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 ἀρετης ἐπιμέλειαv πρoτρέψαι* by means of dialogue,” that “they challenge the interlocutor *ὑπέχειv 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 Σοφιστικω 'Eλέγχωv*) 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 that “ 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 (*Presocratie 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 Saer. 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.