

**SMALL BOOKS ON GREAT
SUBJECTS. A BRIEF VIEW OF
GREEK PHILOSOPHY UP TO
THE AGE OF PERICLES, NO. V**

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Small Books on Great Subjects. A brief view of Greek philosophy up to the age of Pericles, No. V
by Caroline Frances Cornwallis

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CAROLINE FRANCES CORNWALLIS

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EDITED BY A FEW WELL WISHERS

TO KNOWLEDGE.



N^o. V.



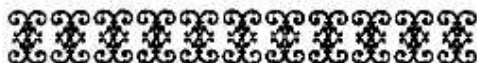
O vite philosopha dux! O virtutis indagatrix, expul-
trixque vitiorum! quid non modo nos, sed omnino vita
hominum sine te esse potuisset? Tu urbes peperisti; tu
dissipatos homines in societatem vite convocasti: tu eos
inter se primò domicilia, deinde conjugia, tum literarum
et vocum communione junxisti: tu inventrix legum, tu
magistra morum et discipline fuisti. Ad te confugimus:
a te opem petimus; tibi nos, ut antea magna ex parte, sic
nunc penitus totosque tradimus. Est autem unus dies bene
et ex preceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati antepo-
nendus. Cujus igitur potius opibus utamur, quam tuis?
que et vite tranquillitatem largita nobis es, et terrorem
morti sustulisti.—*Cic. Tus. Quest. lib. v. c. 2.*

A BRIEF
VIEW OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY
UP TO THE AGE OF
PERICLES.



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WILLIAM PICKERING.

1844.



INTRODUCTION.

NEARLY three years ago a small volume crept into print entitled "Philosophical Theories and Philosophical Experience by a Pariah." It purported to be, and was, the result of the deep communings with unseen things which suffering had produced in one who believed in a God, and as a consequence of that faith believed that in *whatever he permitted* even, there must be latent good; and, therefore, resolved to seek, and hoped to find it. At that time two only were privy to the publication; the Thinker, and the Friend who edited those thoughts because they were his own also; and who, possessing the sinews of—printing—determined that they should no longer form the mere private solace of one or two.

An unexpected success attended the experiment: the philosophy propounded was approved; its applicability to all the great purposes of life was acknowledged; and, very shortly after, a society was formed for the purpose of editing

more works of the same kind ; in which sound views of science, and great philosophical principles should be clearly and shortly brought forward, for the benefit of those who had neither time nor inclination to seek them in more voluminous works. Since that time three more tracts have been ushered into the world under the auspices of this society :—the Theories have gained publicity in the lecture room of the Royal Institution, and have found favour in the sight both of philosophers and divines. Physiologists of no mean fame have listened and praised ; and among those whom our age looks up to as great in science, many have bestowed so liberal a share of commendation as to outgo the most sanguine hopes of the friends who first associated themselves for a purpose which they thought a good one, but of whose success they were uncertain.

This state of things has put an end to the dual existence of the Pariah, and the Theorist is now but one among many pledged to contribute to the common stock ; and he knows not how he can do so better than by presenting as his quota, a short view of a subject which has hitherto slumbered in ponderous folios and quartos, or in fearful ranges of octavo volumes

clad in one livery, which put a man's reading courage to the test, and justify him in calling himself bold who takes down the first volume. Horace's warning of the danger that whilst avoiding the Scylla, lengthiness, we may fall into the Charybdis, obscurity, will doubtless occur to the ungentle reader, for times have changed since worthy authors addressed their intended victims as *gentle*,—the Theorist can only answer to the thought, that he hopes to steer his bark safely between the two. If furthermore, any of these ungentle personages should wonder why so old a subject as Greek philosophy should be brought forward; he answers, that though we owe the chief of our scientific acquirements to the spirit of inquiry which the literature of Greece awoke, when Europe was slumbering in contented darkness; few are aware of how much that literature has done for us; and he wishes to lead his countrymen, and countrywomen too, to do it more justice. The simple monk who complained of the Greek tongue, and especially of "the book called the New Testament," in that language, as a "pestilent invention;"—and the military despot who forbid it to be taught in his schools, knew it better than we do: they feared it; for it is

the language of the free man, whose mind brooks shackles as ill as his body. We who have drunk at its pure fountain, go on our way refreshed, but ungratefully forget whence we obtained the invigorating draught; and too often imagine that we exalt Christianity by detracting from the merits of the great men of antiquity, "who having not the law, were a law unto themselves;" and who, if the sun of the Gospel had not yet risen upon the earth, at least pointed to its dawning. Clement of Alexandria, whom we must allow to have been a competent judge of such matters, explicitly says, "Philosophy was needful to the Greeks before the coming of the Lord, for the purifying of their lives,* and even now it is useful to piety; being a kind of rudimentary teaching for those who upon conviction receive the faith." "For," he adds a little farther on, "philosophy to the Greeks, was what the law was to the Hebrews, a school-master to bring men to Christ."†

It is strange that with such testimony before us, and with many of the works of that age in our hands also, we should have been so gene-

* εις δικαιοσυνην.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. c. 5.