sokrates, and the mental measure of those who voted for putting him to death, it is not surprising that through all Greek history educated men (including Aristotle) continued to believe firmly in the deluge of Deukalion¹ and the invasion of the Amazons² as solid historical facts. Such beliefs, of course, are on all fours with those current in the modern religious world down till the present century: we shall, in fact, best appraise the rationality of Greece by making such comparisons. The residual lesson is that where Greek reason ended, modern social science had better be regarded as only beginning. THUKYDIDES, the greatest of all the ancient historians, and one of the great of all time, treated human affairs in a spirit so strictly rationalistic that he might reasonably be termed an atheist on that score even if he had not earned the name as a pupil of Anaxagoras.³ But his task was to chronicle a war which proved that the Greeks were to the last children of instinct for the main purposes of life, and that the rule of reason which they are credited with establishing⁴ was only an

¹ Grote, *History*, i, 94.

² *Id.* i, 194. Not till Strabo do we find this myth disbelieved; and Strabo was surprised to find most men holding by the old story while admitting that the race of Amazons had died out. *Id.* p. 197.

³ Life of Thukydides, by Marcellinus, ch. 23, citing Antyllas. Cp. Girard, *Essai sur Thucydide*, p. 239; and the prefaces of Hobbes and Smith to their translations.

⁴ Girard, p. 3.

intermittent pastime. In the days of Demosthenes we still find them politically consulting the Pythian oracle, despite the consciousness among educated men that the oracle is a piece of political machinery. We can best realize the stage of their evolution by first comparing their public religious practice with that of contemporary England. No one now regards the daily prayers of the House of Commons as more than a reverent formality. But Nikias at Syracuse staked the fortunes of war on the creed of omens. We can perhaps finally conceive with fair accuracy the subordination of Greek culture and politics to superstition by likening the thought-levels of pre-Alexandrian Athens to those of England under Cromwell.

2. The decisive measure of Greek accomplishment is found in the career of PLATO [429-347]. One of the great prose writers of the world, he has won by his literary genius—that is, by his power of continuous presentation as well as by his style—no less than by his service to supernaturalist philosophy in general, a repute above his deserts as a thinker. In Christian history he is the typical philosopher of Dualism,¹ his prevailing conception of the universe being that of an inert Matter acted on or even created by a craftsman-God, the "Divine Artificer," sometimes conceived as a *Logos* or divine Reason, separately personalized. Thus he came to be *par excellence* the philosopher of theism, as against Aristotle and those of the Pythagoreans who affirmed the eternity of the universe.² In the history of freethought he figures as a man of genius formed by Sokrates and reflecting his limitations, developing the Sokratic dialectic on the one hand and finally emphasizing the Sokratic dogmatism to the point of utter bigotry. If the Athenians are to be condemned for putting Sokrates to death, it must not be forgotten that the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Laws* drawn up by Plato in his old age fully justified them.³ That code, could it ever have been put in force, would have wrought the death of every honest free-thinker as well as most of the ignorant believers within its sphere. Alone among the great serious writers of Greece does he implicate Greek thought in the gospel of intolerance passed on to modern Europe from antiquity. It is recorded of him⁴ that he wished to

¹ "His writings," remarks Dr. Hatch, "contain the seeds of nearly all that afterwards grew up on Christian soil" (*Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, p. 182).

² Clem. Alex. *Stromata*, v, 14; Fairbanks, pp. 146-47; Grote, *Plato*, ch. 38.

³ Cp. Grote, *Plato*, iv, 162, 381. Professor Bain, however (*Practical Essays*, 1884, p. 273), raises an interesting question by his remark, as to the death of Sokrates: "The first person to feel the shock was Plato. That he was affected by it to the extent of suppressing his views on the higher questions we can infer with the greatest probability. Aristotle was equally cowed."

⁴ Diog. Laër. bk. ix, ch. vii, § 8 (40).

burn all the writings of Demokritos that he could collect, and was dissuaded only on the score of the number of copies.

What was best in Plato, considered as a freethinker, was his early love of ratiocination, of "the rendering and receiving of reasons." Even in his earlier dialogues, however, there are signs enough of an arbitrary temper, as well as of an inability to put science in place of religious prejudice. The obscurantist doctrine which he put in the mouth of Sokrates in the *Phædrus* was also his own, as we gather from the exposition in the *Republic*. In that brilliant performance he objects, as so many believers and freethinkers had done before him, to the scandalous tales in the poets concerning the Gods and the sons of Gods; but he does not object to them as being untrue. His position is that they are unedifying.¹ For his own part he proposes that his ideal rulers frame new myths which shall edify the young: in his Utopia it is part of the business of the legislator to choose the right fictions;² and the systematic imposition of an edifying body of pious fable on the general intelligence is part of his scheme for the regeneration of society.³ Honesty is to be built up by fraud, and reason by delusion. What the Hebrew Bible-makers actually did, Plato proposed to do. The one thing to be said in his favour is that by thus telling how the net is to be spread in the sight of the bird he put the decisive obstacle—if any were needed—in the way of his plan. It is, indeed, inconceivable that the author of the *Republic* and the *Laws* dreamt that either polity as a whole would ever come into existence. His plans of suppressing all undesirable poetry, arranging community of women, and enabling children to see battles, are the fancy-sketches of a dilettant. He had failed completely as a statesman in practice; as a schemer he does not even posit the first conditions of success.

As to his practical failure see the story of his and his pupils' attempts at Syracuse (Grote, *History*, ix, 37–123). The younger Dionysios, whom they had vainly attempted to make a model ruler, seems to have been an audacious unbeliever to the extent of plundering the temple of Persephone at Lokris, one of Jupiter in the Peloponnesos, and one of Æsculapius at Epidaurus. Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* c. 4) states that he plundered "the statue of Jupiter in Sicily." Cicero (*De nat. Deorum*, iii, 33, 34) and Valerius Maximus (i, 1) tell the story of the elder Dionysios; but of him it cannot be true. In his day the

¹ *Republic*, bk. ii, 377, to iii, 392; Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. iii, 60 sq., 68 sq. In bk. x, it is true, he does speak of the poets as unqualified by knowledge and training to teach truth (Jowett's tr. iii, 311 sq.); but Plato's "truth" is not objective, but idealistic, or rather fictitious-didactic.

² *Id.* Jowett, pp. 59, 69, etc.

³ *Id.* bk. iii; Jowett, pp. 103–105.

plunder of the temples of Dêmêtêr and Persephone in Sicily by the Carthaginians was counted a deadly sin. See Freeman, *History of Sicily*, iv, 125-47, and *Story of Sicily*, pp. 176-80. In Cicero's dialogue it is noted that after all his impieties Dionysios [the elder, of whom the stories are mistakenly told] died in his bed. Athenæus, however, citing the biographer Klearchos, tells that the younger Dionysios, after being reduced to the rôle of a begging priest of Kybelê, ended his life very miserably (xii, 60).

Nonetheless, the prescription of intolerance in the *Laws*¹ classes Plato finally on the side of fanaticism, and, indeed, ranks him with the most sinister figures on that side, since his earlier writing shows that he would be willing to punish men alike for repeating stories which they believed, and for rejecting what *he* knew to be untruths.² By his own late doctrine he vindicated the slayers of his own friend. His psychology is as strange as that of Aristophanes, but strange with a difference. He seems to have practised "the will to believe" till he grew to be a fanatic on the plane of the most ignorant of orthodox Athenians; and after all that science had done to enlighten men on that natural order the misconceiving of which had been the foundation of their creeds, he inveighs furiously in his old age against the impiety of those who dared to doubt that the sun and moon and stars were deities, as every nurse taught her charges.³ And when all is said, his Gods satisfy no need of the intelligence; for he insists that they only partially rule the world, sending the few good things, but not the many evil⁴—save insofar as evil may be a beneficent penalty and discipline. At the same time, while advising the imprisonment or execution of heretics who did not believe in the Gods, Plato regarded with even greater detestation the man who taught that they could be persuaded or propitiated by individual prayer and sacrifice.⁵ Thus he would have struck alike at the freethinking few and at the multitude who held by the general religious beliefs of Greece, dealing damnation on all save his own clique, in a way that would have made Torquemada blench.⁶ In the face of such teaching as this, it may well be said that "Greek philosophy made incomparably greater advances in the earlier polemic period [of the Ionians] than after its friendly return to

¹ *Laws*, x; Jowett, v, 295-98.

² Received myths are forbidden; and the preferred fictions are to be city law. Cp. the *Laws*, ii, iii; Jowett, v, 42, 79.

³ *Laws*, Jowett's tr. 3rd ed. v, 271-72. Cp. the comment of Benn, i, 271-72.

⁴ *Republic*, bk. ii, 379; Jowett, iii, 62.

⁵ *Laws*, x, 906-907, 910; Jowett, v, 293-94, 297-98.

⁶ On the inconsistency of the whole doctrine see Grote's *Plato*, iv, 379-97.

the poetry of Homer and Hesiod"¹—that is, to their polytheistic basis. It is to be said for Plato, finally, that his embitterment at the downward course of things in Athens is a quite intelligible source for his own intellectual decadence: a very similar spectacle being seen in the case of our own great modern Utopist, Sir Thomas More. But Plato's own writing bears witness that among the unbelievers against whom he declaimed there were wise and blameless citizens;² while in the act of seeking to lay a religious basis for a good society he admitted the fundamental immorality of the religious basis of the whole of past Greek life.

3. ARISTOTLE [384-322], like Sokrates, albeit in a very different way, rendered rather an indirect than a direct service to Freethought. Where Sokrates gave the critical or dialectic method or habit, "a process of eternal value and of universal application,"³ Aristotle supplied the great inspiration of system, partly correcting the Sokratic dogmatism on the possibilities of science by endless observation and speculation, though himself falling into scientific dogmatism only too often. That he was an unbeliever in the popular and Platonic religion is clear. Apart from the general rationalistic tenor of his works,⁴ there was a current understanding that the Peripatetic school denied the utility of prayer and sacrifice;⁵ and though the essentially partisan attempt of the anti-Macedonian party to impeach him for impiety may have turned largely on his hyperbolic hymn to his dead friend Hermeias (who was a eunuch, and as such held peculiarly unworthy of being addressed as on a level with semi-divine heroes),⁶ it could hardly have been undertaken at all unless he had given solidier pretexts. The threatened prosecution he avoided by leaving the city, dying shortly afterwards. Siding as he did with the Macedonian faction, he had put himself out of touch with the democratic instincts of the Athenians, and so doubly failed to affect their thinking. But nonetheless the attack upon him by the democrats was a political stratagem. The prosecution for blasphemy had now become a recognized weapon in politics for all who had more piety than principle, and perhaps for some who had neither. And Aristotle, well aware of the temper of the

¹ Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.* Eng. tr. i, 25. Cp. Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus*, i, 38-39 (tr. i, 52-54), and the remarkable verdict of Bacon (*De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. 4; *Works*, 1-vol. ed. 1905, p. 471; cp. *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii, p. 96) as to the superiority of the natural philosophy of Demokritos over those of Plato and Aristotle. Bacon immediately qualifies his verdict; but he repeats it, as regards both Aristotle and Plato, in the *Novum Organum*, bk. i, aph. 96. See, however, Mr. Benn's final eulogy of Plato as a thinker, i, 273, and Murray's *Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 311-13.

² *Laws*, x, 908; Jowett, v, 295.

³ Cp. Grote, *Aristotle*, 2nd ed. p. 10.

⁴ Origen, *Against Celsus*, ii, 13; cp. i, 65; iii, 75; vii, 3.

⁵ Grote, *Aristotle*, p. 13.

⁶ Grote, *History*, vii, 168.

population around him, had on the whole been so guarded in his utterance that a fantastic pretext had to be fastened on for his undoing.

Prof. Bain (*Practical Essays*, p. 273), citing Grote's remark on the "cautious prose compositions of Aristotle," comments thus: "That is to say, the execution of Sokrates was always before his eyes; he had to pare his expressions so as not to give offence to Athenian orthodoxy. We can never know the full bearings of such a disturbing force. The editors of Aristotle complain of the corruption of his text: a far worse corruption lies behind. In Greece Sokrates alone had the courage of his opinions. While his views as to a future life, for example, are plain and frank, the real opinion of Aristotle on the question is an insoluble problem." (See, however, the passage in the *Metaphysics* cited below.)

The opinion of Grote and Bain as to Aristotle's caution is fully coincided in by Lange, who writes (*Gesch. des Mater.* i, 63): "More conservative than Plato and Sokrates, Aristotle everywhere seeks to attach himself as closely as possible to tradition, to popular notions, to the ideas embodied in common speech, and his ethical postulates diverge as little as may be from the customary morals and laws of Greek States. He has therefore been at all times the favourite philosopher of conservative schools and movements."

It is clear, nevertheless, if we can be sure of his writings, that he was a monotheist, but a monotheist with no practical religion. "Excluding such a thing as divine interference with Nature, his theology, of course, excludes the possibility of revelation, inspiration, miracles, and grace."¹ In a passage in the *Metaphysics*, after elaborating his monistic conception of Nature, he dismisses in one or two terse sentences the whole current religion as a mass of myth framed to persuade the multitude, in the interest of law and order.² His influence must thus have been to some extent, at least, favourable to rational science, though unhappily his own science is too often a blundering reaction against the surmises of earlier thinkers with a greater gift of intuition than he, who was rather a methodizer than a discoverer.³ What was worst in his thinking was its tendency to

¹ Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, i, 352. Mr. Benn refutes Sir A. Grant's view that Aristotle's creed was a "vague pantheism"; but that phrase loosely conveys the idea of its non-religiousness. It might be called a Lucretian monotheism. Cp. Benn, i, 294; and Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus*, p. 257.

² *Metaphysics*, xi (xii), 8, 13 (p. 1074, b). The passage is so stringent as to raise the question how he came to run the risk in this one case. It was probably a late writing, and he may have taken it for granted that the *Metaphysics* would never be read by the orthodox.

³ Cp. the severe criticisms of Benn, vol. i, ch. vi; Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.* p. 33; and Lange, *Ges. des Mater.* i, 61-68, and notes, citing Eucken and Cuvier. Aristotle's science is very much on a par with that of Bacon, who saw his imperfections, but fell into the same kinds of error. Both insisted on an inductive method; and both transgressed from it. See, however, Lange's summary, p. 69, also p. 7, as to the unfairness of Whewell; and ch. v of Soury's *Bréviaire de l'histoire du Matérialisme*, 1881, especially *end.*

apriorism, which made it in a later age so adaptable to the purposes of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus his doctrines of the absolute levity of fire and of nature's abhorrence of a vacuum set up a hypnotizing verbalism, and his dictum that the earth is the centre of the universe was fatally helpful to Christian obscurantism. For the rest, while guiltless of Plato's fanaticism, he had no scheme of reform whatever, and was as far as any other Greek from the thought of raising the mass by instruction. His own science, indeed, was not progressive, save as regards his collation of facts in biology; and his political ideals were rather reactionary; his clear perception of the nature of the population problem leaving him in the earlier attitude of Malthus, and his lack of sympathetic energy making him a defender of slavery when other men had condemned it.¹ He was in some aspects the greatest brain of the ancient world; and he left it, at the close of the great Grecian period, without much faith in man, while positing for the modern world its vaguest conception of Deity. Plato and Aristotle between them had reduced the ancient God-idea to a thin abstraction. Plato would not have it that God was the author of evil, thus leaving evil unaccounted for save by sorcery. Aristotle's God does nothing at all, existing merely as a potentiality of thought. And yet upon those positions were to be founded the theisms of the later world. Plato had not striven, and Aristotle had failed, to create an adequate basis for thought in real science; and the world gravitated back to religion.

[In previous editions I remarked that "the lack of fresh science, which was the proximate cause of the stagnation of Greek thought, has been explained like other things as a result of race qualities: 'the Athenians,' says Mr. Benn (*The Greek Philosophers*, i, 42), 'had no genius for natural science: none of them were ever distinguished as savans.....It was, they thought, a miserable trifling [and] waste of time.....Pericles, indeed, thought differently.....' On the other hand, Lange decides (i, 6) "that with the freedom and boldness of the Hellenic spirit was combined.....the talent for scientific deduction." These contrary views," I observed, "seem alike arbitrary. If Mr. Benn means that other Hellenes had what the Athenians lacked, the answer is that only special social conditions could have set up such a difference, and that it could not be innate, but must be a mere matter of usage." Mr. Benn has explained to me that he does not dissent from this view, and that I had not rightly gathered his from the passage I quoted. In his later work, *The Philosophy of Greece*

¹ *Politics*, i, 2.

considered in relation to the character and history of its people (1898), he has pointed out how, in the period of Hippias and Prodikos, "at Athens in particular young men threw themselves with ardour into the investigation of" problems of cosmography, astronomy, meteorology, and comparative anatomy (p. 138). The hindering forces were Athenian bigotry (pp. 113-14, 171) and the mischievous influence of Sokrates (pp. 165, 173).

Speaking broadly, we may say that the Chaldeans were forward in astronomy because their climate favoured it to begin with, and religion and their superstitions did so later. Hippokrates of Kos became a great physician because, with natural capacity, he had the opportunity to compare many practices. The Athenians failed to carry on the sciences, not because the faculty or the taste was lacking among them, but because their political and artistic interests, for one thing, preoccupied them—*e.g.*, Sokrates and Plato; and because, for another, their popular religion, popularly supported, menaced the students of physics. But the Ionians, who *had* savans, failed equally to progress after the Alexandrian period; the explanation being again not stoppage of faculty, but the advent of conditions unfavourable to the old intellectual life, which in any case, as we saw, had been first set up by Babylonian contacts. (Compare, on the ethnological theorem of Cousin, G. Bréton, *Essai sur la poésie philos. en Grèce*, p. 10.) On the other hand, Lange's theory of gifts "innate" in the Hellenic mind in general is the old racial fallacy. Potentialities are "innate" in all populations, according to their culture stage, and it was their total environment that specialized the Greeks as a community.]

§ 9

The overthrow of the "free" political life of Athens was followed by a certain increase in intellectual activity, the result of throwing back the remaining store of energy on the life of the mind. By this time an almost open unbelief as to the current tales concerning the Gods would seem to have become general among educated people, the withdrawal of the old risk of impeachment by political factions being so far favourable to outspokenness. It is on record that the historian EPHOROS (of Cumæ in Æolia: fl. 350 B.C.), who was a pupil of Isocrates, openly hinted in his work at his disbelief in the oracle of Apollo, and in fabulous traditions generally.¹ In other directions there were similar signs of freethought. The new schools of philosophy founded by ZENO the Stoic (fl. 280: d. 263 or 259)

¹ Strabo, bk. ix, ch. iii, § 11. Strabo reproaches Ephoros with repeating the current legends all the same; but it seems clear that he anticipated the critical tactic of Gibbon.

and EPICURUS (341-270), whatever their defects, compare not ill with those of Plato and Aristotle, exhibiting greater ethical sanity and sincerity if less metaphysical subtlety. Of metaphysics there had been enough for the age: what it needed was a rational philosophy of life. But the loss of political freedom, although thus for a time turned to account, was fatal to continuous progress. The first great thinkers had all been free men in a politically free environment: the atmosphere of cowed subjection, especially after the advent of the Romans, could not breed their like; and originative energy of the higher order soon disappeared. Sane as was the moral philosophy of Epicurus, and austere as was that of Zeno, they are alike static or quietist,¹ the codes of a society seeking a regulating and sustaining principle rather than hopeful of new achievement or new truth. And the universal skepticism of PYRRHO has the same effect of suggesting that what is wanted is not progress, but balance. It is significant that he, who carried the Sokratic profession of Nescience to the typical extreme of doctrinal Nihilism, was made high-priest of his native town of Elis, and had statues erected in his honour.²

Considered as freethinkers, all three men tell at once of the critical and of the reactionary work done by the previous age. Pyrrho, the universal doubter, appears to have taken for granted, with the whole of his followers, such propositions as that some animals (not insects) are produced by parthenogenesis, that some live in the fire, and that the legend of the Phoenix is true.³ Such credences stood for the arrest of biological science in the Sokratic age, with Aristotle, so often mistakenly, at work; while, on the other hand, the Sokratic skepticism visibly motives the play of systematic doubt on the dogmas men had learned to question. Zeno, again, was substantially a monotheist; Epicurus, adopting but not greatly developing the science of Demokritos,⁴ turned the Gods into a far-off band of glorious spectres, untroubled by human needs, dwelling for ever in immortal calm, neither ruling nor caring

¹ As to the Stoics, cp. Zeller, § 34, 4; Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece*, pp. 255-56. As to Epicurus, cp. Benn, p. 261.

² Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. xi, 5, § 64. The lengthy notice given by Diogenes shows the impression Pyrrho's teaching made. See a full account of it, so far as known, in the Rev. J. Owen's *Evenings with the Sceptics*, 1881, i, 287 sq., and the monograph of Zimmerman, there cited.

³ These propositions occur in the first of the ten Pyrrhonian *tropoi* or modes (Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. xi, 9), of which the authorship is commonly assigned to Ænesidemus (fl. 80-50). Cp. Owen, *Evenings with the Sceptics*, i, 290, 322-23. But as given by Diogenes they seem to derive from the early Pyrrhonian school.

⁴ Thus, where Democritus pronounced the sun to be of vast size, Epicurus held it to be no larger than it seemed (Cicero, *De Finibus*, i, 6)—a view also loosely ascribed to Herakleitos (Diog. Laërt. bk. ix, ch. i, 6, § 7). See, however, Wallace's *Epicureanism* ("Ancient Philosophies" series), 1889, pp. 176 sq., 186 sq., 266, as to the scientific merits of the system.

to rule the world of men.¹ In coming to this surprising compromise, Epicurus, indeed, probably did not carry with him the whole intelligence even of his own school. His friend, the second Metrodoros of Lampsakos, seems to have been the most stringent of all the censors of Homer, wholly ignoring his namesake's attempts to clear the bard of impiety. "He even advised men not to be ashamed to confess their utter ignorance of Homer, to the extent of not knowing whether Hector was a Greek or a Trojan."² Such austerity towards myths can hardly have been compatible with the acceptance of the residuum of Epicurus. That, however, became the standing creed of the sect, and a fruitful theme of derision to its opponents. Doubtless the comfort of avoiding direct conflict with the popular beliefs had a good deal to do with the acceptance of the doctrine.

This strange retention of the theorem of the existence of anthropomorphic Gods, with a flat denial that they did anything in the universe, might be termed the great peculiarity of average ancient rationalism, were it not that what makes it at all intelligible for us is just the similar practice of modern non-Christian theists. The Gods of antiquity were non-creative, but strivers and meddlers and answerers of prayer; and ancient rationalism relieved them of their striving and meddling, leaving them no active or governing function whatever, but for the most part cherishing their phantasms. The God of modern Christendom had been at once a creator and a governor, ruling, meddling, punishing, rewarding, and hearing prayer; and modern theism, unable to take the atheistic or agnostic plunge, relieves him of all interference in things human or cosmic, but retains him as a creative abstraction who somehow set up "law," whether or not he made all things out of nothing. The psychological process in the two cases seems to be the same—an erection of æsthetic habit into a philosophic dogma, and an accommodation of phrase to popular prejudice.

Whatever may have been the logical and psychological crudities of Epicureanism, however, it counted for much as a deliverance of men from superstitious fears; and nothing is more remarkable in the history of ancient philosophy than the affectionate reverence paid to the founder's memory³ on this score through whole centuries. The powerful Lucretius sounds his highest note of praise in telling

¹ The Epicurean doctrine on this and other heads is chiefly to be gathered from the great poem of Lucretius. Prof. Wallace's excellent treatise gives all the clues. See p. 202 as to the Epicurean God-idea.

² Grote, *History*, i, 395, note; Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivi sec. Epicur.*

³ Compare Wallace, *Epicureanism*, pp. 64-71, and ch. xi; and Mackintosh, *On the Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, 4th ed. p. 29.

how this Greek had first of all men freed human life from the crushing load of religion, daring to pass the flaming ramparts of the world, and by his victory putting men on an equality with heaven.¹ The laughter-loving Lucian two hundred years later grows gravely eloquent on the same theme.² And for generations the effect of the Epicurean check on orthodoxy is seen in the whole intellectual life of the Greek world, already predisposed in that direction.³ The new schools of the Cynics and the Cyrenaics had alike shown the influence in their perfect freedom from all religious preoccupation, when they were not flatly dissenting from the popular beliefs. ANTISTHENES, the founder of the former school (fl. 400 B.C.), though a pupil of Sokrates, had been explicitly anti-polytheistic, and an opponent of anthropomorphism.⁴ ARISTIPPOS of Cyrene, also a pupil of Socrates, who a little later founded the Hedonic or Cyrenaic sect, seems to have put theology entirely aside. One of the later adherents of the school, THEODOROS, was like Diagoras labelled "the Atheist"⁵ by reason of the directness of his opposition to religion; and in the Rome of Cicero he and Diagoras are the notorious atheists of history.⁶ To Theodoros, who had a large following, is attributed an influence over the thought of Epicurus,⁷ who, however, took the safer position of a verbal theism. The atheist is said to have been menaced by Athenian law in the time of Demetrius Phalereus, who protected him; and there is even a story that he was condemned to drink hemlock;⁸ but he was not of the type that meets martyrdom, though he might go far to provoke it.⁹ Roaming from court to court, he seems never to have stooped to flatter any of his entertainers. "You seem to me," said the steward of Lysimachos of Thrace to him on one occasion, "to be the only man who ignores both Gods and kings."¹⁰

In the same age the same freethinking temper is seen in STILPO of Megara (fl. 307), of the school of Euclides, who is said to have

¹ *De rerum natura*, i, 62-79.

² *Alexander seu Pseudomantis*, cc. 25, 38, 47, 61, cited by Wallace, pp. 249-50.

³ The repute of the Epicureans for irreligion appears in the fact that when Romanized Athens had consented to admit foreigners to the once strictly Athenian mysteries of Eleusis, the Epicureans were excluded.

⁴ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 13; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, v, 14; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Mathematicos*, ix, 51, 55.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. viii, §§ 7, 11-14 (86, 97-100). He was also nicknamed "the God." *Id.* and ch. xii, 5 (§ 116).

⁶ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 1, 23, 42.

⁷ Diogenes, as last cited, § 12 (97).

⁸ *Id.* §§ 15, 16 (101-102).

⁹ Professor Wallace's account of the court of Lysimachos of Thrace as a "favourite resort of emancipated freethinkers" (*Epicureanism*, p. 42) is hardly borne out by his authority, Diogenes Laërtius, who represents Lysimachos as unfriendly towards Theodoros. Hipparchia the Cynic, too, opposed rather than agreed with the atheist.

¹⁰ Diog., last cit. Cp. Cicero, *Tusculans*, ii, 43. Philo Judæus (*Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, c. 18; cp. Plutarch, *De Exilio*, c. 16) has a story of his repelling taunts about his banishment by comparing himself to Hercules, who was put ashore by the alarmed Argonauts because of his weight. But he is further made to boast extravagantly, and in doing so to speak as a believer in myths and deities. The testimony has thus little value.

been brought before the Areopagus for the offence of saying that the Pheidian statue of Athênê was "not a God," and to have met the charge with the jest that she was in reality not a God but a Goddess; whereupon he was exiled.¹ The stories told of him make it clear that he was an unbeliever, usually careful not to betray himself. Euclides, too, with his optimistic pantheism, was clearly a heretic; though his doctrine that evil is *non-ens*² later became the creed of some Christians. Yet another professed atheist was the witty BION of Borysthenes, pupil of Theodoros, of whom it is told, in a fashion familiar to our own time, that in sickness he grew pious through fear.³ Among his positions was a protest or rather satire against the doctrine that the Gods punished children for the crimes of their fathers.⁴ In the other schools, SPEUSIPPOS (fl. 343), the nephew of Plato, leant to monotheism;⁵ STRATO of Lampsakos, the Peripatetic (fl. 290), called "the Naturalist," taught sheer pantheism, anticipating Laplace in declaring that he had no need of the action of the Gods to account for the making of the world;⁶ DIKAIARCHOS (fl. 326-287), another disciple of Aristotle, denied the existence of separate souls, and the possibility of foretelling the future;⁷ and ARISTO and CLEANTHES, disciples of Zeno, varied likewise in the direction of pantheism; the latter's monotheism, as expressed in his famous hymn, being one of several doctrines ascribed to him.⁸

Contemporary with Epicurus and Zeno and Pyrrho, too, was EVÊMÉROS (Euhemerus), whose peculiar propaganda against Godism seems to imply theoretic atheism. As an atheist he was vilified in a manner familiar to modern ears, the Alexandrian poet Callimachus labelling him an "arrogant old man vomiting impious books."⁹ His lost work, of which only a few extracts remain, undertook to prove that all the Gods had been simply famous men, deified after death; the proof, however, being by way of a fiction about old inscriptions found in an imaginary island.¹⁰ As above noted,¹¹ the idea may have been borrowed from skeptical Phoenicians, the principle having already been monotheistically applied by the Bible-making Jews,¹² though, on the other hand, it had been

¹ Diog. bk. ii, ch. xii, § 5 (116).

² *Id.* ch. x, § 2 (106).

³ *Id.* ch. xii, § 5 (117) and bk. iv, ch. vii, §§ 4, 9, 10 (52, 54, 55).

⁴ Plutarch, *De defectu orac.* ch. 19. Bion seems to have made an impression on Plutarch, who often quotes him, though it be but to contradict him.

⁵ Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, i, 13.

⁶ *Id. ib.*; *Academics*, iv, 38.

⁷ Cicero, *Tusculans*, i, 10, 31; *Academics*, ii, 39; and refs. in ed. Davis.

⁸ Sir A. Grant's tr. of the hymn is given in Capes's *Stoicism* ("Chief Ancient Philosophies" series), 1880, p. 41; and the Greek text by Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 262. Cp. Cicero, *De nat. Deor.* i, 14.

⁹ Pseudo-Plutarch, *De placitis philosoph.* i, 7.

¹⁰ Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* bk. ii, ch. 2; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, ch. 23.

¹¹ P. 80.

¹² It may be noted that Diogenes of Babylon, a follower of Chrysippos, applied the principle to Greek mythology. Cicero, *De nat. Deor.* i, 15.

artistically and to all appearance uncritically acted on in the Homeric epopees. It may or may not then have been by way of deliberate or reasoning Evêmerism that certain early Greek and Roman deities were transformed, as we have seen, into heroes or *hetairai*.¹ In any case, the principle seems to have had considerable vogue in the later Hellenistic world; but with the effect rather of paving the way for new cults than of setting up scientific rationalism in place of the old ones. Quite a number of writers like Palaiphatos, without going so far as Evêmeros, sought to reduce myths to natural possibilities and events, by way of mediating between the credulous and the incredulous.² Their method is mostly the naïf one revived by the Abbé Banier in the eighteenth century of reducing marvels to verbal misconceptions. Thus for Palaiphatos the myth of Kerberos came from the facts that the city Trikarenos was commonly spoken of as a beautiful and great dog; and that Geryon, who lived there, had great dogs called Kerberoi; Actæon was "devoured by his dogs" in the sense that he neglected his affairs and wasted his time in hunting; the Amazons were shaved men, clad as were the women in Thrace, and so on.³ Palaiphatos and the Herakleitos who also wrote *De Incredilibus* agree that Pasiphae's bull was a man named Tauros; and the latter writer similarly explains that Scylla was a beautiful *hetaira* with avaricious hangers-on, and that the harpies were ladies of the same profession. If the method seems childish, it is to be remembered that as regards the explanation of supernatural events it was adhered to by German theologians of a century ago; and that its credulity in incredulity is still to be seen in the current view that every narrative in the sacred books is to be taken as necessarily standing for a fact of some kind.

One of the inferrible effects of the Evêmerist method was to facilitate for the time the adoption of the Egyptian and eastern usage of deifying kings. It has been plausibly argued that this practice stands not so much for superstition as for skepticism, its opponents being precisely the orthodox believers, and its promoters those who had learned to doubt the actuality of the traditional Gods. Evêmerism would clinch such a tendency; and it is noteworthy that Evêmeros lived at the court of Kassander (319-296 B.C.) in a period in which every remaining member of the family of the deified Alexander had perished, mostly by violence; while the con-

¹ Above, p. 80, note 4.

² See Grote, i, 371-74 and notes.

³ Palaiphatos, *De Incredilibus*: *De Actæone*, *De Geryone*, *De Cerbero*, *De Amazonibus*, etc.

temporary Ptolemy I of Egypt received the title of *Sotér*, "Saviour," from the people of Rhodes.¹ It is to be observed, however, that while in the next generation Antiochus I of Syria received the same title, and his successor Antiochus II that of *Theos*, "God," the usage passes away; Ptolemy III being named merely *Evergetês*, "the Benefactor" (of the priests), and even Antiochus III only "the Great." Superstition was not to be ousted by a political exploitation of its machinery.²

In Athens the democracy, restored in a subordinate form by Kassander's opponent, Demetrius Poliorkêtes (307 B.C.), actually tried to put down the philosophic schools, all of which, but the Aristotelian in particular, were anti-democratic, and doubtless also comparatively irreligious. Epicurus and some of his antagonists were exiled within a year of his opening his school (306 B.C.); but the law was repealed in the following year.³ Theophrastos, the head of the Aristotelian school, was indicted in the old fashion for impiety, which seems to have consisted in denouncing animal sacrifice.⁴ These repressive attempts, however, failed; and no others followed at Athens in that era; though in the next century the Epicureans seem to have been expelled from Lythos in Crete and from Messenê in the Peloponnesos, nominally for their atheism, in reality probably on political grounds.⁵ Thus Zeno was free to publish a treatise in which, besides far out-going Plato in schemes for dragooning the citizens into an ideal life, he proposed a State without temples or statues of the Gods or law courts or gymnasia.⁶ In the same age there is trace of "an interesting case of rationalism even in the Delphic oracle."⁷ The people of the island of Astypalaia, plagued by hares or rabbits, solemnly consulted the oracle, which briefly advised them to keep dogs and take to hunting. About the same time we find Lachares, temporarily despot at Athens, plundering the shrine of Pallas of its gold.⁸ Even in the general public there must have been a strain of surviving rationalism; for among the fragments of Menander (fl. 300), who, in general, seems to have

¹ E. R. Bevan (art. "The Deification of Kings in the Greek Cities" in *Eng. Histor. Rev.* Oct. 1901, p. 631) argues that the practice was not primarily eastern, but Greek. See, however, Herodotos, vii, 136; Arrian, *Anab. Alexand.* iv, 11; Q. Curtius, viii, 5-8; and Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, ch. 22, as to the normal attitude of the Greeks, even as late as Alexander.

² See Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, chs. 22, 23, for the later Hellenistic tone on the subject of apotheosis apart from the official practice of the empire.

³ Gibbon, ch. xl. Bohn ed. iv, 353, and note.

⁴ Mahaffy, *Greek Life*, pp. 133-35; Diog. Laërt. bk. ii, ch. v, 5 (§ 38).

⁵ Wallace, *Epicureanism* (pp. 245-46), citing Suidas, s.v. *Epicurus*.

⁶ Diogenes Laërtius, bk. vii, ch. i, 28 (§ 33); cp. Origen, *Against Celsus*, bk. i, ch. 5; Clemens Alex. *Stromata*, bk. v, ch. ii.

⁷ Mahaffy, as cited, p. 135, n.; Athenæus, ix, 63 (p. 400).

⁸ (297 B.C.) Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 213; Pausanias, i, 29.

leant to a well-bred orthodoxy,¹ there are some speeches savouring of skepticism and pantheism.²

It was in keeping with this general but mostly placid and non-polemic latitudinarianism that the New Academy, the second birth, or rather transformation, of the Platonic school, in the hands of ARKESILAOS and the great CARNEADES (213-129), and later of the Carthaginian CLITOMACHOS, should be marked by that species of skepticism thence called Academic—a skepticism which exposed the doubtfulness of current religious beliefs without going the Pyrrhonian length of denying that any beliefs could be proved, or even denying the existence of the Gods.

For the arguments of Carneades against the Stoic doctrine of immortality see Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, iii, 12, 17; and for his argument against theism see Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* ix, 172, 183. Mr. Benn pronounces this criticism of theology “the most destructive that has ever appeared, the armoury whence religious skepticism ever since has been supplied” (*The Philosophy of Greece*, etc., p. 258). This seems an over-statement. But it is just to say, as does Mr. Whittaker (*Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets*, 1911, p. 60; cp. p. 86), that “there has never been a more drastic attack than that of Carneades, which furnished Cicero with the materials for his second book, *On Divination*”; and, as does Prof. Martha (*Études Morales sur l’antiquité*, 1889, p. 77), that no philosophic or religious school has been able to ignore the problems which Carneades raised.

As against the essentially uncritical Stoics, the criticism of Carneades is sane and sound; and he has been termed by judicious moderns “the greatest skeptical mind of antiquity”³ and “the Bayle of Antiquity”;⁴ though he seems to have written nothing.⁵ There is such a concurrence of testimony as to the victorious power of his oratory and the invincible skill of his dialectic⁶ that he must be reckoned one of the great intellectual and rationalizing forces of his day, triumphing as he did in the two diverse arenas of Greece and Rome. His disciple and successor Clitomachos said of him, with Cicero’s assent, that he had achieved a labour of Hercules “in liberating our souls as it were of a fierce monster, credulity, conjecture, rash belief.”⁷ He was, in short, a mighty antagonist of thoughtless beliefs, clearing the ground for a rational life; and the

¹ Cp. G. Guizot, *Ménandre*, 1855, pp. 324-27, and App.

² Cp. Guizot, pp. 327-31, and the fragments cited by Justin Martyr, *De Monarchia*, ch. 5.

³ Whittaker, as cited, p. 85.

⁴ Martha, as cited, p. 78.

⁵ Diog. Laërt. bk. iv, ch. ix, 8 (§ 65).

⁶ Diog. Laërt. bk. iv, ch. ix, 4, 5 (§ 63); Noumenios in Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* xiv, 8.

⁷ Cicero, *De Oratore*, ii, 38; Lucilius, cited by Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*

⁷ Cicero, *Academics*, ii, 34.

fact that he was chosen with Diogenes the Peripatetic and Critolaos the Stoic to go to Rome to plead the cause of ruined Athens, mulcted in an enormous fine, proved that he was held in high honour at home. Athens, in short, was not at this stage "too superstitious." Unreasoning faith was largely discredited by philosophy.

On this basis, in a healthy environment, science and energy might have reared a constructive rationalism; and for a time astronomy, in the hands of ARISTARCHOS of Samos (third century B.C.), ERATOSTHENES of Cyrene, the second keeper of the great Alexandrian library (2nd cent. B.C.), and above all of HIPPARCHOS of Nikaia, who did most of his work in the island of Rhodes, was carried to a height of mastery which could not be maintained, and was re-attained only in modern times.¹ Thus much could be accomplished by "endowment of research" as practised by the Ptolemies at Alexandria; and after science had declined with the decline of their polity, and still further under Roman rule, the new cosmopolitanism of the second century of the empire reverted to the principle of intelligent evocation, producing under the Antonines the "Second" School of Alexandria.

But the social conditions remained fundamentally bad; and the earlier greatness was never recovered. "History records not one astronomer of note in the three centuries between Hipparchos and Ptolemy"; and Ptolemy (fl. 140 C.E.) not only retrograded into astronomical error, but elaborated on oriental lines a baseless fabric of astrology.² Other science mostly decayed likewise. The Greek world, already led to lower intellectual levels by the sudden ease and wealth opened up to it through the conquests of Alexander and the rule of his successors, was cast still lower by the Roman conquest. Pliny, extolling Hipparchos with little comprehension of his work, must needs pronounce him to have "dared a thing displeasing to God" in numbering the stars for posterity.³ In the air of imperialism, stirred by no other, original thought could not arise; and the mass of the Greek-speaking populations, rich and poor, gravitated to the level of the intellectual⁴ and emotional life of more or less well-fed slaves. In this society there rapidly

¹ Berry, *Short Hist. of Astron.* pp. 34-62; Narrien, *Histor. Account*, as cited, ch. xi; L. U. K. *Hist. of Astron.* ch. vi. It is noteworthy that Hipparchos, like so many of his predecessors, had some of his ideas from Babylonia. Strabo, *proem.* § 9.

² Ptolemy normally lumps unbelief in religion with all the vices of character. Cp. the *Tetrabiblos*, iii, 18 (paraphrase of Proclus).

³ *Hist. Nat.* ii, 26.

⁴ Lucian's dialogue *Philopseudes* gives a view of the superstitions of average Greeks in the second century of our era. Cp. Mr. Williams's note to the first *Dialogue of the Dead*, in his *tr.* p. 87.

multiplied private religious associations—*thiasoi, eranoi, orgeones*—in which men and women, denied political life, found new bonds of union and grounds of division in cultivating worships, mostly oriental, which stimulated the religious sense and sentiment.¹

Such was the soil in which Christianity took root and flourished; while philosophy, after the freethinking epoch following on the fall of Athenian power, gradually reverted to one or other form of mystical theism or theosophy, of which the most successful was the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria.² When the theosophic Julian rejoiced that Epicureanism had disappeared,³ he was exulting in a symptom of the intellectual decline that made possible the triumph of the faith he most opposed. Christianity furthered a decadence thus begun under the auspices of pagan imperialism; and “the fifth century of the Christian era witnessed an almost total extinction of the sciences in Alexandria”⁴—an admission which disposes of the dispute as to the guilt of the Arabs in destroying the great library.

Here and there, through the centuries, the old intellectual flame burns whitely enough: the noble figure of EPICURETUS in the first century of the new era, and that of the brilliant LUCIAN in the second, in their widely different ways remind us that the evolved faculty was still there if the circumstances had been such as to evoke it. MENIPPUS in the first century B.C. had played a similar part to that of Lucian, in whose freethinking dialogues he so often figures; but with less of subtlety and intellectuality. Lucian’s was indeed a mind of the rarest lucidity; and the argumentation of his dialogue *Zeus Tragædos* covers every one of the main aspects of the theistic problem. There is no dubiety as to his atheistic conclusion, which is smilingly implicit in the reminder he puts in the mouth of Hermes, that, though a few men may adopt the atheistic view, “there will always be plenty of others who think the contrary—the majority of the Greeks, the ignorant many, the populace, and all the barbarians.” But the moral doctrine of Epictetus is one of endurance and resignation; and the almost unvarying raillery of Lucian, making mere perpetual sport of the now moribund Olympian Gods, was hardly better fitted than the all-round skepticism of the school of SEXTUS EMPIRICUS to inspire positive and progressive thinking.

This latter school, described by Cicero as dispersed and extinct

¹ See M. Foucart’s treatise, *Des assoc. relig. chez les Grecs*, 1873, 2e ptie.

² On the early tendency to orthodox conformity among the unbelieving Alexandrian scholars, see Mahaffy, *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 260–61.

³ Frag. cited by Wallace, p. 258.

⁴ Rev. Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 79.

in his day,¹ appears to have been revived in the first century by Ænesidemus, who taught at Alexandria.² It seems to have been through him in particular that the Pyrrhonic system took the clear-cut form in which it is presented at the close of the second century by the accomplished Sextus "Empiricus"—that is, the empirical (*i.e.*, experiential) physician,³ who lived at Alexandria and Athens (fl. 175–205 C.E.). As a whole, the school continued to discredit dogmatism without promoting knowledge. Sextus, it is true, strikes acutely and systematically at ill-founded beliefs, and so makes for reason;⁴ but, like the whole Pyrrhonian school, he has no idea of a method which shall reach sounder conclusions. As the Stoics had inculcated the control of the passions as such, so the skeptics undertook to make men rise above the prejudices and presuppositions which swayed them no less blindly than ever did their passions. But Sextus follows a purely skeptical method, never rising from the destruction of false beliefs to the establishment of true. His aim is *ataraxia*, a philosophic calm of non-belief in any dogmatic affirmation beyond the positing of phenomena as such; and while such an attitude is beneficently exclusive of all fanaticism, it unfortunately never makes any impression on the more intolerant fanatic, who is shaken only by giving him a measure of critical truth in place of his error. And as Sextus addressed himself to the students of philosophy, not to the simple believers in the Gods, he had no wide influence.⁵ Avowedly accepting the normal view of moral obligations while rejecting dogmatic theories of their basis, the doctrine of the strict skeptics had the effect, from Pyrrho onwards, of giving the same acceptance to the common religion, merely rejecting the philosophic pretence of justifying it. Taken by themselves, the arguments against current theism in the third book of the *Hypotyposes*⁶ are unanswerable; but, when bracketed with other arguments against the ordinary belief in causation, they had the effect of leaving theism on a par with that belief. Against religious beliefs in particular, therefore, they had no wide destructive effect.

Lucian, again, thought soundly and sincerely on life; his praise of the men whose memories he respected, as Epicurus and Demonax (if the Life of Demonax attributed to him be really his), is grave and heartfelt; and his ridicule of the discredited Gods was perfectly right

¹ *De Oratore*, iii, 17; *De Finibus*, ii, 12, 13.

² See Saisset, *Le Scepticisme*, 1865, pp. 22–27, for a careful discussion of dates.

³ His own claim was to be of the "methodical" school. *Hypotyp.* i, 34.

⁴ See his doctrine expounded by Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics*, i, 332 sq.

⁵ Cp. Owen, p. 349.

⁶ These seem to be derived from Carneades. Cp. Ueberweg, i, 217.

so far as it went. It is certain that the unbelievers and the skeptics alike held their own with the believers in the matter of right living.¹ In the period of declining pagan belief, the maxim that superstition was a good thing for the people must have wrought a quantity and a kind of corruption that no amount of ridicule of religion could ever approach. Polybius (fl. 150 B.C.) agrees with his complacent Roman masters that their greatness is largely due to the carefully cultivated superstition of their populace, and charges with rashness and folly those who would uproot the growth;² and Strabo, writing under Tiberius—unless it be a later interpolator of his work—confidently lays down the same principle of governmental deceit,³ though in an apparently quite genuine passage he vehemently protests the incredibility of the traditional tales about Apollo.⁴ So far had the doctrine evolved since Plato preached it. But to countervail it there needed more than a ridicule which after all reached only the class who had already cast off the beliefs derided, leaving the multitude unenlightened. The lack of the needed machinery of enlightenment was, of course, part of the general failure of the Græco-Roman civilization; and no one man's efforts could have availed, even if any man of the age could have grasped the whole situation. Rather the principle of esoteric enlightenment, the ideal of secret knowledge, took stronger hold as the mass grew more and more comprehensively superstitious. Even at the beginning of the Christian era the view that Homer's deities were allegorical beings was freshly propounded in the writings of Herakleides and Cornutus (Phornutus); but it served only as a kind of mystical *Gnosis*, on all fours with Christian Gnosticism, and was finally taken up by Neo-Platonists, who were no nearer rationalism for adopting it.⁵

So with the rationalism to which we have so many uneasy or hostile allusions in Plutarch. We find him resenting the scoffs of Epicureans at the doctrine of Providence, and recoiling from the "abyss of impiety"⁶ opened up by those who say that "Aphrodite is simply desire, and Hermes eloquence, and the Muses the arts and

¹ "The general character of the Greek Skeptics from Sokrates to Sextos is quite unexceptionable" (Owen, *Evenings*, i, 352).

² Polybius, bk. vi, ch. lvi. Cp. bk. xvi, Frag. 5 (12), where he speaks impatiently of the miracle-stories told of certain cults, and, repeating his opinion that some such stories are useful for preserving piety among the people, protests that they should be kept within bounds.

³ Bk. i, ch. ii, § 8. Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*, ch. 8) puts the more decent principle that all the apparent absurdities have good occult reasons.

⁴ Bk. ix, ch. iii, § 12. Cp. bk. x, ch. iii, § 23. The hand of an interpolator frequently appears in Strabo (e.g., bk. ix, ch. ii, § 40; ch. iii, § 5); and the passage cited in bk. i is more in the style of the former than of the latter.

⁵ See Dr. Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church*, 1890, pp. 60-64, notes; also above, pp. 143 and 161, note.

⁶ *De defect. orac.* c. 19; *Isis and Osiris*, ch. 67.

sciences, and Athênê wisdom, and Dionysos merely wine, Hephaistos fire, and Démêtêr corn";¹ and in his essay *On Superstition* he regretfully recognizes the existence of many rational atheists, confessing that their state of mind is better than that of the superstitious who abound around him, with their "impure purifications and unclean cleansings," their barbaric rites, and their evil Gods. But the unbelievers, with their keen contempt for popular folly, availed as little against it as Plutarch himself, with his doctrine of a just mean. The one effectual cure would have been widened knowledge; and of such an evolution the social conditions did not permit.

To return to a state of admiration for the total outcome of Greek thought, then, it is necessary to pass from the standpoint of simple analysis to that of comparison. It is in contrast with the relatively slight achievement of the other ancient civilizations that the Greek, at its height, still stands out for posterity as a wonderful growth. That which, tried by the test of ideals, is as a whole only one more tragic chapter in the record of human frustration, yet contains within it light and leading as well as warning; and for long ages it was as a lost Paradise to a darkened world. It has been not untruly said that "the Greek spirit is immortal, because it was free":² free not as science can now conceive freedom, but in contrast with the spiritual bondage of Jewry and Egypt, the half-barbaric tradition of imperial Babylon, and the short flight of mental life in Rome. Above all, it was ever in virtue of the freedom that the high things were accomplished; and it was ever the falling away from freedom, the tyranny either of common ignorance or of mindless power, that wrought decadence. There is a danger, too, of injustice in comparing Athens with later States. When a high authority pronounces that "the religious views of the Demos were of the narrowest kind,"³ he is not to be gainsaid; but the further verdict that "hardly any people has sinned more heavily against the liberty of science" is unduly lenient to Christian civilization. The heaviest sins of that against science, indeed, lie at the door of the Catholic Church; but to make that an exoneration of the modern "peoples" as against the ancient would be to load the scales. And even apart from the Catholic Church, which practically suppressed all science for a thousand years, the attitude of Protestant leaders and Protestant peoples, from Luther down to the second half of the

¹ *De Amore*, c. 13; *Isis and Osiris*, chs. 66, 67; and *De defect. orac.* c. 13.

² Schmidt, *Gesch. der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im erst. Jahr.* 1847, p. 22.

³ Burnet, *Early Greek Philos.* 1892, p. 276. Cp. 2nd ed. p. 294.

nineteenth century, has been one of hatred and persecution towards all science that clashed with the sacred books.¹ In the Greek world there was more scientific discussion in the three hundred years down to Epicurus than took place in the whole of Christian Europe in thirteen hundred; and the amount of actual violence used towards innovators in the pagan period, though lamentable enough, was trifling in comparison with that recorded in Christian history, to say nothing of the frightful annals of witch-burning, to which there is no parallel in civilized heathen history. The critic, too, goes on to admit that, while "Sokrates, Anaxagoras, and Aristotle fell victims in different degrees to the bigotry of the populace," "of course their offence was political rather than religious. They were condemned not as heretics, but as innovators in the *state* religion." And, as we have seen, all three of the men named taught in freedom for many years till political faction turned popular bigotry against them. The true measure of Athenian narrowness is not to be reached, therefore, without keeping in view the long series of modern outrages and maledictions against the makers and introducers of new machinery, and the multitude of such episodes as the treatment of Priestley in Christian Birmingham, little more than a century ago. On a full comparison the Greeks come out not ill.

It was, in fact, impossible that the Greeks should either stifle or persecute science or freethought as it was either stifled or persecuted by ancient Jews (who had almost no science by reason of their theology) or by modern Christians, simply because the Greeks had no anti-scientific hieratic literature. It remains profoundly significant for science that the ancient civilization which on the smallest area evolved the most admirable life, which most completely transcended all the sources from which it originally drew, and left a record by which men are still charmed and taught, was a civilization as nearly as might be without Sacred Books, without an organized priesthood, and with the largest measure of democratic freedom that the ancient world ever saw.

¹ It is to be presumed that Dr. Burnet, when penning his estimate, had not in memory such a record as Dr. A. D. White's *History of the Warfare between Science and Theology*.

CHAPTER VI

FREETHOUGHT IN ANCIENT ROME

§ 1

THE Romans, so much later than the Greeks in their intellectual development, were in some respects peculiarly apt—in the case of their upper class—to accept freethinking ideas when Greek rationalism at length reached them. After receiving from their Greek neighbours in Southern Italy, in the pre-historic period, the germs of higher culture, in particular the alphabet, they rather retrograded than progressed for centuries, the very alphabet degenerating for lack of literary activity¹ in the absence of any culture class, and under the one-idea'd rule of the landowning aristocracy, whose bent to military aggression was correlative to the smallness of the Roman facilities for commerce. In the earlier ages nearly everything in the nature of written lore was a specialty of a few priests, and was limited to their purposes, which included some keeping of annals.² The use of writing for purposes of family records seems to have been the first literary development among the patrician laity.³ In the early republican period, however, the same conditions of relative poverty, militarism, and aristocratic emulation prevented any development even of the priesthood beyond the rudimentary stage of a primitive civic function; and the whole of these conditions in combination kept the Roman Pantheon peculiarly shadowy, and the Roman mythology abnormally undeveloped.

The character of the religion of the Romans has been usually explained in the old manner, in terms of their particular "genius" and lack of genius. On this view the Romans primordially tended to do whatever they did—to be slightly religious in one period, and highly so in another. Teuffel

¹ Mommsen, *History of Rome*, bk. i, ch. 14 (Eng. tr. 1894, vol. i, pp. 282-83). Mommsen's view of the antiquity of writing among the Latins (p. 280) is highly speculative. He places its introduction about or before 1000 B.C.; yet he admits that they got their alphabet from the Greeks, and he can show no Greek contacts for that period. Cp. pp. 167-68 (ch. x). Schwegler (*Römische Geschichte*, 1853, i, 36) more reasonably places the period after that of the Etruscan domination, while recognizing the Greek origin of the script. Cp. Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. tr. 1906, pp. 26-28; Pelham, *Outlines of Roman History*, 1893, p. 32.

² Schwegler, i, ch. i, § 12; Teuffel, *Hist. of Roman Lit.* ed. Schwabe, Eng. tr. 1900, i, 100-101, 104-10.

³ Teuffel, i, 110-11.

quite unconsciously reduces the theorem to absurdity in two phrases: "As long as the *peculiar character of the Roman nation remained unaltered*".....(*Hist. of Roman Lit.* ed. Schwabe, Eng. tr. 1900, i, 2): "the *peculiar Roman character had now come to an end, and for ever*" (*id.* p. 123). By no writer has the subject been more unphilosophically treated than by Mommsen, whose chapter on Roman religion (vol. i, ch. xii) is an insoluble series of contradictions. (See the present writer's *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 115-17.) M. Boissier contradicts himself hardly less strangely, alternately pronouncing the Latin religion timid and confident, prostrate and dignified (*La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, 4e édit. i, 7, 8, 26, 28). Both writers ascribe every characteristic of Roman religion to the character of "the Romans" in the lump—a method which excludes any orderly conception. It must be abandoned if there is to be any true comprehension of the subject.

Other verdicts of this kind by Ihne, Jevons, and others, will no better bear examination. (See *Christianity and Mythology*, pt. i, ch. iii, § 3.) Dr. Warde Fowler, the latest English specialist to handle the question, confidently supports the strange thesis (dating from Schwartz) that the multitude of deities and daimons of the early Latins were never thought of as personal, or as possessing sex, until Greek mythology and sculpture set the fashion of such conceptions, whereupon "this later and foreign notion of divinity so completely took possession of the minds of the Romans of the cosmopolitan city that Varro is the only writer who has preserved the tradition of the older way of thinking" (*The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, 1911, p. 147). That is to say, the conception of the Gods in the imageless period was an "older way of thinking," in which deities called by male and female names, and often addressed as *Pater* and *Mater*, were not really thought of as anthropomorphic at all! How the early Romans conceived their non-imaged deities Dr. Fowler naturally does not attempt to suggest. We get merely the unreasoned and unexplained negative formula that "we may take it as certain that even the greater deities of the calendar, Janus, Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, and Vesta, were not thought of as existing in any sense in human form, nor as personal beings having any human characteristics. The early Romans were destitute of mythological fancy....."

Either, then, the early Romans were psychologically alien to every other primitive or barbaric people, as known to modern anthropology, or, by parity of reasoning, *all* anthropomorphism is the spontaneous creation of sculptors, who had no ground whatever in previous psychosis for making images of Gods. The Greeks, on this view, had no anthropomorphic notion of their

deities until suddenly sculptors began to make images of them, whereupon everybody promptly and obediently anthropomorphized!

The way out of this hopeless theorem is indicated for Dr. Fowler by his own repeated observation that the Roman *jus divinum*, in which he finds so little sign of normal "mythological fancy," represented the deliberately restrictive action of an official priesthood for whom all *religio* was a kind of State magic or "medicine." He expressly insists (p. 24) on "the wonderful work done by the early authorities from the State in *eliminating* from their rule of worship (*jus divinum*) almost all that was magical, barbarous, or, as later Romans would have called it, superstitious" (Lect. ii, p. 24; cp. Lect. iii.). He even inclines to the view that the patrician religion "was really the religion of an invading race, like that of the Achæans in Greece, engrafted on the religion of a primitive and less civilized population" (pp. viii, 23). This thesis is not necessary to the rebuttal of his previous negation; but it obviously resists it, unless we are to make the word "Roman" apply only to patricians. An invading tribe might, in the case of Rome as in that of the Homeric Greeks, abandon ordinary and *localized* primitive beliefs which it had held in its previous home, and thereafter be officially reluctant to recognize the local superstitions of its conquered *plebs*.

But the Roman case can be understood without assuming any continuity of racial divergence. Livy shows us that the Latin peasantry were, if possible, *more* given to superstitious fears and panics than any other, constantly reporting portents and *prodigia* which called for State ritual, and embarrassing military policy by their apprehensions. A patrician priesthood, concerned above all things for public polity, would in such circumstances naturally seek to minimize the personal side of the popular mythology, treating all orders of divinity as mere classes of powers to be appeased. The fact (*id.* p. 29) that among the early Romans, as among other primitives, women were rigidly excluded from certain *sacra* points to a further ground for keeping out of official sight the sex life of the Gods. But the very ritual formula of the Fratres Arvales, *Sive deus sive dea* (p. 149), proves that the deities were habitually thought of as personal, and male or female.

Dr. Fowler alternately and inconsistently argues that the "vulgar mind was ready to think of God-couples" (p. 152), and that the conjunctions of masculine and feminine names in the Roman Pantheon "do not represent *popular* ideas of the deities, but ritualistic forms of invocation" (p. 153). The answer is that the popular mind is the matrix of mythology, and that if a State ritual given to minimizing mythology recognized a given habit of myth-making it was presumably abundant outside. In

short, the whole academic process of reducing early Roman religion to something unparalleled in anthropology is as ill-founded in the data as it is repugnant to scientific thought.

The differentiation of Greek and Roman religion is to be explained by the culture-history of the two peoples; and that, in turn, was determined by their geographical situation and their special contacts. Roman life was made systematically agricultural and militarist by its initial circumstances, where Greek life in civilized Asia Minor became industrial, artistic, and literary. The special "genius" of Homer, or of various members of an order of bards developed by early colonial-feudal Grecian conditions, would indeed count for much by giving permanent artistic definiteness of form to the Greek Gods, where the early Romans, leaving all the vocal arts mainly to the conservative care of their women and children as something beneath adult male notice, missed the utilization of poetic genius among them till they were long past the period of romantic simplicity (cp. Mommsen, bk. i, ch. 15; Eng. tr. 1894, vol. i, pp. 285-300). Hence the *comparative* abstractness of their unsung Gods (cp. Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 225-28, and refs.; Boissier, *La religion romaine*, as cited, i, 8), and the absence of such a literary mythology as was evolved and preserved in Greece by local patriotisms under the stimulus of the great epopees and tragedies. The doctrine that "the Italian is deficient in the passion of the heart," and that *therefore* "Italian" literature has "never produced a true epos or a genuine drama" (Mommsen, ch. 15, vol. i, p. 284), is one of a thousand samples of the fallacy of explaining a phenomenon in terms of itself. Teuffel with equal futility affirms the contrary: "Of the various kinds of poetry, *dramatic poetry* seems after all to be most in conformity with the character of the Roman people" (as cited, p. 3; cp. p. 28 as to the epos). On the same verbalist method, Mommsen decides as to the Etruscan religion that "the mysticism and barbarism of their worship had their foundation in the essential character of the Etruscan people" (ch. 12, p. 232). Schwegler gives a more objective view of the facts, but, like other German writers whom he cites, errs in speaking of early deities like Picus as "only aspects of Mars," not realizing that Mars is merely the surviving or developed deity of that type. He also commits the conventional error of supposing that the early Roman religion is fundamentally monotheistic or pantheistic, because the multitudinous "abstract" deities are "only" aspects of the general force of Nature. The notion that the Romans did not anthropomorphize their deities like all other peoples is a surprising fallacy.

Thus when Rome, advancing in the career of conquest, had

developed a large aristocratic class, living a city life, with leisure for intellectual interests, and had come in continuous contact with the conquered Grecian cities of Southern Italy, its educated men underwent a literary and a rationalistic influence at the same time, and were the more ready to give up all practical belief in their own slightly-defined Gods when they found Greeks explaining away theirs. Here we see once more the primary historic process by which men are led to realize the ill-founded character of their hereditary creeds: the perception is indirectly set up by the reflective recognition of the creeds of others, and all the more readily when the others give a critical lead. Indeed, Greek rationalism was already old when the Romans began to develop a written and artistic literature: it had even taken on the popular form given to it by Evêmeros a century before the Romans took it up. Doubtless there was skepticism among the latter before Ennius: such a piece of religious procedure as the invention of a God of Silver (*Argentinus*), son of the God of Copper (*Æsculanus*), on the introduction of a silver currency, 269 B.C., must have been smiled at by the more intelligent.¹

Mommsen states (ii, 70) that at this epoch the Romans kept "equally aloof from superstition and unbelief," but this is inaccurate on both sides. The narrative of Livy exhibits among the people a boundless and habitual superstition. The records of absurd prodigies of every sort so throng his pages that he himself repeatedly ventures to make light of them. Talking oxen, skies on fire, showers of flesh, crows and mice eating gold, rivers flowing blood, showers of milk—such were the reports chronically made to the Roman government by its pious subjects, and followed by anxious religious ceremonies at Rome (cp. Livy, iii, 5, 10; x, 27; xi, 28-35; xxiv, 44; xxvii, 4, 11, 23, etc., etc. In the index to Drakenborch's Livy there are over five columns of references to *prodigia*). On the other hand, though superstition was certainly the rule, there are traces of rationalism. On the next page after that cited, Mommsen himself admits that the faith of the people had already been shaken by the interference allowed to the priestly colleges in

¹ Mommsen, bk. ii, ch. 8, Eng. tr. ii, 70. Such creation of deities by mere abstraction of things and functions had been the rule in the popular as distinguished from the civic religion. Cp. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv, 16, 23; vi, 9, etc. It was the concomitant of the tendency noted by Livy: *adeo minimis etiam rebus prava religio inserit deos* (xxvii, 23). But the practice was not peculiar to the Romans, for among the Greeks were Gods or Goddesses of Wealth, Peace, Mercy, Shame, Fortune, Rumour, Energy, Action, Persuasion, Consolation, Desire, Yearning, Necessity, Force, etc. See Pausanias *passim*. The inference is that the more specific deities in all religions, with personal names, are the product of sacerdotal institutions or of poetic or other art. M. Boissier (i, 5), like Ibné, takes it for granted that the multitude of deified abstractions had no legends; but this is unwarranted. They may have had many; but there were no poets to sing, or priests to preserve and ritualize them.

political matters ; and in another chapter (bk. ii, ch. 13 ; vol. ii, 112) he recalls that a consul of the Claudian gens had jested openly at the auspices in the first Punic war, 249 B.C. The story is told by Cicero, *De natura Deorum*, ii, 3, and Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 2. The sacred poultry, on being let out of their coop on board ship, would not feed, so that the auspices could not be taken ; whereupon the consul caused them to be thrown into the water, *etiam per jocum Deos inridens*, saying they might drink if they would not eat. His colleague Junius in the same war also disregarded the auspices ; and in both cases, according to Balbus the Stoic in Cicero's treatise, the Roman fleets were duly defeated ; whereupon Claudius was condemned by the people, and Junius committed suicide. Cp. Valerius Maximus, l. i, c. iv, § 3.

Such stories would fortify the age-long superstition as to auspices and omens, which was in full force among Greek commanders as late as Xenophon, when many cultured Greeks were rationalists. But it was mainly a matter of routine, in a sphere where freethought is slow to penetrate. There was probably no thought of jesting when, in the year 193 B.C., after men had grown weary alike of earthquakes and of the religious services prescribed on account of them ; and after the consuls had been worn out by sacrifices and expiations, it was decreed that "if on any day a service had been arranged for a reported earthquake, no one should report another on that day" (Livy, xxxiv, 55). Cato, who would never have dreamt of departing from a Roman custom, was the author of the saying (Cicero, *De Div.* ii, 24) that haruspices might well laugh in each other's faces. He had in view the Etruscan practice, being able to see the folly of that, though not of his own. Cp. Mommsen, iii, 116. As to the Etruscan origin of the haruspices, in distinction from the augurs, see Schwegler, i, 276, 277 ; Ihne, Eng. ed. i, 82-83, *note* ; and O. Müller as there cited.

But it is with the translation of the *Sacred History* of Evêmeros by ENNIUS, about 200 B.C., that the literary history of Roman freethought begins. In view of the position of Ennius as a teacher of Greek and *belles lettres* (he being of Greek descent, and born in Calabria), it cannot be supposed that he would openly translate an anti-religious treatise without the general acquiescence of his aristocratic patrons. Cicero says of him that he "followed" as well as translated Evêmeros ;¹ and his favourite Greek dramatists were the freethinking Euripides and Epicharmos, from both of whom he translated.² The popular superstitions, in particular those of sooth-

¹ *De natura Deorum*, i, 43.

² Mr. Schueckburgh (*History of Rome*, 1894, p. 401, *note*) cites a translated passage in his fragments (Cicero, *De Div.* ii, 50 ; *De nat. Deorum*, iii, 32), putting the Epicurean view that the Gods clearly did not govern human affairs, "which he probably would have softened if he had not agreed with it." Cp. Mommsen, iii, 113 (bk. ii, ch. 13).

saying and divination, he sharply attacked.¹ If his patrons all the while stood obstinately to the traditional usages of official augury and ritual, it was in the spirit of political conservatism that belonged to their class and their civic ideal, and on the principle that religion was necessary for the control of the multitude. In Etruria, where the old culture had run largely to mysticism and soothsaying on quasi-oriental lines, the Roman government took care to encourage it, by securing the theological monopoly of the upper-class families,² and thus set up a standing hot-bed of superstition. In the same spirit they adopted from time to time popular cults from Greece, that of the Phrygian Mother of the Gods being introduced in the year 204 B.C. The attempt (186 B.C.) to suppress the Bacchic mysteries, of which a distorted and extravagant account³ is given by Livy, was made on grounds of policy and not of religion; and even if the majority of the senate had not been disposed to encourage the popular appetite for emotional foreign worships, the multitude of their own accord would have introduced the latter, in resentment of the exclusiveness of the patricians in keeping the old domestic and national cults in their own hands.⁴ As new eastern conquests multiplied the number of foreign slaves and residents in Rome, the foreign worships multiplied with them; and with the worships came such forms of freethought as then existed in Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt. In resistance to these, as to the orgiastic worships, political and religious conservatism for a time combined. In 173 B.C. the Greek Epicurean philosophers Alkaios and Philiskos were banished from the city,⁵ a step which was sure to increase the interest in Epicureanism. Twelve years later the Catonic party carried a curt decree in the Senate against the Greek rhetors,⁶ *uti Romae ne essent*; and in 155 the interest aroused by Carneades and the other Athenian ambassadors led to their being suddenly sent home, on

¹ *Fragmenta*, ed. Hesselius, p. 226; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i, 58.

² Mommsen, i, 301; ii, 71; iii, 117 (bk. i, ch. 15; bk. ii, ch. 8; bk. iii, ch. 13). Cicero, *De Div.* i, 41.

³ Livy, xxix, 18. Dr. Warde Fowler (*Religious Experience of the Roman People*, p. 346) censures Mr. Heitland for calling Livy's story "an interesting romance" (*Hist. of Rom. Rep.* ii, 229 note); remarking that "it is the fashion now to reject as false whatever is surprising," and adding (p. 347): "It is certain, from the steps taken by the governmentthat it is in the main a true account." It may suffice to ask whether Dr. Fowler believes in all or any of the *prodigia* mentioned by Livy because the government "took steps" about them.

⁴ Cp. Boissier, *La religion romaine*, i, 39, 346.

⁵ Aulus Gellius (xv, 11) says the edict was *de philosophis et de rhetoribus Latinis*, but the *senatus-consultum*, as given by him, does not contain the adjective; and he goes on to tell that *aliquot deinde annis post*—really sixty-nine years later—the censors fulminated against *homines qui NOVUM genus disciplinae instituerunt.....eos sibi nomen imposuisse Latinas rhetoras*. The former victims, then, were presumably Greek. Cp. Shuckburgh, p. 520; and Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, 1866, ii, 146. Professor Pelham (*Outlines of Roman History*, 1893, p. 179, note) mistakenly cites the *senatus-consultum* as containing the word "Latinis." The reading *Latinis* in Gellius's own phrase has long been suspected. See ed. Frederic and Gronov, 1706.

⁶ Teuffel, i, 122.

Cato's urging.¹ It seems certain that Carneades made converts to skepticism, among them being the illustrious Scipio Æmilianus.² In the sequel the Greeks multiplied, especially after the fall of Macedonia,³ and in the year 92 we find the censors vetoing the practices of the *Latin* rhetors as an unpleasing novelty,⁴ thus leaving the Greeks in possession of the field.⁵ But, the general social tendency being downwards, it was only a question of time when the rationalism should be overgrown by the superstition. In 137 there had been another vain edict against the foreign soothsayers and the worshippers of Sabazius;⁶ but it was such cults that were to persist, while the old Roman religion passed away,⁷ save insofar as it had a non-literary survival among the peasantry.

§ 2

While self-government lasted, rationalism among the cultured classes was fairly common. The great poem of LUCRETIUS, *On the Nature of Things*, with its enthusiastic exposition of the doctrine of Epicurus, remains to show to what a height of sincerity and ardour a Roman freethinker could rise. No Greek utterance that has come down to us makes so direct and forceful an attack as his on religion as a social institution. He is practically the first systematic free-thinking propagandist; so full is he of his purpose that after his stately prologue to *alma Venus*, who is for him but a personification of the genetic forces of Nature, he plunges straight into his impeachment of religion as a foul tyranny from which thinking men were first freed by Epicurus. The sonorous verse vibrates with an indignation such as Shelley's in *Queen Mab*: religion is figured as *horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans*; a little further on its deeds are denounced as *scelerosa atque impia*, "wicked and impious," the religious term being thus turned against itself; and a moving picture of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia justifies the whole. "To so much of evil could religion persuade." It is with a bitter consciousness of the fatal hold of the hated thing on most men's ignorant imagination that he goes on to speak of the fears⁸ so assiduously wrought upon by the *vates*, and to set up with strenuous speed the vividly-imagined system of Epicurean science by which he

¹ Plutarch, *Cato*, c. 22.

² Cicero, *De. Repub. passim*, ed. Halm.

³ Polybius, xxxii, 10.

⁴ Suetonius, *De claris rhetoribus*.

⁵ See in Cicero, *De Oratore*, iii, 24, the account by the censor Crassus of his reasons for preferring the Greek rhetors.

⁶ Valerius Maximus, i, 3, 1.

⁷ The culture history of the republican period, as partially recovered by recent archaeology, shows a process of dissolution and replacement from a remote period. Cp. Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. tr. 1906, ch. ii, notably p. 18.

⁸ *De rerum natura*, i, 50-135; cp. v, 1166.

seeks to fortify his friend against them. That no thing comes from nothing, or lapses into nothing; that matter is eternal; that all things proceed "without the Gods" by unchanging law, are his insistent themes; and for nigh two thousand years a religious world has listened with a reluctant respect. His influence is admitted to have been higher and nobler than that of the religion he assailed.

"Lucretius was the first not only to reveal a new power, beauty, and mystery in the world, but also to communicate to poetry a speculative impulse, opening up, with a more impassioned appeal than philosophy can do, the great questions underlying human life—such as the truth of all religious tradition, the position of man in the universe, and the attitude of mind and course of conduct demanded by that position." (Sellar, *Roman Poets of the Republic: Virgil*, 1877, p. 199.)

"In the eyes of Lucretius all worship seemed prompted by fear and based on ignorance of natural law.....But it is nevertheless true that Lucretius was a great religious poet. He was a prophet, in deadly earnest, calling men to renounce their errors both of thought and conduct.....We may be certain that he was absolutely convinced of the truth of all that he wrote." (W. Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, 1909, pp. 327-28.)

And yet throughout the whole powerful poem we have testimony to the pupillary character of Roman thought in relation to Grecian. However much the earnest student may outgo his masters in emphasis and zeal of utterance, he never transcends the original irrationality of asserting that "the Gods" exist; albeit it is their glory to do nothing. It is in picturing their ineffable peace that he reaches some of his finest strains of song,¹ though in the next breath he repudiates every idea of their control of things cosmic or human. He swears by their sacred breasts, *proh sancta deum pectora*, and their life of tranquil joy, when he would express most vehemently his scorn of the thought that it can be they who hurl the lightnings which haply destroy their own temples and strike down alike the just and the unjust. It is a survival of a quite primitive conception of deity,² alongside of an advanced anti-religious criticism.

The explanation of the anomaly seems to be twofold. In the first place, Roman thought had not lived long enough—it never did live long enough—to stand confidently on its own feet and criticize its Greek teachers. In Cicero's treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*, the Epicurean and the Stoic in turn retail their doctrine as they had

¹ ii, 646-50 (the passage cited by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons in one of the Bradlaugh debates, with a confession of its noble beauty); and again ii, 1090-1105, and iii, 18-22.

² See *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 52-57.

it from their school, the Epicurean affirming the existence and the inaction of the Gods with equal confidence, and repeating without a misgiving the formula about the Gods having not bodies but quasi-bodies, with not blood but quasi-blood; the Stoic, who stands by most of the old superstitions, professing to have his philosophical reasons for them. Each sectarian derides the beliefs of the other; neither can criticize his own creed. It would seem as if in the habitually militarist society, even when it turns to philosophy, there must prevail a militarist ethic and psychosis in the intellectual life, each man choosing a flag or a leader and fighting through thick and thin on that side henceforth. On the other hand, the argumentation of the high-priest Cotta in the dialogue turns to similar purpose the kindred principle of civic tradition. He argues in turn against the Epicurean's science and the Stoic's superstition, contesting alike the claim that the Gods are indifferent and the claim that they govern; and in the end he brazenly affirms that, while he sees no sound philosophic argument for religious beliefs and practices, he thinks it is justifiable to maintain them on the score of prescription or ancestral example. Here we have the senatorial or conservative principle,¹ availing itself of the skeptical dialectic of Carneades. In terms of that ideal, which prevailed alike with believers and indifferentists,² and mediated between such rival schools as the Epicurean and Stoic, we may partly explain the Epicurean theorem itself. For the rest, it is to be understood as an outcome partly of surviving sentiment and partly of forced compromise in the case of its Greek framers, and of the habit of partizan loyalty in the case of its Roman adherents.

In the arguments of Cotta, the unbelieving high-priest, we presumably have the doctrine of CICERO himself,³ who in the *Academica* avows his admiration of Carneades's reasoning, and in the *De Divinatione* follows it, but was anchored by officialism to State usage. With his vacillating character, his forensic habit, and his genius for mere speech, he could not but betray his own lack of intellectual conviction; and such weakness as his found its natural support in the principle of use and wont, the practice and tradition of the commonwealth. On that footing he had it in him to boast

¹ See the account of the doctrine of the high-priest Scaevola, preserved by Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, iv, 27. He and Varro (*id.* iv, 31; vi, 5-7) agreed in rejecting the current myths, but insisted on the continued civic acceptance of them. On the whole question compare Boissier, *La religion romaine*, i, 47-63.

² Thus the satirist LUCILIUS, who ridiculed the popular beliefs, was capable, in his capacity of patriot, of crying out against the lack of respect shown to religion and the Gods (Boissier, pp. 51-52). The purposive insincerity set up in their thinking by such men must, of course, have been injurious to character.

³ Cp. the *De Divinatione*, i, 2.

like any pedigreed patrician of the historic religiousness of Rome, he himself the while being devoid of all confident religious belief. His rhetoric on the subject can hardly be otherwise estimated than as sheer hustings hypocrisy. Doubtless he gave philosophic colour to his practice by noting the hopeless conflict of the creeds of the positive sects, very much as in our own day conservative dialectic finds a ground for religious conformity in the miscarriages of the men of science.¹ But Cicero does not seem even to have had a religious sentiment to cover the nakedness of his political opportunism. Not only does he in the *Tusculan Disputations* put aside in the Platonic fashion all the Homeric tales which anthropomorphize and discredit the Gods;² but in his treatise *On Divination* he shows an absolute disbelief in all the recognized practices, including the augury which he himself officially practised; and his sole excuse is that they are to be retained "on account of popular opinion and of their great public utility."³ As to prodigies, he puts in germ the argument later made famous by Hume: either the thing could happen (in the course of nature) or it could not; if it could not, the story is false; if it could, *non esse mirandum*—there is no miracle.⁴ In his countless private letters, again, he shows not a trace of religious feeling,⁵ or even of interest in the questions which in his treatises he declares to be of the first importance.⁶ Even the doctrine of immortality, to which he repeatedly returns, seems to have been for him, as for so many Christians since, only a forensic theme, never a source of the private consolation he ascribed to it.⁷ In Cicero's case, in fine, we reach the conclusion that either the noted inconstancy of his character pervaded all his thinking, or that his gift for mere utterance, and his demoralizing career as an advocate, overbore in him all sincere reflection. But, indeed, the practical subversion of all rational ethic in the public life of late republican Rome, wherein men claimed to be free and self-governing, yet lived by oppressing the rest of the world, was on all hands fatal to the moral rectitude which inspires a critical philosophy.

Modern scholarship still clings to the long-established view that Cicero was practically right, and that Lucretius was practically wrong. Augustus, says Dr. Warde Fowler, was fortunate in finding in Virgil "one who was in some sense a

¹ E.g., Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*.

² *De Divinatione*, ii, 33, 34, cp. ii, 12; and *De nat. Deorum*, i, 22. It is not surprising that in a later age, when the remaining pagans had no dialectic faculty left, the Christian Fathers, by using Cicero as a weapon against the cults, could provoke them into calling him impious (Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, iii, 6, 7).

³ *De Divinatione*, ii, 22.

⁴ *De nat. Deorum*, ii, 1.

⁵ *Tusc. Disp.* i, 26.

⁶ Boissier, i, 58.

⁷ Boissier, p. 59.

prophet as well as a poet, who could urge the Roman by an imaginative example to return to a living *pietas*—not merely to the old religious forms, but to the intelligent sense of duty to God and man which had built up his character and his empire. In Cicero's day there was also a great poet, he too in some sense a prophet; but Lucretius could only appeal to the Roman to shake off the slough of his old religion, and such an appeal was at the time both futile and dangerous. Looking at the matter *historically, and not theologically*, we ought to sympathize with the attitude of Cicero and Scaevola towards the religion of the State. It was based on a statesmanlike instinct; and had it been possible for that instinct to express itself practically in a positive policy like that of Augustus, it is quite possible that much mischief might have been averted" (*Social Life at Rome*, pp. 325-26).

It is necessary to point out (1) that the early Roman's "sense of duty to God and man" was never of a kind that could fitly be termed "intelligent"; and (2) that it was his character that made his creed, and not his creed his character, though creed once formed reacts on conduct. Further, it may be permitted to suggest that we might consider historical problems morally, and to deprecate the academic view that "statesmanship" is something necessarily divorced from veracity. The imperfect appeal of Lucretius to the spirit of truth in an ignorant and piratical community, living an increasingly parasitic life, was certainly "futile"; but it is a strange sociology that sees in it something "dangerous," while regarding the life of perpetual conquest and plunder as a matter of course, and the practice of systematic deceit as wholesome.

The summary of the situation is that Cicero's policy of religious make-believe could no more have "saved" Rome than Plato's could have saved Athens, or than that of Augustus *did* save the empire. It went downhill about as steadily after as before him; and it continued to do so under Christianity as under paganism. The decline was absolutely involved in the policy of universal conquest; and neither creeds nor criticism of creeds could have "averted" the result while the cause subsisted. But there is something gratuitously anti-rational in the thesis that such a decay might have been prevented by a politic manipulation of beliefs *known* to be false, and that some regeneration was really worked in Rome by the tale of pious Æneas. In his *Religious Experience of the Roman People* (1911) Dr. Fowler is more circumspect.

In the upper-class Rome of Cicero's day his type seems to have been predominant,¹ the women alone being in the mass orthodox,²

¹ "It seems to me that, on the whole, among the educated and the rich, the indifferent must have been in the majority" (Boissier, p. 61).

² *Id.* p. 59.

and in their case the tendency was to add new superstitions to the old. Among public men there subsisted a clear understanding that public religion should continue for reasons of State. When we find an eminent politician like the elder M. Æmilius Scaurus prosecuted in the year 103 B.C. on a charge of neglecting certain religious ceremonies connected with his offices, we know that there had been neither conscientious abstention on his part nor sincere religious resentment on the other side, but merely a resort by political enemies, after Greek precedent, to a popular means of blackening an antagonist; for the same Scaurus, who was a member of the college of augurs, had actually rebuilt or restored the temple of Fides, said to have been founded by Numa, and that of Mens (Prudence), which had been set up after the great defeat of the Romans at the Trasimene lake;¹ the early and the late procedure alike illustrating the political and pragmatic character of the State religion.² In the supreme figure of JULIUS CÆSAR we see the Roman brain at its strongest; and neither his avowed unbelief in the already popular doctrine of immortality,³ nor his repeatedly expressed contempt for the auspices,⁴ withheld him from holding and fulfilling the function of high pontiff. The process of skepticism had been rapid among the men of action. The illiterate Marius carried about with him a Syrian prophetess; of Sulla, who unhesitatingly plundered the temple of Delphi, it was said that he carried a small figure of Apollo as an amulet;⁵ of Cæsar, unless insofar as it may be true that in his last years, like Napoleon, he grew to believe in omens as his powers failed, under the stress of perpetual conflict,⁶ it cannot be pretended that he was aught but a convinced freethinker.⁷ The greatest and most intellectual man of action in the ancient world had no part in the faith which was supposed to have determined the success of the most powerful of all the ancient nations.

¹ Cp. Long, *Decline of Roman Republic*, i, 438; ii, 38-40. Long remarks that Domitius, the accuser of Scaurus (who had prevented his election to the college of augurs), "used the name of religion for the purpose of damaging a political enemy; and the trick has been repeated, and is repeated, up to the present day. The Romans must have kept records of many of these trials. They were the great events of the times.....; and so we learn that three tribes voted against Scaurus, and thirty-two voted for him; but in each of these thirty-two tribes there was only a small majority of votes (*pauca puncta*) in favour of Scaurus."

² See Long, i, 56, for a cynical estimate of the mode of manipulation of the Sibylline and other sacred books.

³ Sallust, *Bellum Catilin.* c. 51.
⁴ Suetonius, *Julius*, cc. 59, 77; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, ii, 24. Cp. Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, ed. 1865, ii, 424.

⁵ Plutarch, *Sulla*, c. 29; *Marius*, c. 16. Long (*Decline of Roman Republic*, ii, 369) says of Sulla that, "though he could rob a temple when he wanted money, he believed in the religion of his time. We should call him superstitious; and a man who is superstitious is capable of any crime, for he believes that the Gods can be conciliated by prayers and presents."

⁶ Compare the fears which grew upon Cromwell in his last days.
⁷ Pompeius, on the other hand, had many seers in his camp; but after his overthrow expressed natural doubts about Providence. Cicero, *De Div.* ii, 24, 47; Plutarch, *Pompeius*, c. 75.

Dean Merivale, noting that Cæsar "professed without reserve the principles of the unbelievers," observes that, "freethinker as he was, he could not escape from the universal thralldom of superstition in which his contemporaries were held" (*Hist. of the Romans under the Empire*, ed. 1865, ii, 424). The reproach, from a priest, is piquant, but misleading. All the stories on which it is founded apply to the last two or three years of Cæsar's life; and supposing them to be all true, which is very doubtful, they would but prove what has been suggested above—that the overstrained soldier, rising to the dizzy height of a tremendous career, partly lost his mental balance, like so many another. (Cp. Mackail, *Latin Literature*, 1895, p. 80.) Such is the bearing of the doubtful story (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxviii, 2) that after the breaking down of a chariot (presumably the casualty which took place in his fourfold triumph; see Dio Cassius, xlvi, 21) he never mounted another without muttering a charm. M. Boissier (i, 70) makes the statement of Pliny apply to Cæsar's whole life; but although Pliny gives no particulars, even Dean Merivale (p. 372) connects it with the accident in the triumph. To the same time belongs the less challengeable record (Dio Cassius, lx, 23) of his climbing on his knees up the steps of the Capitol to propitiate Nemesis. The very questionable legend, applied so often to other captains, of his saying, *I have thee, Africa*, when he stumbled on landing (Sueton. *Jul.* 59), is a proof not of superstition but of presence of mind in checking the superstitious fears of the troops, and was so understood by Suetonius; as was the rather flimsy story of his taking with him in Africa a man nicknamed Salutio (Sueton. *ibid.*) to neutralize the luck of the opposing Cornelii. The whole turn given to the details by the clerical historian is arbitrary and unjudicial. Nor is he accurate in saying that Cæsar "denied the Gods" in the Senate. He actually swore by them, *per Deos immortales*, in the next sentence to that in which he denied a future state. The assertion of the historian (p. 423), that in denying the immortality of the soul Cæsar denied "the recognized foundation of all religion," is a no less surprising error. The doctrine never had been so recognized in ancient Rome. A Christian ecclesiastic might have been expected to remember that the Jewish religion, believed by him to be divine, was devoid of the "recognized foundation" in question, and that the canonical book of Ecclesiastes expressly discards it. Of course Cæsar offered sacrifices to Gods in whom he did not believe. That was the habitual procedure of his age.

§ 3

It is significant that the decay of rationalism in Rome begins and proceeds with the Empire. Augustus, whose chosen name was

sacerdotal in its character,¹ made it part of his policy to restore as far as possible the ancient cults, many of which had fallen into extreme neglect, between the indifference of the aristocratic class² and the devotion of the populace, itself so largely alien, to the more attractive worships introduced from Egypt and the East. That he was himself a habitually superstitious man seems certain;³ but even had he not been, his policy would have been natural from the Roman point of view. A historian of two centuries later puts in the mouth of Mæcenas an imagined counsel to the young emperor to venerate and enforce the national religion, to exclude and persecute foreign cults, to put down alike atheism and magic, to control divination officially, and to keep an eye on the philosophers.⁴ What the empire sought above all things was stability; and a regimen of religion, under imperial control, seemed one of the likeliest ways to keep the people docile. Julius himself had seemed to plan such a policy,⁵ though he also planned to establish public libraries,⁶ which would hardly have promoted faith among the educated.

Augustus, however, aimed at encouraging public religion of every description, repairing or rebuilding eighty-two temples at Rome alone, giving them rich gifts, restoring old festivals and ceremonies, reinstating priestly colleges, encouraging special foreign worships, and setting up new civic cults; himself playing high pontiff and joining each new priesthood, to the end of making his power and prestige so far identical with theirs;⁷ in brief, anticipating the later ruling principle of the Church of Rome. The natural upshot of the whole process was the imperial apotheosis, or raising of each emperor to Godhead at death. The usage of deifying living rulers was long before common in Egypt and the east,⁸ and had been adopted by the conquering Spartan Lysander in Asia Minor as readily as by the conquering Alexander. Julius Cæsar seems to have put it aside as a nauseous flattery;⁹ but Augustus wrought it

¹ Boissier, i, 73.

² See Augustine's citation from Varro, *De civ. Dei*, vi, 2. Cp. Sueton. *Aug.* 29.

³ The only record to the contrary is the worthless scandal as to his "suppers of the Twelve Gods" (Sueton. *Aug.* 70). The statement of W. A. Schmidt that "none of the Julians was orthodox" (*Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert*, 1847, p. 175) is somewhat overstrained.

⁴ Dio Cassius, lii, 36.

⁵ E.g., his encouragement of a new college of priests founded in his honour. Dio, xlv, 6.

⁶ Sueton. *Julius*, 44, 56. The first public library actually opened in Rome was founded by Asinius Pollio under Augustus, and was placed in the forecourt of the temple of Liberty; Augustus founded two others; Tiberius a fourth, in his palace; Vespasian a fifth, in the temple of Peace; Domitian a sixth, on the Capitol. W. A. Schmidt, *Gesch. der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit*, pp. 151-52, and refs.

⁷ Boissier, pp. 67-108; Suetonius, *Aug.* xxix-xxxi.

⁸ L'Abbé Beurlier, *Le Culte Impérial*, 1891, introd. and ch. 1; Boissier, ch. 2. Cp. p. 185, note, above.

⁹ It would seem that the occasion on which he enraged the Senate by not rising to receive them (Sueton. *Jul.* 78) was that on which they came to announce that they had made him a God, Jupiter Julius, with a special temple and a special priest. See Long,

into his policy. It was the consummation at once of the old political conception of religion and of the new autocracy.

In a society so managed, all hope of return to self-government having ceased, the level of thought sank accordingly. There was practically no more active freethought. Livy, indeed, speaks so often of the contempt shown in his own day for tales of prodigies, and of what he calls contempt for the Gods,¹ that there can be no question of the lack of religion among the upper classes at the beginning of the empire. But even in Livy's day unbelief had ceased to go beyond a shrugging of the shoulders. HORACE, with his *credat Judæus Apella*, and his frank rejection of the fear of the *Deos tristes*,² was no believer, but he was not one to cross the emperor,³ and he was ready to lend himself to the official policy of religion.⁴ OVID could satirize⁵ the dishonest merchant who prayed to the Gods to absolve his frauds; but he hailed Augustus as the sacred founder and restorer of temples,⁶ prayed for him as such, busied himself with the archæology of the cults, and made it, not quite without irony, a maxim to "spare an accepted belief."⁷ VIRGIL, at heart a pantheist with rationalistic leanings,⁸ but sadly divided between Lucretius and Augustus, his poetical and his political masters,⁹ tells all the transition from the would-be scientific to the newly-credulous age in the two wistful lines:—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.....
Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes¹⁰

—"happy he who has been able to learn the causes of things; fortunate also he who has known the rural Gods." The Gods, rural and other, entered on their due heritage in a world of decadence; Virgil's epic is a religious celebration of antiquity; and Livy's history is written in the credulous spirit, or at least in the tone, of an older time, with a few concessions to recent common sense.¹¹ In the next generation SENECA'S monotheistic aversion to the popular superstitions is the high-water mark of the period, and represents the elevating power of the higher Greek Stoicism. On this score he belongs to the freethinking age, while his theistic

Decline of the Roman Republic, v, 418. He might very well have intended to rebuke their baseness. But cp. Boissier, i, 122, citing Dio, xlvi, 6.

¹ iii, 46; x, 40; xliii, 13.

² *1 Sat.* v, 98-103.

³ As to the conflict between Horace's bias and his policy, cp. Boissier, i, 193-201.

⁴ *E.g.*, *Carm.* iii, 6.

⁵ *Fasti*, v, 673-92.

⁶ *Fasti*, ii, 61-66.

⁷ *Fasti*, iv, 204. The preceding phrase, *pro magno teste vetustas creditur*, certainly has an ironic ring.

⁸ *Æneid*, vi, 724-27.

⁹ Cp. Boissier, i, 228-29.

¹⁰ *Georgics*, ii, 490, 493. Diderot originated the idea that the first of these lines and the two which follow it in Virgil had reference to Lucretius. Grimm, *Correspondance Littéraire*, ed. 1829-30, vi, 24-25. It is acquiesced in by W. Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, 1909, p. 327. Sellar (*Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil*, 1877, p. 201) is doubtful on the point.

¹¹ Cp. Boissier, i, 193.

apriorism belongs to the next.¹ All the while his principle of conformity to all legal observances² leaves him powerless to modify the environment.

As the empire proceeds, the echoes of the old freethought become fewer and fewer. It is an entire misconception to suppose that Christianity came into the Roman world as a saving counter-force to licentious unbelief. Unbelief had in large part disappeared before Christianity made any headway; and that creed came as one of many popular cults, succeeding in terms of its various adaptations to the special conditions, moral and economic. It was easy for the populace of the empire to deify a ruler: as easy as for those of the East to deify Jesus; or for the early Romans to deify Romulus; at Rome it was the people, now so largely of alien stock, who had most insisted on deifying Cæsar.³ But the upper class soon kept pace with them in the zest for religion. In the first century, the elder PLINY recalls the spirit of Lucretius by the indignant eloquence with which he protests against the burdensome belief in immortality;⁴ and the emphasis with which he scouts alike the polytheism of the multitude, the universal worship of Fortune, and the idea that man can know the infinite divinity which is the universe;⁵ but, though Seneca and others reject the fear of future torment, Pliny is the last writer to repudiate with energy the idea of a future state.⁶ A number of epitaphs still chime with his view; but already the majority are on the other side;⁷ and the fear of hell was normally as active as the hope of heaven; while the belief in an approaching end of the world was proportionally as common as it was later under Christianity.⁸ And though Pliny, discussing the bases of magic, of which he recognized the fraudulence, ranks among them the influences of religion, as to which he declared mankind to be still in extreme darkness,⁹ we have seen how he in turn, on theistic grounds, frowned upon Hipparchos for daring to number the stars.¹⁰ Thus, whatever may be the truth as to the persecutions of the Christians in the first two centuries of the empire, the motive was in all cases certainly political or moral, as in the earlier case of the Bacchic mysteries, not rationalistic hostility to its doctrines as apart from Christian attacks on the established worships.

¹ Boissier, ii, 84-92.

² *Ep.* xciv.

³ Suetonius, *Jul.* 88.

⁴ The same note occurs in Virgil, *Æneid*, vi, 719-21.

⁵ *Hist. Nat.* ii, 1, 5 (7). Pliny identifies nature and deity: "*Per quæ declaratur haud dubie naturæ potentia, idque esse quod Deum vocamus*" (last cit., *end*).

⁶ *Hist. nat.* vii, 55 (56). Cp. Boissier, i, 300.

⁷ *Id.* pp. 301-303.

⁸ See the praiseworthy treatise of Mr. J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, 1891, chs. 5, 6, and 7.

⁹ "*.....vires religionis, ad quas maxime etiamnum caligat humanum genus.*" *Hist. nat.* xxx, 1.

¹⁰ Above, p. 188.

Some unbelievers there doubtless were after PETRONIUS, whose perdurable maxim that "Fear first made Gods in the world,"¹ adopted in the next generation by STATIUS,² was too pregnant with truth to miss all acceptance among thinking men. The fact that Statius in his verse ranked Domitian with the Gods made its truth none the less pointed. The Alexandrian rationalist CHAEREMON, who had been appointed one of the tutors of Nero, had explained the Egyptian religion as a mere allegorizing of the physical order of the universe.³ It has been remarked too that in the next century the appointment of the freethinking Greek Lucian by Marcus Aurelius to a post of high authority in Egypt showed that his writings gave no great offence at court,⁴ where, indeed, save under the two great Antonines, religious seriousness was rare. These, however, were the exceptions: the whole cast of mind developed under the autocracy, whether in the good or in the bad, made for belief and acquiescence or superstition rather than for searching doubt and sustained reasoning.

The statement of Mosheim or of his commentators (*Eccles. Hist.* 1 Cent. Pt. I, ch. i, § 21, *note*; Murdock's trans. Reid's ed.) that JUVENAL (Sat. xiii, 86) "complains of the many atheists at Rome" is a perversion of the passage cited. Juvenal's allusion to those who put all things down to fortune and deny a moral government of the world begins with the phrase "*sunt qui*," "there are (those) who"; he makes far more account of the many superstitious, and never suggests that the atheists are numerous in his day. Neither does he "complain"; on the contrary, his allusion to the atheists as such is non-condemnatory as compared with his attacks on pious rogues, and is thus part of the ground for holding that he was himself something of a freethinker—one of the last among the literary men. In the tenth Satire (346 *sqq.*) he puts the slightly theistic doctrine, sometimes highly praised (ed. Ruperti, 1817, *in loc.*), that men should not pray for anything, but leave the decision to the Gods, to whom man is dearer than to himself. There too occurs the famous doctrine (356) that if anything is to be prayed for it should be the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and the strong soul void of the fear of death. The accompanying phrase about offering "the intestines and the sacred sausages of a whitish pig" is flatly contemptuous of religious ceremonial; and the closing lines, placing the source

¹ *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*. Frag. 22, ed. Burmanni. The whole passage is noteworthy. See also his *Satyricon*, c. 137, as to his estimate of sacerdotal sincerity.

² *Thebaid*, iii, 661.

³ Porphyry, *Epistle to Anebo* (with Jamblichus). Chaeremon, however, is said to have regarded comets as divine portents. Origen, *Ag. Celsus*, bk. i, ch. 59.

⁴ Prof. C. Martha, *Les moralistes sous l'empire romain*, ed. 1881, p. 341.

of virtue and happiness within, are strictly naturalistic. In the two last:—

Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia; nos [or sed] te
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam, cœloque locamus,

the frequent reading *abest* for *habes* seems to make the better sense: "No divinity is wanting, if there be prudence; but it is we, O fortune, who make thee a Goddess, and throne thee in heaven." In any case, the insistence is on man's lordship of himself. (The phrase occurs again in *Sat.* xiv, 315.) But the worship of Fortune—which Pliny declares to be the prevailing faith of his day (*Hist. Nat.* II, v (vii), 7—was itself a cult like another, with temples and ritual; and the astrology which, he adds, is beginning to supersede Fortune-worship among the learned and the ignorant alike, was but a reversion to an older Eastern religion. His own preference is for sun-worship, if any; but he falls back on the conviction that the power of God is limited, and that God is thus seen to be simply Nature (*id.* 8).

The erroneous notion that the Roman aristocracy ran mainly to atheism was widely propagated by Voltaire, who made it part of his argument against the atheism of his own day (*Jenni*; art. *Athéisme*, in the *Dict. Philos.*, etc.). It will not bear examination. As regards the general tone of Roman literature from the first century onwards, the summing-up of Renan is substantially just: "The freethinkers.....diminish little by little, and disappear.....Juvenal alone continues in Roman society, down to the time of Hadrian, the expression of a frank incredulity.....Science dies out from day to day. From the death of Seneca, it may be said that there is no longer a thoroughly rationalistic scholar. Pliny the Elder is inquisitive, but uncritical. Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, avoid commenting on the inanity of the most ridiculous inventions. Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* vii, 27) believes in puerile stories of ghosts; Epictetus (xxxii, 5) would have all practise the established worship. Even a writer so frivolous as Apuleius feels himself bound to take the tone of a rigid conservative about the Gods (*Florida*, i, 1; *De Magia*, 41, 55, 56, 63). A single man, about the middle of this century, seems entirely exempt from supernatural beliefs; that is Lucian. The scientific spirit, which is the negation of the supernatural, exists only in a few; superstition invades all, enfeebling all reason" (*Les Évangiles*, ed. 1877, pp. 406-407).

That the mental paralysis connects causally with the political conditions will perhaps not now be denied. A censorship of the written word belongs congenitally to autocracy; and only the personal magnanimity of Cæsar and the prudence of Augustus delayed its development in Rome. Soon it became an irresistible terrorism. Even Cæsar, indeed, so far forgot one of the great rules

of his life as to impeach before the Senate the tribunes who had quite justifiably prosecuted some of the people who had hailed him as king;¹ and the fact that the Senate was already slavish enough to eject them gives the forecast of the future. Augustus long showed a notable forbearance to all manner of verbal opposition, and even disparagement; but at length he also began to prosecute for private aspersions,² and even to suppress histories of a too critical stamp. Tiberius began his reign with the high-pitched sentiment that "in a free State tongue and mind should be free";³ and for a time he bore himself with an exemplary restraint; but he too, in turn, took the colour of his place, and became murderously resentful of any semblance of aspersion on himself.⁴ The famous sentiment ascribed to him in the *Annals* of Tacitus, *Deorum injuriae diis curae*⁵—"the Gods' wrongs are the Gods' business"—is not noted by Suetonius, and has an un-Roman sound. What Suetonius tells is⁶ that he was "very negligent concerning the Gods and religions," yet addicted to the astrologers, and a believer in fate. The fact remains that while, as aforesaid, there must have been still a number of unbelievers, there is no sign after Lucretius of any Roman propaganda against religion; and the presumption is that the Augustan policy of promoting the old cults was extended to the maintenance of the ordinary Roman view that disrespect to the Gods was a danger to the State. In the reign of Nero we find trace of a treatise *De religionis erroribus* by Fabricius Vejento,⁷ wherein was ridiculed the zeal of the priests to proclaim mysteries which they did not understand; but, whether or not its author was exiled and the book burnt on their protest, such literature was not further produced.⁸

There was, in fact, no spirit left for a Lucretian polemic against false beliefs. Everything in the nature of a searching criticism of life was menaced by the autocracy; Nero decreeing that no man should philosophize at Rome,⁹ after slaying or banishing a series of

¹ W. A. Schmidt, who cites this act (*Geschichte der Denk- und Glaubensfreiheit* pp. 31-33) as the beginning of the end of free speech in Rome, does not mention the detail given by Dio (xliv, 10), that Cæsar suspected the tribunes of having set on some of the people to hail him as king. But the unproved suspicion does not justify his course, which was a bad lapse of judgment, even if the suspicion were just. From this point a conspiracy against his life was natural. Cp. Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, v, 432-33, as to the facts.

² See W. A. Schmidt, pp. 34-108, for a careful analysis of the evolution. As to the book-censure, see pp. 101-104.

³ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 28.

⁴ *Id.* c. 61.

⁵ *Annals*, i, 73. That such a phrase should have been written by an emperor in an official letter, and yet pass unnoticed through antiquity save in one historical work, recovered only in the Renaissance, is one of the minor improbabilities that give colour to the denial of the genuineness of the *Annals*.

⁶ *Tiberius*, c. 69.

⁷ Petronius, *Satyricon*, *ad init.*

⁸ In the *Annals* (xiv, 50) it is stated that the book attacked senators and pontiffs; that it was condemned to be burned, and Vejento to be exiled; and that the book was much sought and read while forbidden; but that it fell into oblivion when all were free to read it. Here, again, there is no other ancient testimony. Vejento is heard of, however, in Juvenal, iv, 113, 123-29.

⁹ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, iv, 47.