

**SIX LECTURES INTRODUCTORY TO
THE PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS OF
CICERO, WITH SOME EXPLANATORY
NOTES ON THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF
THE ACADEMICA AND DE FINIBUS**

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Six lectures introductory to the philosophical writings of Cicero, with some explanatory notes on the subject-matter of the *Academica* and *De finibus* by T. W. Levin

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SIX LECTURES

INTRODUCTORY TO

THE PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS OF CICERO;

WITH

SOME EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE SUBJECT-MATTER
OF THE ACADEMICA AND DE FINIBUS.

BY

Miller
T. W. LEVIN, M.A.

ST CATHARINE'S COLLEGE,
INTER-COLLEGIATE LECTURER ON LOGIC AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Facile etiam absentibus nobis veritas se ipsa defendet."



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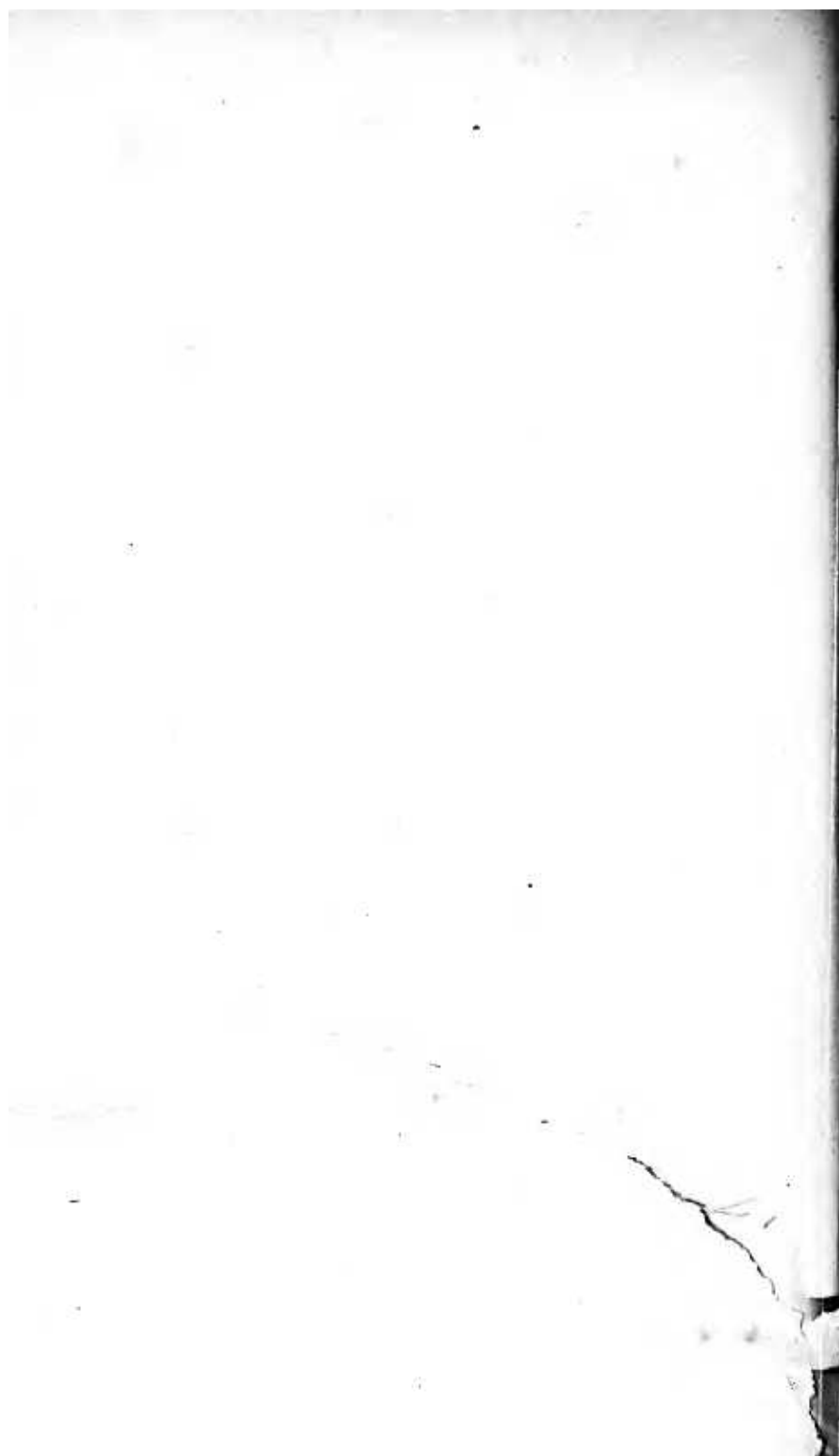
WITH THE HOPE THAT
THE FOLLOWING LECTURES
MAY TO SOME SLIGHT EXTENT
AID IN REVIVING AN INTEREST IN SPECULATIVE SUBJECTS
AMONG THE STUDENTS OF THIS UNIVERSITY,

THE AUTHOR,
BY PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBES THEM
TO THE
REV. W. H. THOMPSON, D.D.
MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
AND LATE REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK.

CAMBRIDGE,
October, 1871

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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"Non enim hominum interita sententia quoque occidunt: sed in eam auctoris fortasse desiderant."

§ a. THE general object of these Lectures is to familiarize you with the distinctive spirit which pervades and informs the later manifestations of Greek speculative opinion. The character we shall there find exhibited was undoubtedly impressed by Pyrrho the Eliensic philosopher, diffused by the writings of Timon the Phliasian, and adopted by the representative men of the later Academy. Yet, influential as the teaching of Pyrrho was, the real nature and tendency of his doctrines have been strangely overlooked or misunderstood by most writers. To his figure has never yet been assigned its proper niche in the gallery of history. We shall therefore endeavour, if possible, to remedy this lack of just appreciation by making the aims and effects of Pyrrhonism one of the chief subjects of our enquiry. Another point we shall also consider is, the real extent to which the special doctrines of Pyrrho were entertained by the leaders of the so-called New Academy. This has always been a vexed question with historians, and one indeed which

there is not much prospect of satisfactorily determining. Further, we shall attempt to present to you in as clear a light as possible, that problem which formed the centre of discussion between the Stoics and Academicians, and which is equally conspicuous in modern Metaphysics, namely, the nature and reality of the phenomena of perception. Some previous acquaintance with these subjects will, I hope, give the philosophical writings of Cicero a higher degree of interest for you than they have perchance hitherto possessed, since it is somewhat difficult for those not habituated to the atmosphere in which Cicero's characters think and speak, to follow their arguments or understand their allusions.

It is our purpose then to examine a portion of the history of Greek Philosophy comprised within the last three centuries before the commencement of the Christian era¹. This is a period which perhaps has not commanded either the attention of historians², or the interest of students to the same degree as the age preceding, when Greek thought attained its highest development in the hands of Plato and

¹ We may consider the period before us to have commenced with Pyrrho, and closed with Cicero. The exact date of Pyrrho is uncertain, but he is known to have accompanied Alexander the Great on his Indian campaign. (Diogenes Laertius, ix. 61. 58.)

² Professor Maurice calls this period, "the less of Greek philosophy," and favours it accordingly with a very brief notice. *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, Part I. chap. vi. Liv. xv. sec. iv. Degerando remarks on the slight interest historians have taken in this part of Greek philosophy: "On est surpris de voir que la nouvelle Académie n'ait pas obtenu en général des historiens toute l'attention qu'elle méritait. Brucker, qui a consacré un livre entier à la philosophie Antédiluvienne, et de longs chapitres à des philosophes sans importance, accorde à peine quelques lignes à Philon et à Antiochus, quelque pages à Arcésilas et à Carnéade. On peut cependant consulter avec fruit l'*Académie* de Pierre de Valentia. Foucher: *Histoire des Académiciens* (Paris, 1690). De *philosophiâ Academicâ* (Paris, 1792). On trouve dans les *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Berlin* en 1748, une dissertation sur Clitomache, et dans ceux de l'Académie des Inscriptions la dissertation de

Aristotle; or as that succeeding, when the once brilliant flame of Athenian speculation flickered with the uncertain light of Alexandrian mysticism, before its final extinction in the obscurity of the dark ages. A careful consideration of the course of Greek thought during this period, may, I think, reveal to us many points of interest, which will render it worthy of minute investigation,—which may discover for it a character of its own, too marked to be overlooked by the historian of the development of human opinion,—and may show that it involves issues too important to be neglected by the critic of later systems of philosophy. Every event in general history should be viewed in connection with the circumstances which preceded and caused it, with those which accompanied and determined it, and with those which followed and resulted from it. So, in recording the successive phases of human opinion, which are the events in a history of philosophy, we must consider them with reference to preceding speculations, to those contemporaneous with them,

Gantier de Sibert." *Histoire comparée des Systèmes de Philosophie*," Tome III. p. 110 (note). To these works of the Academy we may add the following, which profess to treat directly of the Pyrrhonian philosophy: *Dissert. de Philosophia Pyrrhonia* (Jac. Arrhenii, Upsal, 1708); *Dissert. de notione ac indole scepticismi, nominatim Pyrrhonismi* (Jo. Gottl. Munch, Altdorf, 1796); *Dissert. de Epoche Pyrrhonis* (God. Flouquet, Tübingen, 1758); *Diss. Adumbratio questionis: an Pyrrhonis doctrina omnia tollatur virtus* (Ch. Vit. Kindervater, Leipzig, 1789); *Examen du Pyrrhonisme* (M. Crousaz). This book is, however, more a consideration of the results than the principles of Pyrrhonism, and is in fact little more than an attack on M. Bayle. Bishop Huel's *Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain* is a good introduction to the subject, although it is encumbered with the false notion of perception through representative images prevalent among philosophers up to the age of Reid. Perhaps the fundamental problems of early scepticism are most clearly stated by Herbart, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, 59. 173. Sextus Empiricus, who lived about the middle of the 3rd century A. D., wrote a voluminous treatise on the doctrines of Pyrrho and the Sceptics generally. The best edition is the Fabrician. Histories of Greek Philosophy by Brandis, Zeller, Schwegler and Lewes, are most accessible to English students.