SCAVENGER’S DAUGHTER (corruption of Skevington’s or Skeffington’s Daughter), an instrument of torture in use during the 1 6th century in England. It was invented by Sir W. Skevington, lieutenant of the Tower in the reign of Henry VIII. It consisted of a wide iron hoop which by means of screws was tightened round the victim’s body until the blood was forced from the nose and ears, and sometimes even from the hands and feet.

SCENE (Fr. *scène,* Lat. *scaena,* Gr. *σκηνή,* a tent or booth, a stage or scene), a word of which the various applications, figur­ative or otherwise, are derived from its original meaning of the stage or platform in the Greek or Roman theatre together with the structure that formed the background. Thus “ scene ” was formerly used, as “ stage ” is to-day, of the actor’s profession or of dramatic art; and of the actual performance or representation on the stage, still surviving in such phrases as “ the scene opens ” or “ closes.” It is also applied, actually and figuratively, to the place where the action of a play or any series of events take place, and so of any episode or situation in a novel or other narrative or description of events; from this the transition to an excited or violent exhibition of feeling between two or more persons is easy.

Of the specific applications of the word to the drama the main examples are (1) to a division of the play, marked by the fall of the curtain, the “ scene ” being a subdivision of an “ act,” where the play is thus divided, or where there are no acts, of the divisions themselves; (2) to the material which forms the view of the place where the action is supposed to occur, that is, the painted cloths, slides and other apparatus, known as the “ scenery, ” a word which has thus been transferred to a view generally, the appearance of the feature of a natural landscape. Allied words are “ scena,” used only in music, of a composition consisting mainly of recitative with accompaniment, forming part of an opera or as an individual com­position; and "scenario,” a full outline of a play or opera, giving details of the acts, scenes, actors, situations, stage-business, &c.

SCENT, an odour or smell, particularly a fragrant liquid distilled from flowers, &c., used as a perfume (see PerFumery). The word should be properly spelled “ sent,” and is derived from the Mid. Eng. verb *senten,* to scent, to perceive by the sense of smell, Fr. *sentir.* Lat. *sentire,* perceive by the senses. The intrusive *c* appears in the 17th century, and is paralleled by the same in “ scythe ” for *sythe.* For the physical causes of the sensation caused by a scent see Smell, and for the anatomy of the organs concerned see Olfactory System.

**SCEPTICISM** *(σκέπτομαι,* I consider, reflect, hesitate, doubt), a term signifying etymologically a state of doubt or indecision in the face of mutually conflicting statements. It is implied, moreover, that this doubt is not merely a stage in the road to true knowledge, but rather the last result of investigation, the conclusion that truth or real knowledge is unattainable by man. Therefore, in general terms, scepticism may be summarily defined as a thorough-going impeachment of man’s power to know—a denial of the possibility of objective knowledge.

Trust, not distrust, is the primitive attitude of the mind. **I.** What is put before us, whether by the senses or by the statements of others, is instinctively accepted as a veracious report, till experience has proved the possi­bility of deception. In the history of philosophy affirmation precedes negation; dogmatism goes before scepticism. And this must be so, because the dogmatic systems are, as it were, the food of scepticism. Accordingly, we find that sceptical thought did not make its appearance till a succession of mutually inconsistent theories as to the nature of the real had suggested the possibility that they might all alike be false.

The Sophistic epoch of Greek philosophy was, in great part, such **a** negative reaction against the self-confident assertion of the nature-philosophies of the preceding age. Though scepticism as a definite school may be said to date only from the time of Pyrrho **(*q.v.*)** of Elis, the main currents of Sophistic thought were sceptical in the wider sense of that term. The Sophists *(q.υ.)* were the first in Greece to dissolve knowledge into individual and momentary opinion (Protagoras), or dialectically to deny the possibility of knowledge (Gorgias). In these two examples we see how the weapons forged by the

dogmatic philosophers to assist in the establishment of their own theses are sceptically turned against philosophy in general. As every attempt to rationalize nature implies a certain process of criticism and interpretation to which the data of sense are subjected, and in which they are, as it were, transcended, the antithesis of reason and sense is formulated early in the history of speculation. The opposition, being taken as absolute, implies the impeachment of the veracity of the senses in the interest of the rational truth proclaimed by the philosophers in question. Among the pre-Socratic nature-philosophers of Greece, Hera- clitus and the Eleatics are the chief representatives of this polemic. The diametrical opposition of the grounds on which the veracity of the senses is impugned by the two philosophies (see Heraclitus, Parmenides, Eleatic School) was in itself suggestive of sceptical reflection. Moreover, the arguments by which Heraclitus supported this theory of the universal flux are employed by Protagoras to undermine the possibility of objective truth, by dissolving all knowledge into the momentary sensation or persuasion of the individual. The idea of an objective flux, or law of change constituting the reality of things, is abandoned, and subjective points of sense alone remain—which is tanta­mount to eliminating the real from human knowledge.

Still more unequivocal was the sceptical nihilism expressed by Gorgias (*q.v.*) :—(1) nothing exists; (2) if anything existed, it would be unknowable; (3) if anything existed and were knowable, the knowledge of it could not be communicated. His arguments were drawn from the dialectic which the Eleatics had directed against the existence of the phenomenal world. But they are no longer used as indirect proofs of a universe of pure and unitary Being. The prominence given by most of the Sophists to rhetoric, their cultivation of a subjective readiness as the essential equipment for life, their substitution of persuasion for conviction, all mark the sceptical undertone of their teaching. This attitude of indifference to real knowledge passed in the younger and less reputable generation into a corroding moral scepticism which recognized no good but pleasure and no right but might.

The scientific impulse communicated by Socrates was sufficient to drive scepticism into the background during the great age of Greek philosophy (*i.e.* the hundred years preceding Aristotle’s death, 323 b.c.). The captious logic of the Megarian school (*q.v.*) was indeed in some cases closely related to sceptical results. The school has been considered with some truth to form a connecting link with the later scepticism, just as the contemporary Cynicism and Cyrenaicism may be held to be imperfect preludes to Stoicism and Epicureanism. The extreme nominalism of some of the Cynics also, who denied the possibility of any but identical judgments, must be similarly regarded as a solvent of knowledge. But with these insignificant exceptions it holds true that, after the sceptical wave marked by the Sophists, scepticism does not reappear till after the exhaus­tion of the Socratic impulse in Aristotle.

Scepticism, as a distinct school, begins with Pyrrho of Elis, who maintained that knowledge of things is impossible and that we must assume an attitude of reserve (έπoχή). The Pyrrhonists were consistent enough to extend their doubt even to their own principle of doubt. They thus attempted to make their scepticism universal, and to escape the reproach of basing it upon a fresh dogmatism. Mental imperturbability (άταραξία) was the result to be attained by cultivating such a frame of mind. The happiness or satisfaction of the individual was the end which dominated this scepticism as well as the contemporary systems of Stoicism and Epicureanism, and all three philosophies place it in tranquillity or self-centred indifference. It is men’s opinions or unwarranted judgments about things, say the sceptics, which betray them into desire, and painful effort and disappointment. From all this a man is delivered who abstains from judging one state to be preferable to another. But, as complete inactivity would have been synonymous with death, it appears to have been admitted that the sceptic, while retaining his consciousness of the complete uncertainty envelop­ing every step, might follow custom in the ordinary affairs of life.

The scepticism of the New Academy (more strictly of the Middle Academy, under Arcesilaus and Carneades) differed very little from that of the Pyrrhonists. The differences