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ART. I.—*The Spirit of the Fathers of Western Presbyterianism.*

ON Tuesday, February 12th, of the present year, a centenary convention was held at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, composed of representatives of the twenty Presbyteries contained in the four Synods of Pittsburgh, Allegheny, Wheeling, and Ohio, which was designed to commemorate the visit to that region of the Rev. Charles Beatty and the Rev. George Duffield, by the appointment of the old "Synod of New York and Philadelphia." While the interest in the religious history of that region, so important in itself and in its influence upon the Presbyterian Church, is fresh, it is a favourable time to consider some points in the character and labours of its pioneer ministers.

It may be premised that this is a late hour to hold a "centenary" convention. The visit of Messrs. Beatty and Duffield was made in the summer of 1766; and the commemoration of that event is a year too late. But we cannot grant that to have been the kindling of the light of Presbyterianism in that territory. In the early part of the last century large numbers of the people from the North of Ireland were driven by the

ART. II.—*The Epicurean Philosophy.*

THE Epicurean philosophy was one of the natural developments of an age and condition of political humiliation and moral decay. The public and the private state and relations of Athens were well adapted to suggest and to make popular the system taught for more than thirty-five years in the famous Gardens by Epicurus himself, and on the same attractive spot for successive generations by his enthusiastic disciples. Demetrius Poliorcetes had just become the ruler of Athens, a prince who, in his deep and notorious profligacy, surpassed the mass of Athenian citizens only as greater power and ampler resources increased his facilities for self-gratification. The indulgences of Athens, however, could never be altogether gross and sensual. Literature and science must still be made a means of entertainment. Courtesans as well as statesmen sought recreation, culture, and power of influencing others in such metaphysics as came of and became the age. But as the drama grew wanton and frivolous, so philosophy lost its honesty and dignity.

The conquests of Alexander extended the political supremacy of Greece, and with this her intellectual ascendancy, over the whole eastern world. But the liberties of the true Hellenic states were the price paid for this apparent advancement of her power and influence. During the next two centuries she received a still wider extension of her mission and her opportunity as the world's civilizer, when Magna Græcia and Macedonia and the Achæan League fell before the prowess and the destiny of Rome. But the intellectual activity which was now so vastly diffused, had ceased to be fresh, original, and creative. Moral causes too were working out their slow but sure result. Greek genius could not work in chains, either political or moral; whether the sceptre were visibly wielded by Macedonian or Roman lords, or invisibly by luxury and vice.

And philosophy was in a position of peculiar difficulty. The problems brought and left before it by Plato and Aristotle would have tasked the best powers of the Grecian mind when most free, enthusiastic, and inspired. Now conscious neither of spirit nor of power for such a task, the thinkers of the nation

fell back to more congenial work. They attempted little more than the solution of the practical problem, how the most perfect satisfaction might be attained in life. Epicureans, Stoics, Sceptics, Eclectics, all laboured in their various ways upon this problem. A positive happiness or a negative contentment, often in the midst and even in spite of most untoward circumstances, this, and not the beauty and grandeur of truth and knowledge, the excitement of intellectual grappling with the natural and spiritual wonders of the universe, the joy of intellectual discoveries and achievements, became the inspiration of philosophical inquiry.

The objects of philosophy were with Epicurus wholly practical. Science, as such, he studiously disparaged, as he did also all philosophers except Democritus. Philosophy he defined as an activity which by means of ideas and arguments procures the happiness of life; “ἐνέργεια λόγοις καὶ διαλογισμοῖς τὸν εὐδαιμόνα βίον περιποιούσα.” Truth and knowledge are of course under such a system not an end, but merely a means of pleasure. Diligence, enthusiasm, vigorous and rigorous investigation, are useless and virtually impossible. “The Epicurean,” says Maurice, “is essentially the unscientific man; it would be more correct to say the hater of science.” The only department of philosophy worthy to be pursued for its own sake is Ethics.

The Epicurean system, in the exposition of which the author wrote more than almost any other ancient philosopher, and which he regarded as perfected by himself, is indeed set forth under scientific forms. But this results rather from a deference to the customs of the people and the age, than from any inner impulse or necessity. The system is commonly exhibited under a threefold division, into *Canonic* (their substitute for Logic), *Physics*, and *Ethics*. Of these the first two were altogether subordinate to the third—appendages to the system, incidental necessities rather than essential and vital parts. The logical discussions of Aristotle, who had died sixteen years before Epicurus entered upon his public career as a teacher of philosophy of the school of Democritus, comprised a full investigation of the methods by which man arrives at knowledge. The *Canonic* of Epicurus was merely the doctrine of the criteria by

which truth may be known. These tests it is important to apply, not because of any inherent dignity and worth of truth, nor because the extension of knowledge is desirable, but because, and so far as, falsehood and error directly, perceptibly and seriously interfere with human happiness. The three criteria of truth are sensation (*πάθος*), perception (*αἴσθησις*), and pre-conceptions (*προλήψεις*), which are the common or general images that we form of objects as the result of repeated sensations or perceptions. The first two correspond necessarily with the objects felt or perceived, and must be true, and constitute our only reliable ground of certainty; the third being reliable only so far as they bear the test of subsequent experiences.

Physics became a distinct and important part of the Epicurean system, not from any desire for knowledge, but because false conceptions of man's own nature and of the world about him had filled all the ages with idle fears, greatly impairing the sum of human happiness. The physical part of the system, moreover, contains nothing original; and its author is so indifferent to it, except as a means to an end, that for the sake of the end he sacrifices symmetry and consistency in his doctrine. He starts with the atomistic theory of Democritus, with whom the doctrine was the result of an honest and earnest endeavour to explain the phenomena of the universe from purely natural causes. Epicurus adopts the system as furnishing the best foundation for his ethical theories. In a few particulars he introduces modifications, the most important of which is fatal to the logical consistency of his system. Lest human happiness should be threatened by the assumption of an absolute necessity in the sequence of cause and effect, he introduces chance as one of the elements determining the movements and combinations of atoms. As he excludes design and an intelligent cause, and chance cannot be included in human reasonings, he makes the explanation of nature an impossibility. But men are saved on the one hand, from the thronging fears and terrors that grow out of any system of nature over which higher force, intelligence, and will preside; and on the other, from the more merciless tyranny of mere physical law.

Creation is an absurdity; providence a device to frighten children with; moral government a terrible power over the

blind, deluded nations, yet the merest phantom. Nevertheless all ages and all lands have believed in the existence of gods, and such beliefs demand the admission of corresponding facts; therefore there must be gods, of human form and more than human excellence, living in the interplanetary spaces, undisturbed by thought or care of earth. The ideal of perfect happiness must have its real counterpart (the *Canonic* of Epicurus being true), and this is found in the blissful satisfaction of the gods.

The *Ethics* is therefore the only part of his system which Epicurus elaborates with any care or enthusiasm. As sensation is the ground of all our knowledge, so it is also the measure of all our action. The most marked characteristic of all our sensations is their relation to our sensibilities, to pleasure and pain. Pleasure is therefore the thing essentially desirable, pain the thing to be shunned. The supreme good is found in happiness, or the happy life. The chief element in happiness, nay, even the supreme good, is pleasure. Pleasures are however to be judged and tested by their relation to the deeper and more permanent happiness of life,—one rejected and another preferred, according to their bearing upon the whole of life—“*τοῦ ὄλου βίου μακαριότης.*” Virtue, therefore, while not to be sought as a good in itself, is inseparable from true pleasure, an indispensable means of the happiest life. Bodily pleasures and pains are only for the present; mental states through memory and hope take hold of past and future also, and are therefore of far more account. The pleasurable excitement of the sensibilities is only an element, a factor in the perfect state, which is that of susceptibility for every enjoyment that will promote, or at least not disturb the satisfied rest of the soul, its absolute tranquillity. A fugitive excitement of the sensibilities, however agreeable,—pleasure in motion,—is a less good than pleasure in repose,—calm, equable, and permanent. Temperance, prudence, courage, justice, are necessary conditions of this abiding and satisfying happiness, which may be diversified but cannot be increased by transient enjoyments. The essence of wisdom is prudence, the habit of obeying reason. To this freedom is indispensable. Epicurus, therefore, as he had introduced chance into the sphere of Physics, now again violates the prin-

ciples of the atomistic philosophy by admitting free-will into human action. It were better, he says, to accept the fables of the popular mythology, which allow one to hope for some success from his prayers, than to believe in necessity as controlling human actions, which would be to resign one's self deliberately to despair. And it is worth more to be miserable, acting with reason, than to be happy by chance or in despite of reason.

But in the exercise of this freedom, virtue is to be practised not on account of any independent or abiding power of its own. Justice and right have no existence except on the basis of compacts among men, and do not exist where men have been unable or unwilling to form such agreements. The wise man abstains from injuring others; not from any essential wrong in injustice, nor because of any right by which laws may claim obedience, but for the sake of security and peace. Virtues are therefore only of negative value. Temperance is useful not in its purifying and invigorating power, but because it forestalls the evil effects of violent passion. So of courage, justice, honesty, and other virtues. Weariness and exhaustion follow exertion; therefore the inactive life is the happier. Yet strong natural impulses, like ambition, are to be indulged if, and so far as, the effort to restrain them would cause the greater evil. Above all things avoid pain, and beware of too much activity. Nature requires only things that are easily found. Frugality is therefore an inestimable good, preserving health, quickening our enjoyments, and raising us above the caprices of fortune. The appetites, unregulated, give birth to factitious and superfluous desires, and these to others still more exacting. Experience, if no other teaching, will show that love of riches, of power, of fame, and the like, are only vanity; therefore forego all that does not contribute to that happiness, so simple in its essence, and so fully within the reach of all through nature's bounty, health of body and peace of soul.

There is one apparent inconsistency in this moral system of Epicurus. In one point he permits and even encourages man to look beyond himself for sources of enjoyment, and there limitation and denial are not made indispensable conditions of the desired result. The surest support and sweetest consolation of life are found in friendship; and a friend must be aided

in his distress, consoled in his sorrow, succoured in adversity, although there be no immediate advantage or recompense in sight. Here human sympathies assert themselves, and give to Epicureanism its genial and winning aspect. By precept and by delightful example Epicurus commended friendship, and his followers were renowned for the strength and permanence of their mutual attachments. And yet, says Denis,* from whose attractive pages much of the foregoing sketch has been derived, "I would have preferred in danger the devotion of the Stoic, with all his stern appearance and his rigid impassibility."

If circumstances are untoward, if the wise man is suffering inevitable pain, he turns his thoughts from present ills, and supplies by memory and hope the lack of the passing hour, drawing always copiously upon the inexhaustible stores of his self-complacency. Pain and misery are transient states, almost never both intense and long continued. As for the fear of death, it is not from nature, but is the result of our own error and folly, in imagining that after death the soul still exists, conscious that it has lost the good things of this life. And what are the dishonour and decay of the body to a spirit that has ceased to be? As for the mortal agony, it is but for a moment. So long as we are, death is not, and when death is, we are not. Death is not an evil, and the fear of it is only a folly.

As for fear of the gods, which has constituted a large part of human misery, that cannot concern us hereafter. With regard to the present, it is the felicity of the gods of Epicurus to know as little as possible of human affairs, and men may surely, with perfect propriety, think as little of them.

Epicurus bequeathed to his disciples for ever, on condition of their fidelity to his doctrine, the Garden where so much enjoyment had been found in the most delightful social intercourse, and pleasure so exalted as the end of philosophy and the end of life. And for a long time, as might be expected, the system continued to be popular and practically influential. We think there can be no doubt of the correctness of the judgment of Denis concerning the influence of the system, where its princi-

* *Histoire des Théories et des Idées morales dans l'Antiquité.* Paris, 1856.

ple was received with the explanations and limitations of its founder. In an age whose tendencies were so strong in the direction of luxury, and the grossest self-indulgence, even a cold and utilitarian commendation of temperance as a condition of more abiding happiness, was a check upon universal license. Yet the check was but feeble, for many would cite the name of the philosopher, and quote his leading principle, stripped of its careful limitations, in justification of every indulgence that their debased spirits craved. And on the other hand, sturdy natures, conscious of activities and impulses that Epicureanism ignored or suppressed with as much sternness as such a system was capable of, would turn toward Stoicism or some other philosophy that left them men. And many would revolt at the materialism that robbed them of a soul, of religion, and a future life. While one class of men hailed the philosopher and his system as liberating them from all religious fears and obligations, there were others, not a few, who could not disown their deep and strong religious instincts, and to whom it was a sufficient refutation of Epicureanism that it ignored so real and large a part of their humanity.

The system found warmer adherents and more vehement assailants than perhaps any other of the Greek philosophies. Of the numerous works of Epicurus, very little is preserved beyond the fragments found in Diogenes Laërtius. The philosopher might almost have dispensed with his injunction, that his disciples should receive his doctrine as a completed system: for there was nothing in the system that stimulated to intellectual activity; if, indeed, any more exertion than was required in self-defence would not have been a practical abandonment of their doctrine. Cicero found the school existing in duly organized form at Athens in his day. A century later the apostle Paul encountered its adherents. After another hundred years, when the Antonines attempted to revive the literary glories of Athens, Epicurean philosophers were among their stipendiaries. They seem with the rest to have endured and survived the shock of the Gothic invasion of Greece in the third century, and to have been suppressed with the other schools of philosophy by the edict of Justinian in 529, A. D.

Within a few generations after the death of its founder, the

Epicurean system, with other of the abundant products of Grecian thought, was transferred to Rome. On this soil so uncongenial to some other systems of philosophy that implied more power of abstraction, and involved more acute and subtle reasoning, Epicureanism took root and flourished luxuriantly.

The Roman mind was never predisposed to speculative inquiry. It dealt much more readily with concrete facts and duties. And yet Romans were not without appreciation when this, with other fruits of Greek genius, was brought before them. Rhetoricians and physicians had introduced the science and art of Greece, not without a subtle but potent intermixture of speculation, before the appearance of professed philosophers. And the Grecian drama had been working quite as efficaciously upon the Roman mind; and in this there was a large infusion of the ideas and the spirit of Epicureanism. The stern Roman conceptions of right and rights had begun to melt under these unsuspected influences, before the attention of the people had been invited in any formal way to the doctrines of any of the schools of Athens. The Romans were eager and fascinated listeners. Not a few became, before they were aware of it, adherents of one or another of the schools that were competing for popular favour during the second and third centuries before the Christian era. And here and there one became a more intelligent and earnest advocate of the doctrines to which he had given his adhesion.

Epicureanism had no representative in the famous embassy (A. U. C. 599, B. C. 155) which gave so strong an impulse to Greek studies at Rome in spite of the sturdy resistance of the patriotic and indignant Cato. But the system did not need so much as some others an attractive personal advocacy. The Academy and the Lyceum exacted so much thought that only the most popular teachers could draw away listeners from the Porch and the Garden. Moreover, the circumstances of the state were by no means unlike those which had so prepared the Grecian mind for the teaching of Epicurus. Then the East had just fallen before the genius and prowess of Alexander, and the wealth and the luxury and the vices of the East were terribly avenging the triumphs of arms. Now at Rome, the great conqueror's wish for "more worlds to conquer," might have been

repeated with even greater fitness. And the spoils of the nations were pouring in, to exalt the fame and pride, but sap the virtue of the irresistible Republic. The philosophy which made self-pleasing the great aim and duty of life could not have appeared at Rome more seasonably. And while many elements of the true old Roman nature would respond more promptly and surely to the summons of a Stoic's creed, Rome was rapidly becoming less Roman; and in just that ratio would the easy, comfortable, and plausible system of Epicurus be sure of a wide success. Epicureanism in each successive generation could doubtless muster the largest array of adherents, and could always exhibit on her roll some of Rome's proudest names. Of Cicero's contemporaries it is enough to mention his great rival, Hortensius, his most intimate friend, Atticus, Cassius, the conspirator against the great dictator, and Cæsar himself, the marvel of the world.

During the last half century of the Republic, political considerations undoubtedly contributed to the wider prevalence of this philosophy. In the fierceness of party strife, amidst the desperate and unscrupulous contests of personal ambition, patriotism found its sphere greatly limited. Wearied with vain endeavours, not a few patriotic spirits took refuge in the faith of Epicurus, which justified political inaction on the ground of the vanity of ambitious desires and the impossibility that the wise man should always enjoy the favour of the people, or control their caprices. The only instance in which Cicero speaks of Epicureanism with any other tone than that of aversion and contempt, illustrates the point before us. In the *De Oratore*, (iii. 17,) in his discussion of the place which philosophy should hold in the studies of the orator, after speaking concisely but emphatically of the unfitness of the Epicurean system to develop the spirit or the powers of the orator, he adds, "and yet no wrong will be done by us to that philosophy; for it will not be excluded from a sphere into which it desires to enter, but will remain quiet in its gardens according to its wish, where also reclining daintily and at its ease it calls us away from the *Ros-tra*, from the courts, from the senate-house, perhaps wisely, especially in the present condition of the commonwealth."

In explaining the prevalence and popularity of this philoso-

phy at Rome, Cicero, in another connection, adverts to the fact that it had the advantage of being put before the people in their own language earlier than its competitors. (*Tusc. Disp.* iv. 3.) Of Amafinius and Rabirius, the first Latin writers on philosophy, he speaks only disparagingly, both with reference to their style and doctrine. Among a people, however, who were little trained to criticism, either literary or philosophical, priority in time gave Epicureanism the greater advantage. Yet the system never gained control of any large proportion of the thinkers of Rome. The Roman nature was too strong and vigorous, too full of impulse and efficiency, to submit readily to a doctrine so listless and paralyzing as the higher Epicureanism. The grosser and perverted system would of course find favour with the enervated and self-indulgent, especially after the decay of the Republic.

In Roman literature the philosophy of the Garden finds its best exponents in Lucretius and Horace. Reversing the order of time, let us first look at Epicureanism as illustrated and applied in the graceful, polished, and popular poetry of Horace, that perfect epitome of the spirit of the Augustan age. Horace is no professed metaphysician. At Athens he had studied in the schools, and at Rome had reflected upon philosophy, especially in its moral and practical bearings, although not with the intense and consecutive interest of a man of science. From each system he could learn something, and each was open to his keen and discriminating criticism. So far as he assigns himself a place among the schools, it seems to be with Epicurus. And yet his adhesion to the doctrine is general rather than rigid and consistent. The philosophy of self-enjoyment is not always solid and earnest enough to meet his own conscious wants, or to satisfy his deep and manly convictions concerning the rights and obligations of his fellow-men. The gods are at times more truly living, ruling powers, than Epicurus would tolerate. Now and then the poet must recognize a providence over himself, and cannot doubt that it concerns itself actively with his neighbours, his age, his land. Life has deeper meanings, human conduct more important issues than were discerned in the Garden. Still, for the most part, he gives himself up to the enjoyment of the present, and commends to others a like

self-indulgence, with little thought or care for gods or future. As Pierron says, (*Histoire de la Littérature Romaine*, p. 410,) "He is an Epicurean by temperament, and not by system; and on occasion he will make sport of the extreme Epicureans, as he makes sport of the too consistent Stoics. His philosophy, if one may here employ the word, is summed up entirely in the principle, 'Nothing in excess.'" If we may make a distinction among his writings as to their moral tendency and philosophical affinities, we should say that the Odes more frequently make the impression that pleasure is his end, and the philosophy of pleasure his guide, while the Epistles and Satires more generally exhibit his sober and earnest views of life, and his independent judgments. And we think the prevailing impression made upon his contemporaries, like that upon his modern critics, must have classed him with the followers of Epicurus.

Lucretius, on the other hand, was a most enthusiastic adherent of this school in its best type. He was the great interpreter and defender of the Epicurean system to the Romans, and the one most accessible to all later generations. Apart from his doctrine, this poet and his work held no doubtful place in the estimation of scholars of every land, for the first two or three centuries after the revival of learning. The interest in him, which had somewhat declined, but had been restored in Germany by Lachmann, has of late been greatly revived in England by the publication of Prof. Sellar's "Roman Poets of the Republic," nearly one-half of which is devoted to Lucretius, and still more recently by Mr. Munro's edition of the poet's work, (Cambridge, 1864. 2 vols. 8vo., pp. 334, 430.) Lord Macaulay had before pronounced his work "the greatest didactic poem in any language." Goethe expressed great admiration for him. He has been by other critics pronounced the most thoroughly Roman of all the Latin poets.

Although a contemporary of Cicero, and a little younger than he, the poet laboured under the double difficulty of being obliged largely to create a philosophic vocabulary, and to adapt it to poetic use. Philosophers before Cicero had done nothing to enrich and extend the language in this direction, and he had written only the *De Republica* and the *De Legibus*, when Lucretius undertook his *De Rerum Natura*. It has always

excited wonder that such a poem should or could have been written in exposition of any metaphysical system. And if one must needs set forth Epicurean doctrine in song, it could be more easily conceived that the ethical system, the commendation of pleasure as the end of life, should move and fill the poet's strain. But how should one feel, how exhibit one poetic impulse in connection with the physical part of the system, the dry, materialistic, atomic theory of the universe? This problem Lucretius has wonderfully solved. To him the system was consistent and complete. And because his fervid spirit was so intensely in earnest, with an aim so practical, he begins at the foundation. Never has modern philanthropist been more absorbed in his work, or more intent upon convincing and persuading men. It is mainly this direct and vigorous grappling with a great subject for a great purpose, that gives the poem its strongly Roman character. What Latin poem besides carries the impression that it was written with a Roman will? To release man from that terror and darkness of the mind which were all-prevalent under false religion and false philosophy, he undertakes to exhibit *The Nature of Things* according to that system which he believes to be alone true and effectual. Epicurus was to him "the true interpreter of nature," whose praise he is never weary of proclaiming. "A god he was, a god, most noble Memmius (we quote from Mr. Munro's close and vigorous version) who first found out that plan of life which is now termed wisdom, and who by trained skill rescued life from such great billows and such thick darkness, and moored it in so perfect a calm and so brilliant a light." (v. 8—12.) "When human life to view lay foully prostrate upon earth, crushed down under the weight of religion, who showed her head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect lowering upon mortals, a man of Greece ventured first to lift up his mortal eyes to her face, and first to withstand her to her face. Him neither story of gods, nor thunderbolts, nor heaven with threatening roar could quell, but only stirred up the more the eager courage of his soul, filling him with desire to be the first to burst the fast bars of nature's portals." (i. 62—71.) In the opening of the fifth book he adverts to the alleged services to the human race for which Ceres and Liber and Hercules had

been deified, and pronounces them insignificant if set by the side of Epicurus' service. A quotation here will have additional value as showing the moral type of the poet's Epicureanism, and his estimate of the morality of the founder of his creed. He has just spoken of the monsters from whose ravages Hercules was said to have freed the earth, as after all not able to do much harm if they had been left alive. "But unless the breast is cleared, what battles and dangers must then find their way into us in our own despite? What poignant cares inspired by lust then rend the distressful man, and then also what mighty fears! and pride, filthy lust, and wantonness? What disasters they occasion! and lust and all sorts of sloth? He, therefore, who shall have subdued all these and banished them from the mind by words, not arms, shall he not have a just title to be ranked among the gods? And all the more so that he was wont to deliver many precepts in beautiful and godlike phrase about the immortal gods themselves, and to open up by his writings all the nature of things." (v. 43—54.)

In the fragments from Epicurus which have been preserved, there are no such evidences of depth of nature and earnestness of purpose as abound throughout Lucretius. Even Cicero appears to us to fall decidedly below his contemporary poet-philosopher in deep sincerity and intense earnestness of desire to impress his convictions upon other men. "He seems," says Professor Sellar, "to combine in himself what was greatest in the Greek and in the Roman mind—the Greek ardour of inquiry; the Roman manliness of heart."

In order to dissipate effectually the terror and darkness of the mind, the poet, after a brief and beautiful introduction, lays down as his first principle that "nothing is produced from nothing by Divine power." The first book contains his general exposition of the materialistic doctrine; that nothing exists but space and matter, both infinite in extent. The second book describes atoms, and the modes of their combination and separation in nature's perpetual changes. The third exhibits the nature of the soul, about half the book being given to arguments against the doctrine of immortality. The fourth book treats of the senses, dreams, and some of the other phenomena of life; the fifth sets forth the experiences of the human race

from their first appearance on the earth, the organization of society, the origin of language, and the progress of civilization. The sixth and last book, which is less perfectly elaborated than the rest, although the outline of the projected work appears to have been filled out, discusses various natural phenomena, earthquakes, volcanoes, pestilences, and the like. His theological and ethical views Lucretius introduces incidentally, as his direct argument, or the refutation of contrasted errors gives him opportunity.

“For the nature of the gods,” he says, (ii. 646—651) “must ever in itself of necessity enjoy immortality together with supreme repose, far removed and withdrawn from our concerns; for exempt from every pain, exempt from all dangers, strong in its own resources, not wanting aught of us, it is neither gained by favours nor moved by anger.” Again with reference to creation, (v. 156 sq.) “To say that for the sake of men they have willed to set in order the glorious nature of the world, and therefore it is meet to praise the work of the gods, calling as it does for all praise, and to believe that it will be eternal and immortal, and that it is an unholy thing ever to shake by any force from its fixed seats that which by the forethought of the gods in ancient days has been established on everlasting foundations for mankind, or to assail it by speech and utterly overturn it from top to bottom; and to invent and add other figments of the kind, Memmius, is all sheer folly. For what advantage can our gratitude bestow on immortal and blessed beings that for our sakes they should take in hand to administer aught? And what novel incident could have induced them, hitherto at rest, so long after to desire to change their life?” With reference to belief in providence as controlling natural phenomena or human affairs, (vi. 68 sq.) “Unless you drive from your mind with loathing all these things, and banish far from you all belief in things degrading to the gods, and inconsistent with their peace, then often will the holy deities of the gods, having their majesty lessened by you, do you hurt; not that the supreme power of the gods can be outraged, so as in their wrath to resolve to exact sharp vengeance, but because you will fancy to yourself that they, though they enjoy quiet and calm peace, do roll great billows of wrath; nor

will you be able to approach the sanctuaries of the gods with a calm breast." The popular mythologies call forth the poet's most vehement denunciation. "O hapless race of men, (v. 1194—1203) when they charged the gods with such acts and made them the slaves of angry passions! What groanings did they then beget for themselves, what wounds for us, what tears for our posterity! Nor is it any act of piety to be often seen with veiled head to turn to a stone, and approach every altar and fall prostrate on the ground, and to spread out the palms before the statues of the gods and sprinkle the altars with much blood of beasts, and nail up vow after vow, but rather to be able to look on all things with a mind at peace."

"The mind at peace"—this is with Lucretius, as with Epicurus, the highest attainment of man. His physical theory of the universe has constantly and predominantly this moral object. And when he comes to speak more directly of human relations and duties, he always insists that it is a great thing to live well in such a world as this. The motives to right living are of necessity all drawn from the present. All hopes and fears that take hold of the future are the dream of the ignorant or the inconsistent. He denounces sensuality in every form; he ridicules avarice and ambition, and all the vices and follies of the mind. Tityos is the prey not of a vulture, but of sensual lust; the never-ending toil of Sisyphus is the hopeless striving of ambition. The difficulties and distresses of the present, and dread of the future, are the result of ignorance or disregard of "the nature of things," which the poet sets forth, not with the intellectual enthusiasm of a philosopher, but with a feeling in which Professor Sellar recognizes "a zeal more like religious earnestness than the spirit of any other writer of antiquity."

It is indeed true that with his whole school, the poet overlooks and unconsciously disowns at the start his fundamental principle, that the senses are the foundation of all our knowledge. Atoms and void, from which all things are said to be made, may be inferences from what we see, but surely they are not seen, nor can any sense take direct cognizance of them. The infinite variety and change which co-exist with universal order and all-pervading law in nature, are explained by the

conception that in these atoms, beside the three qualities of simplicity, solidity, and eternity, there is a certain mysterious force, by the recognition of which the philosopher escapes on the one hand from chance, on the other from fatalism. And when the poet passes from the contemplation and exhibition of all this detail, to the representation of nature as a whole, he discerns a life and power and almost a will, which well-nigh constitute nature a god above the gods. When he speaks of creation and denies it as the act of the gods, among other reasonings he puts the question, (v. 181, sq.), "Whence was first implanted in the gods a pattern for begetting things in general as well as the preconception of what men are, so that they knew and saw in mind what they wanted to make; and in what way was the power of first beginnings ever ascertained, and what they could effect by a change in their mutual arrangements, unless nature herself gave the model for making things?"

It is easy to see how this conception of nature aided the poet. Lucretius had chosen the poetic form, partly, no doubt, from consciousness of a poet's calling; but he says, "since the doctrine seems generally somewhat bitter to those by whom it has not been handled, and the multitude shrinks back from it in dismay, I have resolved to set forth our doctrine in sweet-toned Pierian verse, and to overlay it as it were with the pleasant honey of the muses." It is doubtful, however, whether the poem, even by its vigour of thought and poetic merit, gained any considerable influence. The archaic style which the sturdy Roman spirit of the poet led him to adopt, would throw his work out of the current in which Cicero, and afterwards Horace and Virgil, were directing the popular taste. And Epicureanism of a lower type would become prevalent with those who were inclined to live for pleasure. The morality of the *De Rerum Natura* was far above that of the age in and for which it was composed. Notwithstanding the poet's high endeavour, life would continue, we fear, to be "a struggle in the dark." And we wonder whether he who so distinctly recognized a conscience as one of the great disturbers of man's peace, did not himself feel the insufficiency of the remedies he offered in that icy materialism. A century later a doctrine was preached at

Rome, that could ensure "a mind at peace;" but how different was its exhibition of the nature of things!

Epicureanism continued to be practically popular and influential at Rome, although in literature it found no expositors later than the Augustan poets, whose names have been preserved. It has been noted as a remarkable fact that men of every school of philosophy were found among those who engaged in the final struggle for the Republic. And under the Empire all were alike suspected when showing any disposition to meddle with affairs of state; otherwise, from indifference or policy, tolerated. Yet surely the system of Epicurus, so strongly repressing both personal ambition and patriotic devotion, was least obnoxious to suspicion.

Let us now notice briefly the natural and actual working of the Epicurean philosophy in ancient society. What was its place as a modifier of ancient civilization?

Within the sphere of religion it aimed at and contributed to the limitation and overthrow of the old mythologies and superstitions. Even if the gods whom it offered as a substitute for the popular divinities, were gods only in name, whose existence was recognized only because a popular belief so universal, must, according to the *Canon* of Epicurus, have its counterpart in fact, still assaults so vehement and just upon many of the enormities of the popular belief and practice, could not fail to accelerate the downfall of the ancient faith.

Within the sphere of private morality, the system of the true Epicureans both of Greece and Rome, doubtless protested earnestly against the growing corruption of the old world. Temperance and kindred virtues were commended by every variety of argument that could be drawn from self-interest. But it is the idle struggle of selfishness against sin. A few whose judgments were clear and calm, and their passions less impetuous, would make the required reckoning, and forego many a present indulgence because it cost too much. But even in Greece, much more than in Rome, the passions of men were too turbulent, temptations and facilities too numerous and persuasive, to allow many to become the sages that Epicurus sought to make all men. The rapacity, brutality, and debauchery of Rome, during the last generations of the Republic and the first of the Empire,

we fear were not perceptibly restrained by Lucretius and all his school.

The civil and political influence of the philosophy of the Garden was not so directly intended, or so speedily perceptible, and yet perhaps this was the sphere of its mightiest and most beneficent working. Denis sets forth with great clearness and eloquence its influence in Greece, in opposing that blind and narrow patriotism which was so often the bane of Greek politics, in undermining national pride and exclusiveness, and in ameliorating the rigours of servitude. Epicurus, according to Seneca, would have the slave regarded as a friend of humble condition; and it was a further argument with this school, that it is only in connection with such indulgence, and a mutual good will, that the slave will cease to be a troublesome possession. The old Roman pride was made of even sterner stuff, and the virtues of the earlier Republic struggled long and desperately, but in vain, against the insidious assaults of foreign manners, foreign doctrines, foreign vices. But the fierce conqueror must needs be taken captive before she could be anything but a despot in the earth. That old national pride which made a foreigner an enemy, and which doled out the rights of citizenship with a niggard hand, must be broken or melted before the nations would rejoice in her sway. And this result the Epicurean system, so far as it had power, would only hasten. While Stoicism contributed its invaluable service to perfect the legislation and jurisprudence of Rome, the rival system was liberalizing the state, and making it possible that a world-wide empire should be maintained by law instead of force. So the Roman became a cosmopolite. A mightier power than Epicureanism took up this work after the civil wars and the reigns of the first emperors had done their part. But Christianity need not ignore any good work which had been already done, though it be by a philosophy so defective and false as that of the Garden.