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THE FATHERS OF PHILOSOPHY.—V.



ONG did the followers of Pythagoras mourn, in an undemonstrative but classic manner, the decease of their founder and one who was for so many years their teacher. They did not, however, forget his principles, but seemed to think that the best monument they could erect to his memory was dedicating their own lives, as he had done his, to disseminating his doctrines and living up to his strictest regulations. They seem, with apostolic spirit, to have spread over the cultivated world, returning to the seats of learning the knowledge which they had indirectly derived from them, with interest and additions. Some of these traveling philosophers found their way to Ephesus; and two of them especially undertook to teach and bring forth the founder of an improved system, which, however, had the Pythagorean one as a basis. The teachers were Xenophanes and Hippasus, and the pupil was—

HERACLITUS.

This philosopher was born about the year 400, B. C., and in early life manifested a great desire to study the abstrusities of nature; and so well did he profit by his powers of observation and reasoning faculties that he was offered the chief-magistracy of Ephesus, an honor which he immediately declined, and being some time after discovered playing with boys in the Temple of Diana, he was reproached for not being employed more to the profit of his fellow-citizens. "It is surely better," he replied, "to pass my time with children than to govern the corrupt Ephesians." There is no doubt that he was of a moody temperament, and he gradually began to entertain such a supreme contempt for the follies and vices of mankind, that he retired to a mountain-cave; and there, hermit-like, wandering amid the solitude of nature, he gathered the natural produce of the earth, and lived on herbs and simples. Darius, King of Persia, hearing of his learning and extraordinary habits, invited him to his court, and was surprised to find his invitation treated with contempt. This ascetic mode of life brought on a dropsy, and finding that the medical advice of that day gave him no relief, he endeavored to restore himself to health by shutting himself in a close stable with the oxen. He is supposed to have died at the age of 60, but there is a mystery as to the time and manner of his decease.

Heracitus has been called the "Crying Philosopher," from a fable that he was always shedding tears for the follies of mankind; but we think that he little deserves the lachrymose title. He was excessively conservative, as he wrote his treatise on theology as obscurely as possible, in order that it might not be comprehended by the vulgar or common folks. He maintained that fire was the first principle of all things, and that by the combination of this principle with certain indivisible atoms, simple or elemental in their nature and always in motion, all material things were produced, which doctrine was a dim foreshadowing of the Atomic Theory of John Dalton, and the theory of latent or insensible heat now so universally believed in by philosophers. He it was who first enunciated to the world the great idea that "reason, by means of the senses, is the judge of truth;"

and he declared that the end of human life is to enjoy happiness, and to attain this, we should have as few wants as possible, and always recollect that the life of the body was the death of the soul, which never gains its true freedom until it is delivered from its earthly tabernacle and can ascend into the realms of glory. The first virtue, he argued, is temperance; and the first lesson of wisdom is to follow nature; lastly, he thought it was of more importance that men should learn to know themselves than that they should acquire great learning. We will now, for once, break through our chronological order, and leave until next week an account of Anaxagoras, passing on to one who is supposed to be the very contrast of Heraclitus, namely, to—

DEMOCRITUS, OF ABDERA

He was born in the Thracian city of Abdera (whence he takes his name), in 460, B. C., and had for his contemporaries Socrates, Zeno, Protagoras, and other wise and learned men. His father was a rich man, and provided large sums of money for the entertainment of the army of Xerxes, on the return of that monarch to Asia, in exchange for which the Persian king left in Abdera several Chaldean magi. These magi would naturally become frequenters of the house of Democritus, and from them, no doubt he learned astronomy and imbibed some theologic notions. On his father's death, he traveled through Egypt, Persia, Ethiopia, and, some say, India, gathering learning and wisdom as he went along. On his return to his native city, having spent all his money, he dreaded an Abderian law, which enacted that every person who had wasted his patrimony should be deprived the right of sepulture; and to avoid this, he delivered lectures on philosophy to the citizens, which not only brought him in a large amount of money, but great fame. We believe that this is the first instance of any one lecturing for money; therefore, Democritus may be regarded as the patron saint of Yankee lecturers. He like his predecessor, was offered public honors, and, like him, refused them, preferring rather to retire from the world and contemplate his fellow-men. Seneca tells us that whenever he appeared in public, he expressed his contempt for the follies of his race by laughter, and hence he is called the "Laughing Philosopher;" but this story is doubtful. His better name of "Derider" is more probable, as it is likely that one so learned as himself should treat with contempt the petty prejudices and follies which he saw around him.

Democritus taught that the sun and moon are composed of light particles, revolving about a common center from east to west. In other things he but enlarged and extended the atomic idea of Heraclitus. His morals were, however, very fine; and the following sentences are a few from many which are attributed to him:—"He who subdues his passions is more heroic than he who vanquishes an army; yet there are men who, whilst they command nations, are slaves to pleasure." "The sweetest things become bitter by excess." "Do nothing shameful when you are alone; reverse yourself more than all other men." "Every country is open to a wise man, for he is a citizen of the world." "A cheerful man is happy, though he possesses little; a fretful man is miserable in the midst of affluence." "One great difference between a wise man and a fool is, that the former only wishes for what he may possibly obtain, the latter desires impossibilities." "Rulers are chosen not to do ill, but good." Juvenal summed up, in a few lines, the contrast of these two great men; and, as Dryden has translated them very well, we can give them in rhyme:—

"Will you not, now, the pair of sages praise,
Who the same end pursued by different ways?
One pitied, one contemn'd the woful times;
One laughed at follies, and one wept o'er crimes."

CIVILIZED PLAGIARISM.

We confess to a certain reverence for "old fogysm"—that is to say, we believe in honor among all men as well as among thieves; we also believe that men of genius have a right to at least credit for their works. Let us illustrate our meaning. Suppose we write an article and publish it in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN; if we put our individual name at the bottom of it, we expect that those newspapers which copy the article into their columns will also copy the author's name; if there is no name to copy, we ask in courtesy that credit be given to the original source from which the article was taken, namely, our own paper. We regard the petty pilfering

of other men's brains as the meanest kind of work; it is a degrading, not an elevating process. If, then, we expect this to be done to ourselves, how much more courteous should we be to the foreign stranger who gives us information or enjoyment; should we not at least acknowledge him, and not attempt to appear witty, intellectual or original with other men's thoughts, ideas, and genius as our stock in trade. We are not at the present time thinking of ourselves, but we wish, as members of the American press, to express our unqualified disapproval of the plagiarism of art and literature exhibited in *Harpers' Weekly* for the week ending July 23, 1859, which said periodical is called by the proprietors "a Journal of Civilization." Queer civilization! Let us enumerate the plagiarisms. On the first page is a poem called "Magenta," with a beautiful illustration; there is no credit to author or source—the author is Tom Taylor, and the source is the new London hebdomadal entitled *Once a Week*. This is followed by a story by Charles Reade (illustrated by an engraving), extracted from the same source as the above, but no credit given. On the third page is an article called "Snakes and their Prey," neither author nor source being acknowledged; the former is Arthur Clarence and the latter *Once a Week*. On the tenth page is an illustrated article from the same source, by G. W. Dasent; it is called "Audun and his White Bear," but both author and source are, as usual, ignored. Then comes "An Evening at a Milan Café," which is from *All the Year Round*, conducted by Charles Dickens; no credit given, but the title is changed, the original one being "Viva L'Italia!" and the first sixteen lines are omitted. These two articles make two pages of the *Weekly*, less about one-third of a column. Then there is "A Tale of Two Cities," by Mr. Dickens, for which we are happy to say Messrs. Harpers do pay.

Out of nine articles in the first number of *Once a Week*, four are transferred to the *Weekly's* columns. We simply say that this is not fair play to our English cousins, and an American "civilizer" should be far above it.

In an article which we have taken from *Once a Week* we are only too happy to give credit to the author and source, because we think that both deserve popularity, and we have too much respect for ourselves to gain a reputation on what another has written.

VERY IMPORTANT DECISION.

[Telegraphic despatch to the Associated Press.]

BALTIMORE, Wednesday, July 20, 1859.

In the case of Horace H. Day et al. agt. Stellman, et al., which lately occupied the court here for two weeks, his honor, Judge Giles, this morning, rendered, at the close of a very able opinion, a decision in favor of Mr. Day on all the points presented, holding that, under his agreements with Goodyear, Mr. Day has an exclusive monopoly of elastic goods containing vulcanized rubber. A perpetual injunction was granted. Some fifteen other suits were depending here upon this decision, in all of which perpetual injunction will issue.

[This is one of the cases in which the Judson party, who claim title to the Goodyear patent under a grant prior to Day's, did not appear by counsel, so it will be perceived that this only affects the question between Day and certain alleged infringers of the Goodyear patent within the District of Maryland, without establishing any facts affecting the rights of either Judson or Day to their title under the patent.—Eds.]

PHOTOGRAPHIC BANK NOTE.—A Liverpool (England) paper says:—A curious circumstance has just happened to M. Aguda, whose talent in photography has given him a European celebrity. He laid a wager that he would so exactly imitate a French bank note that the difference should not be perceptible. By the time appointed the note was ready, and laid side by side with the original upon his desk. Judge, jury, all were ready to seize the smallest indication which should lead them into the right guess. The gentleman who had laid the wager took both notes in his hand to examine them in the strong light from the window, by some accident he changed or shuffled them from one hand to the other, and when he returned them to the desk, neither M. Aguda himself nor any one of the company could tell which was the false note and which the true. There they lie still—two thousand franc notes—and all connoisseurs are invited to give an opinion. Needless to say that the Banque de France has sent its most expert judges, but without effect.