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 cor- ruptors 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