

## LES SCEPTIQUES GRECS.

*Les Sceptiques Grecs*, par VICTOR BROCHARD.  
Paris, F. Alcan. 1887. 8 frs.

DURING the interval between Aristotle and the rise of Neoplatonism the Greek Sceptics form an important factor in the history of Greek thought. Their work, besides being for the most part negative, was intermittent. Of their chief men several never published anything, the writings of others are lost, the age—even the century—of some of them is uncertain. No authoritative *catena* even of their names exists, such as the list of Stoic philosophers in the Herculean Table. The investigation of many subtle questions turns consequently upon second or third hand statements, on the representations of disciples, on a fragmentary work of Cicero, on the gossip of Diogenes Laertius, on chance quotations by Eusebius or Galen, on an abstract in the *Myriobiblon* of Photius, on the criticisms of Augustine, lastly and chiefly on the miscellaneous compilation (itself of uncertain age) which passes under the name of Sextus Empiricus.

Historians of philosophy have not neglected this region, and much wisdom concerning it is to be found up and down in Zeller. Saisset, in his important work, *Le Scepticisme*, devoted an elaborate section to Aenesidemus, raising questions which have since been acutely discussed by Haas and Natorp; and Mr. Norman Maccoll, in his *Essay on the Greek Sceptics* (Cambridge, 1869), has treated the main features of the subject with luminous brevity. It remained for some one to handle this whole aspect of Greek philosophy with completeness in a separate work, and in performing this task M. Brochard has produced a volume which, if not remarkable for solidity, is in many ways admirable. The patient subtlety of his analysis is equalled by the clearness of his exposition. Considering the fragmentariness of the record, the remoteness of the original sources, the concretion as it were of different layers of opinion thrown down upon the page of Sextus or Diogenes or amalgamated by Cicero, out of which this airy fabric has to be reconstructed, it is no mean triumph of critical and dialectical skill to have given an account of these successive thinkers so continuously interesting, so finely varied, and on the whole so convincing as M. Brochard here presents to his readers. Some amount of repetition

was perhaps inevitable and may be taken in part compensation for the want of an index.

At the first glance the elements of this philosophy seem poor enough, and indeed there is nothing here, except perhaps Carneades's assertion of free will (p. 148 *sqq.*) and Aenesidemus's denial of causation (p. 263 *sqq.*), that is not to be found in some corner of the Platonic dialogues. All later philosophy is apt to read like *τεμάχῃ ἀπὸ τῶν Πλάτωνος μεγάλων δειπνῶν*. But by connecting the doctrines with the characters of the men and with the circumstances of their lives and times, by testing the value of formulae through their relation to the dogmas which they opposed, by noting as it were the different accents of a series of voices that all seem to be always saying the same thing, above all by bringing together the several phases of sceptical tradition into a suggestive general view—not without fruitful applications to modern thought and science—M. Brochard succeeds in giving life and movement to what might otherwise have been a barren recital.

The difficulties on which ancient scepticism laid stress are traced back by our author, as the difficulties of his own time were by Plato, to the exaggerations of the Eleatic school, exaggerations from which Greek dogmatism never worked itself altogether free. The strength of scepticism lay in the crude conception of truth as a mere absolute with which this negative dialectic was contrasted. As M. Brochard says (p. 293) 'On ne peut formuler le principe d'identité, si on veut échapper aux subtilités des sceptiques, qu'en introduisant précisément l'idée d'une relation. "Une chose ne peut, en même temps et sous le même rapport, être et ne pas être."' Plato, once at least, comes near to this solution—'Εκείνο δ' ἤδη καὶ χαλεπὸν ἅμα καὶ καλὸν ...τὸ...τοῖς λεγομένοις οἷον τ' εἶναι καθ' ἕκαστον ἐλέγχοντα ἐπακολουθεῖν, ὅταν τέ τις ἕτερον ὃν πη ταῦτόν εἰναι φῇ καὶ ὅταν ταῦτόν ὃν ἕτερον, ἐκείνη καὶ κατ' ἐκείνο ὃ φησι τούτων πεπονθέναι πότερον. τὸ δὲ ταῦτόν ἕτερον ἀποφαίνειν ἀμῇ γέ πη καὶ τὸ θάτερον ταῦτόν καὶ τὸ μέγα σμικρὸν καὶ τὸ ὅμοιον ἀνόμοιον, καὶ χαίρειν οὕτω τἀναντία αἰεὶ προσφέροντα ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, οὗ τέ τις ἔλεγχος οὗτος ἀληθινὸς ἄρτι τε τῶν ὄντων τινὸς ἐφαπτομένου δηλὸς νεογενὴς ὢν. (*Soph.* 259 c.) But the words of the Eleatic Stranger, which some will not accept as Plato's, prove their authenticity by nothing more than by this, that

they slept in the ear of so many succeeding centuries. Meanwhile the spirit of hypo-statising dogmatism had its way, and in the Stoics was associated with a materialistic principle, constituting a kind of natural realism. Against this stronghold chiefly the darts of the sceptic were directed from his unassailable covert.

In Pyrrho M. Brochard traces not only the world-weariness and despair of truth occasioned by the decline of national life and the jarring of the schools, but also an Oriental touch of contemplative quietism, derived from contact with the Indian gymnosophists with whom the philosopher had intercourse when, with his master Aristarchus, he followed in the train of Alexander. This point of view, although rejected by Maccoll, is certainly interesting, and may claim to have inherent probability; and the image of the great sceptic who accepted the high priesthood of his native town, and performed its duties as well as another would have done (cf. Isocr. *de Antid.* § 71), is presented in these pages with considerable impressiveness. It certainly carries more conviction than the tale, which our author does not quite discredit, of the sceptic who, out of zeal for indifferentism, allowed himself to be crucified. (It may be noted by the way that the chief of sceptics sprang from Elis, the home of *μάρτυς*.)

The sceptical doctrines, or negations of doctrine, turn from the first on two pivot-questions, the criterion of knowledge and the rule of life. The genuine Pyrrhonist admits no criterion, even his negation being swept away with that which it denies, nor any rule of life save to do as others do, or to take the line of least resistance. Even he, however, does not deny the subjective reality of impressions, nor the facts of custom and opinion. But he has no real faith in dialectic, and customs are to him indifferent. If it was otherwise with Pyrrho's remote successors, the cause is partly to be sought in the obscure relations of Pyrrhonism to the New Academy.

The imaginary return to Plato, culminating in Philo Academicus, only partially exempts this school from the imputation of scepticism. Their dialectic was, indeed, a weapon of which the later Pyrrhonists largely availed themselves. Their purely subjective criterion was opposed to the Stoic *κατάληψις*, and, with mild inconclusive rationalism, they made probability the guide of life. M. Brochard's account of Carneades is particularly clear and full. His suggestion that the famous sermon against Justice was an *argumentum ad homines* as addressed to

the Romans is rather over-subtle, but his statement of the theory which the same author set against the Stoical Determinism is both subtle and clear. By a curious oversight Carneades and Philo are each said in the course of the same chapter to be at the apogee of the New Academy (pp. 186, 208), but one must not construe too strictly a rhetorical figure.

Aenesidemus, the dialectical sceptic, gives rise to several questions of great nicety, the most difficult being that occasioned by the discrepancy of statements of nearly equal authority, which represent him now as a Pyrrhonist and now as a Heraclitean. M. Brochard solves this by supposing two periods, the inherent dialectic of scepticism having led this powerful thinker to seek a ground for his opinion in Heracliteanism. There is not room to discuss this opinion here. It is a little strange, however, to find our author following Sextus in alleging Air to have been the principle of Heraclitus without reference to the more constant tradition, according to which Fire was that philosopher's element. He also assumes without hesitation that the pregnant saying *χρόνος πρῶτον σώμα* was due to Aenesidemus. The most interesting thing about Aenesidemus is the fact that he partially anticipated Hume's famous analysis of causation, expressly restricting inquiry to phenomenal succession. That Hume should have been aware of this is, of course, extremely improbable. He was but correcting and amplifying Locke's discussion about Power, but, as an eager student of Cicero's philosophical treatises, the Scottish philosopher may have been directly influenced by the reasonings of the New Academy.

Menodotus appears to have originated the last phase of ancient scepticism in formulating certain rules of observation (*τήρησις*), and even of crude experiment (*μίμησις*), again in so far anticipating modern methods. He and those who followed him were medical men, for whom in the interests of their profession some positive hold upon phenomena was indispensable. Our author, who has a quick eye for historical parallels without being their slave, regards them as the Comtists of antiquity.

According to M. Brochard, pure scepticism is extinct and cannot rise again, partly because the methods of modern investigation have provided criteria which are universally acknowledged as unquestionable, and partly because the progress of knowledge has familiarised the conception, for which the sceptics, to do them justice, had prepared

the way, of approximate or provisional certitude. But our author gives to these early thinkers their full meed of praise. They were philosophers and not mere sophists, and they assisted the advance of true inquiry by arresting judgment when in danger of going by default, and by contesting the pretensions of a crude and narrow dogmatism. There is one sphere of thought, however, which he holds to have remained untouched by their assaults, that of ideal morality. His eloquent words on this subject, though passing beyond the scope of his main inquiry, may fitly conclude the present notice.

‘Quant à la morale, elle présente, au point de vue de la certitude, un caractère tout particulier. Lorsqu’il s’agit de l’idée du devoir, suivant une profonde remarque de Kant, la question n’est plus de savoir si elle a

un objet au sens ordinaire du mot : on ne demande pas si le devoir est toujours accompli sur la terre. L’idée du devoir est un idéal, une règle que l’esprit trouve en lui-même et qu’il s’agit de faire passer dans ses actes. Le fait, ici, ne précède plus l’idée ; il doit se modeler sur elle. Si l’idée du devoir s’offre nécessairement à la raison, elle ne contraint pas la volonté : ici encore, il faut à l’origine de la connaissance un acte de libre initiative. Mais, une fois que l’autorité du devoir a été reconnue (et il l’importe peu que ce soit par obéissance ou par persuasion), la doute a disparu. L’agent moral n’a plus besoin de jeter les yeux sur le monde pour raffermir ses croyances ; c’est en lui-même qu’il découvre la vérité ; sa volonté se suffit pleinement à elle-même. Nul ne peut faire que l’idée du devoir ne soit absolument certaine pour quiconque s’est décidé à lui obéir. Ni les démentis de l’expérience, ni les cruautés de la vie ne sauraient affaiblir la fermeté du Stoïcien ; le monde peut s’écrouler sans ébranler sa foi. C’est assurément le type le plus parfait de certitude que nous puissions connaître.’

LEWIS CAMPBELL.

#### LYSIAS.

- (1) **The Epitaphios**, with Introduction and Notes, by F. J. SNELL, B.A., late Scholar of Balliol. Part i. Introduction and Text. Part ii. Notes. (Clarendon Press Series), 1887. 2s.

THIS is a school edition of the Funeral Oration which has come down to us under the name of Lysias, and, although few would now be prepared to maintain that it was really the work of that orator, there is no reason why it should not prove as useful for educational purposes as those kindred productions, the *Menæxenus* of Plato, and the *Panegyric* of Isocrates. It is written in good and (for the most part) easy Greek, and is suitable for boys who have read the last few books of Herodotus and have not yet begun Thucydides. Mr. Snell’s handy little edition makes it easy for English schoolmasters to make the experiment of adding the *Epitaphios* to the list of subjects which may occasionally be read with advantage by boys in the fourth or fifth form. He supplies them with a very readable Introduction, a satisfactory text (that of Cobet), and some brief but (on the whole) sufficient notes. It cannot, however, be ignored that, in point of accuracy, his work would have gained by a still more thorough revision, and it is with a view to its improvement in any future edition that the following points are suggested.

The first sentence of the Preface shews that the editor is not aware that the *Epitaphios* has already been published with English notes in a very meritorious and generally accurate volume of *Select Orations of Lysias*, by Prof. W. A. Stevens (Griggs and Co.), Chicago, second ed., 1878. The Introduction is partly founded on Villemain’s *Essai sur l’Oraison funèbre*; but no mention is made of the more recent dissertation by Caffiaux, *de l’Oraison funèbre dans la Grèce païenne*, Valenciennes, 1861; or of the discussion respecting the authorship of the *Epitaphios* in Dobree’s *Adversaria*. On p. 8 of the Introduction, the first two index figures, referring to the notes at the foot of the page, have been misplaced. Throughout the book Demosthenes is persistently described as the author of the *Epitaphios* bearing his name. Again,

on p. 11 we read, ‘Gorgias is said to have written an *Epitaphios*,’ when the fact is put beyond all dispute by the testimony of Philostratus and by the long quotation from it preserved by Dionysius (Baiter and Sauppe’s *Oratores Attici*, ii 129). On p. 13, we are told that ‘the voice of antiquity is unanimous in ascribing the *Epitaphios* to Lysias,’ but we ought to have been informed precisely that (apart from some anonymous scholiasts) there are only four persons who quote it as his, without any suspicion : Harpocration (once, s.v. *Ἐπιτάφεια*); Theon (once, *Rhetores Graeci*, i p. 155, Walz); Philemon; and Tzetzes. On the other hand, an authority of greater weight than any of these, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, passes over the speech in complete silence, although he has repeated opportunities for referring to it. Thus, he would almost inevitably have mentioned it in connexion with the *Menæxenus*, and elsewhere, had he supposed it was actually the work of Lysias. Again, ‘the earliest assailant’ of the speech was not Reiske, for he was anticipated by Valckenær (in his notes to Herodotus vii 139, ix 27 and vii 160, published by Wesseling in 1763, whereas Reiske’s attack was nine years later). On this point, Mr. Snell has doubtless been misled by Le Beau, the author of a German dissertation in defence of the genuineness of the speech. To the same dissertation may be traced his quotation of a criticism by Schlegel pointing out ‘the great value of Lysias’ oration from the view which it presents of old Attic morals.’ This criticism is so little known that he ought surely to have given us the reference to Wieland’s *Attisches Museum* i 2 p. 260f, and stated the source from which he derived it. On p. 8 it is asserted that ‘we are nowhere explicitly told when the custom of public funerals in the Ceramicus began.’ But we are expressly informed by Diodorus (xi 33) that it was after the battle of Plataea that the Athenians first instituted the *ἀγὼν ἐπιτάφιος* and the funeral oration. On p. 18 what is sometimes called the great battle of Corinth (394 B.C.) is described as a ‘battle at Nemea’: this involves a confusion between the scene of the Nemean games and the actual site of the battle in question, which was the Nemean brook in the lower part of its course, between Corinth and Sicyon. At the close of the Introduction it is suggested that