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THE EARLY PHILOSOPHERS OF GREECE. With historical Introduction by Matthew Thompson McClure, and with translations by Richard Lattimore. New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1935. Pp. ix+218.

To the many devices, ranging from the scholarly through the pseudo-scientific to the mystic, that have been used to render the fragments of the early Greek philosophers intelligible, Professor McClure has added a suggestive variant, interpreting the fragments in terms of a theory of the continuity of history and speculating on the effects of race mixture and changing social conditions on philosophy. Philosophy, Professor McClure holds (and Plato's name appears conspicuously in the page), is concerned primarily with belief. He begins his inquiries into the foundations of Greek beliefs with an account of prehistoric racial movements by which to illustrate his theory that Greek genius was a product of race mixture. Plato's philosopher-king is a hybrid, Dorian by his warlike spirit, Ionian by his philosophic nature (p. 14); the Greek emphasis on a "gentle nature" is the product of Minoan admixture in their blood (p. 116). The transition from prehistoric considerations to Thales Professor McClure fills in with three essays on early beliefs concerning the soul, the world, and nature drawn from the works of Homer, Hesiod, and from the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries. The doctrines thus set forth serve excellently in the interpretation of many of the later fragments and in the establishment of a beginning-point for the continuity of history; the actual evolution is discussed partly in terms of changed social and political conditions, partly in terms of the breakdown of primitive cosmological and theological ideas by the progress of scientific analysis.

The first mode of analysis is pursued only sporadically. In the case of Anaximander the abandonment of primitive ideas is attributed in part to the rise of Ionian commerce and travel, and Ionian civilization is compared with that of the Renaissance (p. 73). In the case of Heraclitus the growth of democracy is added to the growth of industry and commerce, and the metaphysics of Heraclitus is presented as the construction of an aristocrat, inasmuch as distinctions are set up in nature, and fire is made the lord of all, whereas Empedocles was the champion of democracy and brought fire down to the level of air, earth, and water, so constructing a

“metaphysical democracy” (pp. 192-93, 157, and 174). This sociopolitical interpretation is rendered a little difficult by the fact that Professor McClure makes no attempt, beyond such pronouncements, to sketch the lives and times of the philosophers, and the reader is dependent for historical details on a brief chronological table (pp. 213-14). Moreover, in difficult cases no assistance is offered him; thus Anaxagoras, an older contemporary of Empedocles, though of different racial derivation, of noble birth, and resident for a part of his life in Athens, must have shared some of the social and economic conditions of the times with Empedocles. His infinite “seeds” would seem to be, if one may enter into the spirit of the analysis, democratic; but, on the other hand, his *Nous* has a function as aristocratic as the fire of Heraclitus, though scarcely more aristocratic than the love and strife of Empedocles.

In the course of stating the continuity of scientific thought Professor McClure is careful to caution his reader to bear in mind that observation played an important part in the origin of Greek science and that the analogies of early Greek science to modern science should not be pressed too far. It would be difficult to question either statement. Yet, with respect to the first, Professor McClure does not always choose happy means of substantiation; thus he repeats three times (pp. 69, 138, and 188) the statement of Theophrastus that Thales was led to his choice of water as first principle by “things that appear to sense,” without comment on the circumstance that scholars are generally agreed that this apparently historical statement is based on a passage in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (983 b 18) in which Aristotle offers his conjectures concerning the grounds, apparently unknown in his day, for Thales’ conclusion. With respect to the second, Professor McClure is so enamored of the doctrine of historical continuity that he finds it difficult to resist a great variety of analogies with doctrines much later than those which he treats: Proclus’ statement of the origin of mathematics is the earliest account of the origin of science that would be of interest to a pragmatist or an adherent of the economic interpretation of history (p. 65); Anaximander enunciated the theory of biological evolution, as well as the doctrines of adaptation to environment, survival of the fittest, and emergent evolution (pp. 72 and 78); the germ of scientific explanation in quantitative terms is in Anaximenes (p. 85); Xenophanes is the first humanist (p. 115); and modern philosophers are invoked on the emergence of any important doctrine, reaching a culmination when on three successive pages (pp. 182-84) Newton, Locke, Kant, Bacon, and Kepler are cited as illustrative instances in the exposition of Empedocles.

The treatment of the fragments and the doxographical materials varies

in the course of Professor McClure's book. In the first five chapters selections from the doxographical writers are used, but after Heraclitus they tend to disappear: Plato's statements about his predecessors are almost wholly ignored; Aristotle's testimony is still quoted concerning these later writers, but somewhat sparingly in view of the mass of available material; Theophrastus is quoted only once, Diogenes Laertius five times (indeed, one of the marks of Professor McClure's treatment is the comparative prominence and credit given to Diogenes, his treatment of the cosmology of Heraclitus being quoted in full as "by far the most trustworthy"), and Simplicius twice. The relatively late character of the sources quoted might be improved by the circumstance that the two passages from Simplicius (pp. 172 and 202) might borrow the authority of Theophrastus as might also the earlier reference to Simplicius on Anaximander (p. 73; cf. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, p. 477, frag. 3; p. 483, frag. 8; and p. 476, frag. 2, respectively). Almost no attempt is made, however, to appraise the relative credibility of sources separated by as much as a thousand years.

The translators of the fragments, in Professor McClure's book, faced by the difficult task of finding alternatives to the words of Fairbanks and Burnet, take the wise course of conforming for the most part to one or the other, introducing occasional new words or verbal transpositions; the changes that are made are for the most part slight but by no means consistently happy. The manner of variation may be illustrated by a series of fragments from Heraclitus in which the translator is following the lead of Burnet: "Time is a child playing draughts, the kingly power is a child's" (79 [Burnet]); "A lifetime is a child playing at draughts; the power of a king is a child's" (79 [Lattimore]); "I have sought for myself" (80[B.]); "I have sought myself out" (80 [L.]); "We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not" (81 [B.]); "We enter and do not enter the same rivers, we are and are not" (81 [L.]). Sometimes the change involves an erroneous connotation. Thus if a time element is intended in the substitution in fragment 85 of "Corpses should be cast out sooner than dung," for Burnet's "Corpses are more fit to be cast out than dung," the interpretation is unfaithful to the Greek (as is also the interpretation of frag. 103). Moreover, there are frequent unnoticed changes in the rendition of a single word, as when within two pages (pp. 67-68) the word ἀρχή is translated in three different ways ("beginning," "fundamental," "principle"), with no apparent advantage to the sense; indeed, "whereas the source of generation is the *beginning* of all things" is difficult to interpret unless Aristotle is explaining that "that from which they come to be is the *principle* of all things." (The translation from the *Metaphysics* from

which this passage is taken is rendered a little more cryptic by the fact that the phrase *διὰ τὸ πάντων τὰ σπέρματα τὴν φύσιν ὑγρὰν ἔχειν* is omitted and that "the moist" is said to spring from the moist when "the warm" is intended.) Again, since two translators, Dr. Lattimore and Mr. Daly, have been at work, the text will sometimes contain two translations of the same fragment which have little in common and which the unsuspecting reader might not recognize in their altered forms. Thus on page 114 Xenophanes is quoted: "No matter how accurately a man hit the mark of accomplished fact in what he says, nevertheless he has no knowledge, but opinion prevails in all," and on page 111, fragment 34, ". . . For no matter if he should happen to speak the perfect truth, yet he is not certain of it himself. But each man may have his own opinion." These are translations of the same lines though quoted, respectively, from Hippolytus and Sextus Empiricus. Passing over other differences, the second translator clearly follows Burnet in taking *πᾶσι* as masculine rather than neuter; it is not clear whether the first translator means that opinion prevails in all things or in all men. There are similar differences between the translations on page 112 and fragment 26, and on page 113 and fragment 25. Indeed, the author himself seems sometimes to have had Burnet in mind rather than the translations which appear in his book, as when (p. 136) he quotes "fragment 91b" of Heraclitus; Burnet divides fragment 91 into two parts, Lattimore does not. On other occasions the variation is more serious, as when *φύσις* is translated "coming to be" in fragment 8 of Empedocles without consideration of the long note in which Burnet (*Early Greek Philosophers* [4th ed.], p. 205, n. 4) argues very cogently that it must be rendered "substance" in this context. This difficulty, however, (as well as numerous difficulties which occur in interpreting the footnotes), can doubtless be explained by the fact that the translator apparently used the first or the second rather than a subsequent edition of Burnet. In the first two editions *φύσις* is rendered "coming into being," to be changed in the third as a consequence of Professor Lovejoy's criticism of the then current interpretation of the fragment. Apparently Diels also was consulted in an early edition. The edition, however, does not account for fragment 4 of Xenophanes (p. 108), which is a translation of Diels's paraphrase, not of the Greek, and should have been printed in brackets as are the paraphrases of fragments 13, 20, 21, etc. The balance for the translations, however, is somewhat restored by Mr. Daly's sensitive and poetic rendering of some of the fragments from Empedocles' *Purifications* (pp. 184-86).

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