but also took the lead in fashioning the style of their time. Their influence in these respects was weighty and important. Whereas when sophistry began prose composition was hardly practised in central Greece, the sophists were still the leaders in literature and oratory when Plato wrote the *Republic*, and they had hardly lost their position when Demosthenes delivered the *Philippics*. In fact, it is not too much to say that it was the sophists who provided those great masters with their consummate instrument, and it detracts but little from the merit of the makers if they were themselves unable to draw from it its finer tones.

The relation of sophistry to philosophy was throughout one of pronounced hostility. From the days of Protagoras, when this hostility was triumphant and contemptuous, to the days of Isocrates, when it was jealous and bitter, the sophists were declared and consistent sceptics. But, although Protagoras and Gorgias had examined the teaching of their predecessors so far as to satisfy themselves of its futility and to draw the sceptical inference, their study of the great problem of the day was preliminary to their sophistry rather than a part of it; and, as the overthrow of philosophy was complete and the attractions of sophistry were all-powerful, the question, "What is knowledge?" ceased for a time to claim or to receive attention. There is then no such thing as a "sophistical theory of knowledge." Similarly, the recognition of a "sophistical ethic" is, to say the least, misleading. It may have been that the sophists' preference of seeming to reality, of success to truth, had a mischievous effect upon the morality of the time; but it is clear that they had no common theory of ethics, and there is no warrant for the assumption that a sophist, as such, specially interested himself in ethical questions. When Protagoras asserted "civic excellence" or "virtue" to be the end of education, he neither expressed nor implied a theory of morality. Prodicus in his platitudes reflected the customary morality of the time. Gorgias said plainly that he did not teach "virtue." If Hippias, Polus, and Thrasymachus defied conventional morality, they did so independently of one another, and in this, as in other matters, they were disputants maintaining paradoxical theses, rather than thinkers announcing heretical convictions. The morality of Isocrates bore a certain resemblance to that of Socrates. In short, the attitude of the sophists towards inquiry in general precluded them, collectively and individually, from attachment to any particular theory. Yet among the so-called sophists there were two who had philosophical leanings, as appears in their willingness to be called by the title of philosopher. First, Socrates, whilst he conceived that the physicists had mistaken the field of inquiry, absolute truth being unattainable, maintained, as has been seen, that one opinion was better than another, and that consistency of opinion, resulting in consistency of action, was the end which the human intellect properly proposes to itself. Hence, though an agnostic, he was not unwilling to be called a philosopher, in so far as he pursued such truth as was attainable by man. Secondly, when sophistry had begun to fall into contempt, the political rhetorician Isocrates claimed for himself the time-honoured designation of philosopher, "herein," says Plato, "resembling some tinker, bald-pated and short of stature, who, having made money, knocks off his chains, goes to the bath, buys a new suit, and then takes advantage of the poverty and desolation of his master's daughter to urge upon her his odious addresses" (*Rep.*, vi. 495 E). It will be seen, however, that neither Socrates nor Isocrates was philosopher in any strict sense of the word, the speculative aims of physicists and metaphysicians being foreign to the practical theories both of the one and of the other.

As for the classification of sophistical methods, so for their criticism, the testimony of Plato is all-important. It may be conjectured that, when he emerged from the purely Socratic phase of his earlier years, Plato gave himself to the study of contemporary methods of education and to the elaboration of an educational system of his own, and that it was in this way that he came to the metaphysical speculations of his maturity. It may be imagined further that, when he established himself at the Academy, his first care was to draw up a scheme of education, including arithmetic, geometry (plane and solid), astronomy, harmonics, and dialectic, and that it was not until he had arranged for the carrying out of this programme that he devoted himself to the special functions of professor of philosophy. However this may be, we find amongst his writings,—intermediate, as it would seem, between the Socratic conversations of his first period of literary activity and the metaphysical disquisitions of a later time,—a series of dialogues which, however varied their ostensible subjects, agree in having a direct bearing upon education. Thus the *Protagoras* brings the educational theory of Protagoras and the sophists of culture face to face with the educational theory of Socrates, so as to expose the limitations of both; the *Gorgias* deals with the moral aspect of the teachings of the forensic rhetorician Gorgias and the political rhetorician Isocrates, and the intellectual aspect of their respective theories of education is handled in the *Phædrus*; the *Meno* on the one hand exhibits the strength and the weakness of the teaching of Socrates, and on the other brings into view the makeshift method of those who, despising systematic teaching, regarded the practical politician as the true educator; the *Euthydemus* has for its subject the eristical method; finally, having in these dialogues characterized the current theories of education, Plato proceeds in the *Republic* to develop an original scheme. Plato's criticisms of the sophists are then, in the opinion of the present writer, no mere *obiter dicta*, introduced for purposes of literary adornment or dramatic effect, but rather the expressions of profound and reasoned convictions, and, as such, entitled at any rate to respect. For the details of Plato's critique, the reader should go, not to the summaries of commentators, but to the dialogues themselves. In this place it is sufficient to say that, while Plato accounts no education satisfactory which has not knowledge for its basis, he emphatically prefers the scepticism of Socrates, which, despairing of knowledge, seeks right opinion, to the scepticism of the sophists, which, despairing of knowledge, abandons the attempt to better existing beliefs.

(3) *The Theory of Grote.*—The post-Platonic historians and critics, who, while they knew the earlier sophistry only through tradition, were eye-witnesses of the sophistry of the decadence, were more alive to the faults than to the virtues of the movement. Overlooking the differences which separated the humanists from the eristics, and both of these from the rhetoricians, and taking no account of Socrates, whom they regarded as a philosopher, they forgot the services which Protagoras and Prodicus, Gorgias and Isocrates, had rendered to education and to literature, and included the whole profession in an indiscriminate and contemptuous censure. This prejudice, establishing itself in familiar speech, has descended from antiquity to modern times, colouring, when it does not distort, the narratives of biographers and the criticisms of commentators. "The sophists," says Grote, "are spoken of as a new class of men, or sometimes in language which implies a new doctrinal sect or school, as if they then sprang up in Greece for the first time—ostentatious impostors, flattering and duping the rich youth for their own personal gain, undermining the morality of Athens, public and private, and encouraging their pupils to the unscrupulous prosecution of ambition and cupidity. They are even affirmed to have succeeded in corrupting the general morality, so that Athens had become miserably degenerated and vicious in the latter years of the Peloponnesian War, as compared with what she was in the time of Miltiades and Aristeides;" and, although amongst the pre-Grotian scholars there were some who saw as clearly as Grote himself that "the sophists are a much-calumniated race" (G. H. Lewes), it is certain that historians of philosophy, and editors of Plato, especially the "acumen plumbeum Stallbaumii," had given ample occasion for the energetic protest contained in the famous sixty-seventh chapter of Grote's *History of Greece*. Amongst the many merits of that admirable

scholar, it is one of the greatest that he has laid "the fiend called *die Sophistik*," that is to say, the theory that sophistry was an organized conspiracy against law and morals. Nevertheless, in this matter he is always an advocate; and it may be thought that, while he successfully disposes of the current slander, his description of his clients needs correction in some important particulars. Hence the following paragraphs, while they will resume and affirm his principal results, will qualify and impugn some of his positions.

In so far as he is critical, Grote leaves little to be desired. That the persons styled sophists "were not a sect or school, with common doctrines or method," is clear. Common doctrine, that is to say, common doctrine of a positive sort, they could not have, because, being sceptics, they had nothing which could be called positive doctrine; while there was a period when even their scepticism was in no wise distinctive, because they shared it with all or nearly all their contemporaries. Neither were they united by a common educational method, the end and the instruments of education being diversely conceived by Protagoras, Gorgias, and Isocrates, to say nothing of the wider differences which separate these three from the eristics, and all the four normal types from the abnormal type represented by Socrates.

Again, it is certain that the theoretical and practical morality of the sophists, regarded as a class, was "neither above nor below the standard of the age." The taking of fees, the pride of professional success, and the teaching of rhetoric are no proofs either of conscious charlatanism or of ingrained depravity. Indeed, we have evidence of sound, if conventional, principle in Prodicus's apologue of the "Choice of Heracles," and of honourable, though eccentric, practice in the story of Protagoras's treatment of defaulting pupils. But, above all, it is antecedently certain that defection from the ordinary standard of morality would have precluded the success which the sophists unquestionably sought and won. In fact, public opinion made the morality of the sophists, rather than the sophists the morality of public opinion. Hence, even if we demur to the judgment of Grote that "Athens at the close of the Peloponnesian War was not more corrupt than Athens in the days of Miltiades and Aristeides," we shall not "consider the sophists as the corruptors of Athenian morality," but rather with Plato lay the blame upon society itself, which, "in popular meetings, law-courts, theatres, armies, and other great gatherings, with uproarious censure and clamorous applause" (*Rep.*, vi. 492), educates young and old, and fashions them according to its pleasure.

Nor can we regard "Plato and his followers as the authorized teachers of the Greek nation and the sophists as the dissenters." On the contrary, the sophists were in quiet possession of the field when Plato, returning to Athens, opened the rival school of the Academy; and, while their teaching in all respects accommodated itself to current opinion, his, in many matters, ran directly counter to it.

But if thus far Grote's protest against prevalent assumptions carries an immediate and unhesitating conviction, it may be doubted whether his positive statement can be accounted final. "The appearance of the sophists," he says, "was no new fact. . . . . The paid teachers—whom modern writers set down as the sophists, and denounce as the modern pestilence of their age—were not distinguished in any marked or generic way from their predecessors." Now it is true that before 447 B.C., besides the teachers of writing, gymnastic, and music, to whom the young Greek resorted for elementary instruction, there were artists and artisans who not only practised their crafts but also communicated them to apprentices and pupils, and that accordingly the Platonic Protagoras recognizes in the gymnast Iccus, the physician Herodicus, and the musicians Agathocles and Pythoclides forerunners of the sophists. But the forerunners of the sophists are not to be confounded with the sophists themselves, and the difference between them is not far to seek. Though some of those who resorted to the teachers of rudiments and the artists derived from them such substitute for "higher education" as was before 447 generally obtainable, it was only incidentally that the teachers of rudiments and the artists communicated anything which could be called by that name. Contrariwise, the sophists were always and essentially professors of the higher education; and, although in process of time specialization assimilated sophistry to the arts, at the outset at any rate, its declared aim—the cultivation of the civic character—sufficiently distinguished sophistical education both from rudimentary instruction and from artistic training. It is true too that in some of the colonies philosophy had busied itself with higher education; but here again the forerunners of the sophists are easily distinguished from the sophists, since the sophists condemned, not only the scientific speculations of their predecessors, but also their philosophical aims, and offered to the Greek world a new employment for leisure, a new intellectual ambition.

Nor is it altogether correct to say that "the persons styled sophists had no principles common to them all and distinguishing them from others." Various as were the phases through which sophistry passed between the middle of the 5th century and the middle of the 4th, the sophists—Socrates himself being no exception—had in their declared antagonism to philosophy a common characteristic; and, if in the interval, philosophical speculation being temporarily suspended, scepticism ceased for the time to be peculiar, at the outset, when Protagoras and Gorgias broke with the physicists, and in the sequel, when Plato raised the cry of "back to Parmenides," this common characteristic was distinctive.

Further, it may be doubted whether Grote is sufficiently careful to distinguish between the charges brought against the sophists personally and the criticism of their educational methods. When the sophists are represented as conscious impostors who "poisoned and demoralized by corrupt teaching the Athenian moral character," he has, as has been seen, an easy and complete reply. But the question still remains—Was the education provided by Protagoras, by Gorgias, by Isocrates, by the eristics, and by Socrates good, bad, or indifferent? And, though the modern critic will not be prepared with Plato to deny the name of education to all teaching which is not based upon an ontology, it may nevertheless be thought that normal sophistry—as opposed to the sophistry of Socrates—was in various degrees unsatisfactory, in so far as it tacitly or confessedly ignored the "material" element of exposition or reasoning.

And if Grote overlooks important agreements he seems also to understate important differences. Regarding Protagoras, Gorgias, and Isocrates as types of one and the same sophistry (pp. 487, 493, 495, 499, 544, 2d edition), and neglecting as slander or exaggeration all the evidence in regard to the sophistry of eristic (p. 540), he conceives that the sophists undertook "to educate young men so as to make them better qualified for statesmen or ministers," and that "that which stood most prominent in the teaching of Gorgias and the other sophists was, that they cultivated and improved the powers of public speaking in their pupils." Excellent as a statement of the aim and method of Isocrates, and tolerable as a statement of those of Gorgias, these phrases are inexact if applied to

Protagoras, who, making "civic virtue" his aim, regarded statesmanship and administration as parts of "civic virtue," and consequently assigned to oratory no more than a subordinate place in his programme, while to the eristics—whose existence is attested, not only by Plato, but also by Isocrates and Aristotle—and to Socrates—whom Grote himself accounts a sophist—the description is plainly and palpably inappropriate.

Grote's note about the eristical sophists is perhaps the least satisfactory part of his exposition. That "there were in Athens persons who abused the dialectical exercise for frivolous puzzles" he admits; but "to treat Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as samples of 'The Sophists' is," he continues, "altogether unwarrantable." It would seem then that, while he regards rhetoric as the function of normal sophistry, taking indifferently as his types Protagoras, Gorgias, and Isocrates, he accounts Euthydemus and Dionysodorus (together with Socrates) as sophists, but as sophists of an abnormal sort, who may therefore be neglected. Now this view is inconsistent with the evidence of Plato, who, in the *Sophist*, in his final and operative definition, gives prominence to the eristical element, and plainly accounts it the main characteristic, not indeed of the sophistry of the 5th century, but of the sophistry of the 4th. It must be presumed then that, in virtue of his general suspicions of the Platonic testimony, Grote in this matter leaves the *Sophist* out of account. There is, however, another theory of the significance of Plato's allusions to eristical sophistry, that of Prof. H. Sidgwick, whose brilliant defence of Grote is an indispensable supplement to the original document. Giving a hearty general assent to Grote's theory, Sidgwick nevertheless introduces qualifications similar to some of those which are suggested in this article. In particular he allows that "there was at any rate enough of charlatanism in Protagoras and Hippias to prevent any ardour for their historical reputation," that the sophists generally "had in their lifetime more success than they deserved," that it was "antagonism to their teaching which developed the genius of Socrates," and, above all, that, "in his anxiety to do justice to the Sophist, Grote laid more stress than is at all necessary on the partisanship of Plato." Now this last admission precludes Sidgwick from neglecting, as Grote had done the evidence of the *Euthydemus*. Pointing out that the sophists of that dialogue "profess εἰς ἀρετῆς ἐπιμέλειαν προτρέψαι by means of dialogue," that "they challenge the interlocutor ὑπέχειν λόγον," that "their examples are drawn from common objects and vulgar trades," that "they maintain positions that we know to have been held by Megarians and Cynics," he infers that "what we have here presented to us as 'sophistic' is neither more nor less than a caricature of the Megarian logic;" and further, on the ground that "the whole conception of Socrates and his effect on his contemporaries, as all authorities combine to represent it, requires us to assume that his manner of discourse was quite novel, that no one before had systematically attempted to show men their ignorance of what they believed themselves to know," he is "disposed to think that the art of disputation which is ascribed to sophists in the *Euthydemus* and the *Sophistes* (and exhaustively analysed by Aristotle in the περὶ Σοφιστικῶν Ἐλέγχων) originated entirely with Socrates, and that he is altogether responsible for the form at least of this second species of sophistic." To this theory the present writer is unable to subscribe. That Plato was not careful to distinguish the Megarians and the Cynics from the eristical sophists, and that the disputants of the 4th century affected some of the mannerisms of the greatest disputant of the 5th century, he willingly concedes. But he cannot allow either that the Megarians and the Cynics were the only eristics, or that eristical sophistry began with Socrates. Plainly this is not the place for a full examination of the question; yet it may be remarked—(1) that the previous history of the sophists of the *Euthydemus*, who had been professors of tactics (Xenophon, *Mem.*, iii. 1, 1), swordsmanship, and forensic argumentation, implies that they came to eristic, not from the sophistry of Socrates, but from that of the later humanists, polymaths of the type of Hippias; (2) that the fifth and sixth definitions of the *Sophist*, in which "that branch of eristic which brings pecuniary gain to the practitioner" is opposed to the "patience-trying, purgative elenchus" of Socrates, indicate that contemporary with Socrates there were eristics whose aims were not his; (3) that, whereas the sophist of the final definition "disputes, and teaches others to dispute, about things divine, cosmical, metaphysical, legal, political, technical, in fact, about all things," we have no ground for supposing that the Megarians and the Cynics used their eristic for any purpose except the defence of their logical heresies.

Nor is it possible to accept the statements that "the splendid genius, the lasting influence, and the reiterated polemics of Plato have stamped the name sophist upon the men against whom he wrote as if it were their recognized, legitimate, and peculiar designation," and "Plato not only stole the name out of general circulation, in order to fasten it specially upon his opponents the paid teachers, but also connected with it express discreditable attributes which formed no part of its primitive and recognized meaning and were altogether distinct from, though grafted upon, the vague sentiment of dislike associated with it." That is to say, Grote supposes that for at least eight and forty years, from 447 to 399, the paid professors had no professional title; that, this period having elapsed, a youthful opponent succeeded in fastening an uncomplimentary title, not only upon the contemporary teachers, but also, retrospectively, upon their predecessors; and that, artfully enhancing the indignity of the title affixed, he thus obscured, perverted, and effaced the records and the memories of the past. Manifestly all three propositions are antecedently improbable. But more than this: whereas in the nomenclature of Plato's contemporaries Protagoras, Gorgias, Socrates, Dionysodorus, and Isocrates were all of them sophists, Plato himself in his careful investigation summarized above limits the meaning of the term so that it shall include the humanists and the eristics only. Now, if his use of the term was stricter than the customary use, he can hardly be held answerable for the latter.

Nor is Grote altogether just in his account of Plato's attitude towards the several sophists, or altogether judicious in his appreciation of Plato's testimony. However contemptuous in his portraiture of Hippias and Dionysodorus, however severe in his polemic against Isocrates, Plato regards Protagoras with admiration and Gorgias with respect. While he emphasizes in the later sophists the consequences of the fundamental error of sophistry,—its indifference to truth,—he does honour to the genius and the originality of the leaders of the movement. Indeed, the author of this article finds in the writings of Plato a grave and discriminating study of the several forms of sophistry, but no trace whatsoever of that blind hostility which should warrant us in neglecting his clear and precise evidence.

In a word, the present writer agrees with Grote that the sophists were not a sect or school with common doctrine or method; that their theoretical and practical morality was neither above nor below that of their age, being, in fact, determined by it; and that Plato and his followers are not to be regarded as the authorized teachers of the Greek nation, nor the sophists as the dissenters, but *vice versa*. At the same time, in opposition to Grote, he maintains that the appearance of the sophists marked a new departure, in so far as they were the first professors of "higher education" as such; that they agreed in the rejection of "philosophy"; that the education which they severally gave was open to criticism, inasmuch as, with the exception of Socrates, they attached too much importance to the form, too little to the matter, of their discourses and arguments; that humanism, rhetoric, politic, and disputation were characteristic, not of all sophists collectively, but of sections of the profession; that Plato was not the first to give a special meaning to the term "sophist" and to affix it upon the professors of education; and, finally, that Plato's evidence is in all essentials trustworthy.

Bibliography.—On the significance of the sophistical movement, see E. Zeller, *Philosophie d. Griechen*, 4th ed., Leipsic, 1876, i. 932–1041 (*Presocratic Philosophy*, London, 1881, ii. 394–516); G. Grote, *History of Greece*, London, 1851, &c., ch. lxvii.; E. M. Cope, "On the Sophists," and "On the Sophistical Rhetoric," in *Jour. Class. and Sacr. Philol.*, Cambridge, ii. 1855, and iii. 1857, an erudite but inconclusive reply to Grote; H. Sidgwick, "The Sophists," in *Jour. of Philol.*, Cambridge, iv. 1872, and v. 1874, a brilliant defence of Grote; A. W. Benn, *The Greek Philosophers*, London, 1882, i. 53–107. Compare ETHICS, vol. viii. pp. 576–577. For lists of treatises upon the life and teaching of particular sophists, see Ueberweg, *Grundriss d. Gesch. d. Philos.*, i. §§ 27–32 (*History of Philosophy*, London, 1880). On the later use of the term "sophist," see RHETORIC. (H. JA.)

SOPHOCLES, the most perfect, and next to Æschylus the greatest, of Greek tragic poets, was born 495 B.C. and died 406 B.C. As in the case of other Athenian celebrities, various particulars of his life are handed down, few of which, however, deserve much attention, even the reports attributed to contemporaries being mostly trivial if not puerile. He is known to have reached old age, and his career as a dramatist is believed to have extended over more than sixty years (468–406). His father's name was Sophillus, of the deme Colonus Hippius, the aristocratic quarter, where the Government of the Four Hundred was afterwards constituted. The family burial-place is said by the anonymous biographer to have been ten stadia from the city, on the Decelean Way. These facts run counter to the tradition, which seems to have been already discredited by Alexandrian critics, that Sophillus was an artisan. The date assigned for the poet's birth is in accordance with the tale that young Sophocles, then a pupil of the musician Lamprus, was chosen to lead the chorus of boys (ἠϊθέων λεκτοί, *Œd. Tyr.*, 18) in the celebration of the victory of Salamis (480 B.C.). The time of his death is fixed by the allusions to it in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes and in the *Muses*, a lost play of Phrynichus, the comic poet, which were both produced in 405 B.C., shortly before the capture of the city. And the legend which implies that Lysander allowed him funeral honours is one of those which, like the story of Alexander and Pindar's house at Thebes, we can at least wish to be founded on fact, though we should probably substitute Agis for Lysander. Apart from tragic victories, the event of Sophocles's life most fully authenticated is his appointment at the age of fifty-five as one of the generals who served with Pericles in the Samian War (440–439 B.C.). Conjecture has been rife as to the possibility of his here improving acquaintance with Herodotus, whom he probably met some years earlier at Athens (see HERODOTUS). But the distich quoted by Plutarch—

> Ὠιδὴν Ἡροδότῳ τεῦξεν Σοφοκλῆς ἐτέων ὢν
> Πέντ' ἐπὶ πεντήκοντα—

is a slight ground on which to reject the stronger tradition according to which Herodotus was ere this established at Thurii; and the coincidences in their writings may be accounted for by their having drawn from a common source. The fact of Sophocles's generalship is the less surprising if taken in connexion with the interesting remark of his biographer (whose *Life*, though absent from the earliest MS. through some mischance, bears marks of an Alexandrian origin) that he took his full share of civic duties, and even served on foreign embassies:—Καλῶς τ' ἐπαιδεύθη καὶ ἐτράφη ἐν εὐπορίᾳ, καὶ ἐν πολιτείᾳ καὶ ἐν πρεσβείαις ἐξητάζετο. The large acquaintanceship which this implies, not only in Athens, but in Ionic cities generally, is a point of main importance in considering the opportunities of information at his command. And, if we credit this assertion, we are the more at liberty to doubt the other statement, though it is not incredible, that his appointment as general was due to the political wisdom of the *Antigone*.

The testimony borne by Aristophanes to the amiability of the poet's temper (ὁ δ' εὔκολος μὲν ἐνθάδ', εὔκολος δ' ἐκεῖ) agrees with the record of his biographer that he was universally beloved. And the anecdote recalled by Cephalus in Plato's *Republic*, that Sophocles welcomed the release from the passions which is brought by age, accords with the spirit of his famous Ode to Love in the *Antigone*. The Sophocles who, according to Aristotle (*Rhet.*, iii. 18), said of the Government of the Four Hundred that it was the better of two bad alternatives (probably the same who was one of the *probuli*) may or may not have been the poet. Other gossiping stories are hardly worth repeating,—as that Pericles rebuked his love of pleasure and thought him a bad general, though a good poet; that he humorously boasted of his own "generalship" in affairs of love; or that he said of Æschylus that he was often right without knowing it, and that Euripides represented men as they are, not as they ought to be. Such trifles rather reflect contemporary or subsequent impressions of a superficial kind than tell us anything about the man or the dramatist. The gibe of Aristophanes (*Pax*, 695 *sq.*), that Sophocles in his old age was become a very Simonides in his love for gain, may turn on some perversion of fact,[1] without being altogether fair to either poet. It is certainly irreconcilable with the remark (*Vit. Anon.*) that in spite of pressing invitations he refused to leave Athens for kings' courts. And the story of his indictment by his son Iophon for incompetence to manage his affairs,—to which Cicero has given some weight by quoting it in the *De Senectute*,—appears to be really traceable to Satyrus (*flor. c.* 200 B.C.), the same author who gave publicity to the most ridiculous of the various absurd accounts of the poet's death,—that his breath failed him for want of a pause in reading some passage of the *Antigone*. Satyrus is at least the sole authority for the defence of the aged poet, who, after reciting passages from the *Œd. Col.*, is supposed to have said to his accusers, "If I am Sophocles I am no dotard, and if I dote I am not Sophocles." On the other hand, we need not the testimony of biographers to assure us that he was devoted to Athens and renowned for piety. He is said to have been priest of the hero Alcon (or Halon) in his old age, and himself to have received divine honours after death.

That the duty of managing the actors as well as of training the chorus belonged to the author is well known. But did Æschylus act in his own plays? This certainly is implied in the tradition that Sophocles, because of the weakness of his voice, was the first poet who desisted from doing so. In his *Thamyras*, however, he is said to have performed on the lyre to admiration, and in his *Nausicaa* (perhaps as coryphæus) to have played gracefully the game of ball. Various minor improvements in decoration and stage carpentry are attributed to him,—whether truly or not who can tell? It is more interesting, if true, that he wrote his plays having certain actors in his eye; that he formed an association (θίασον) for the promotion of liberal culture; and that he was the first to introduce three actors on the stage.[2] It is asserted on the authority of Aristoxenus that Sophocles was also the first to employ Phrygian melodies. And it is easy to believe that *Aj.*, 693 *sq.*, *Trach.*, 205 *sq.*, were sung to Phrygian music, though there are strains in Æschylus (*e.g.*, *Choeph.*, 152 *sq.*, 423 *sq.*), which it is hard to distinguish essentially from these. Ancient critics had also noted his familiarity with Homer, especially with the *Odyssey*, his power of selection and of extracting an exquisite grace from all he touched (whence he was named the "Attic Bee"), his mingled felicity and boldness, and, above all, his subtle delineation of human nature and feeling. They observed that the balanced proportions and fine articulation of his work are such that in a single half line or phrase he often conveys the impression of an entire character.

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[1] If any of Sophocles's elegies or odes were "pot-boilers," this might be due rather to his easy temper (εὐκολία) in yielding to a prevalent habit of the time than to any meanness (βαναυσία or γλισχρότης).

[2] If this was so, it must have been previous to the appearance of the Orestean trilogy.