*(a)* that nothing is, (*b*) that, if anything is, it cannot be known, (*c*) that, if anything is and can be known, it cannot be expressed in speech; and the summaries which have been preserved by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Math.* vii. 65-87) and by the author of the *De Melisso,* &c. (chs. 5, 6), show that, in defending these propositions, Gorgias availed himself of the arguments which Zeno had used to discredit the popular belief in the existence of the Many; in other words, that Gorgias turned the destructive logic of Zeno against the constructive ontology of Parmenides, thereby not only reducing Eleaticism to nothingness, but also, until such time as a better logic than that of Zeno should be provided, precluding all philosophical inquiry whatsoever. Thus, whereas the representatives of the three successions had continued to regard themselves as philosophers or seekers after truth, Protagoras and Gorgias, plainly acknowledging their defeat, withdrew from the ungrateful struggle.

Meagre as were the results which the earlier thinkers had obtained, the extinction of philosophy just at the time when the liberal arts became more technical and consequently less available as employments of leisure, threatened to leave a blank in Hellenic life. Accordingly Protagoras, while with the one hand he put away philosophy, with the other offered a substitute. Emphasizing the function of the teacher, which with the philo­sophers had been subordinate, and proclaiming the right end of intellectual endeavour to be, not “ truth” (άλή0αα) or “wisdom” (σοφία), which was unattainable, but “virtue” or “ excellence ” (άρβτή), he sought to communicate, not a theory of the universe, but an aptitude for civic life. “ The lesson which I have to teach,” Plato makes him say (*Prot.* 318 E), “ is prudence or good counsel, both in respect of domestic matters that the man may manage his household aright, and in respect of public affairs, that he may be thoroughly qualified to take part, both by deed and by word, in the business of the state. In other words, I profess to make men good citizens.” As instruments of education Protagoras used grammar, style, poetry and oratory. Thus, whereas hitherto the young Greek, having completed his elementary training in the schools of the 7pαμ∕xατtστ⅛s, the κι0apιστ⅛s, and the τratδoτpi0ηs, was left to prepare himself for his life’s work as best he might, by philo­sophical speculation, by artistic practice, or otherwise, one who passed from the elementary schools to the lecture-room of Protagoras received from him a “ higher education.” The programme was exclusively literary, but for the moment it enabled Protagoras to satisfy the demand which he had discovered and evoked. Wherever he went, his lecture-room was crowded with admiring pupils, whose homage filled his purse and enhanced his reputation.

After Protagoras the most prominent of the literary sophists was Prodicus of Ceos. Establishing himself at Athens, he taught “ virtue ” or “ excellence,” in the sense attached to the word by Protagoras, partly by means of literary subjects; partly in discourses upon practical ethics. It is plain that Prodicus was an affected pedant; yet his simple conventional morality found favour, and Plato (*Rep.* 600 C) couples him with Protagoras in his testimony to the popularity of the sophists and their teaching.

At Athens, the centre of the intellectual life of Greece, there was soon to be found a host of sophists; some of them strangers, others citizens; some of them bred under Protagoras and Prodicus, others self-taught. In the teaching of the sophists of this younger generation two points are observable. First, their independence of philosophy and the arts being assured, though they continued to regard “ civic excellence ” as their aim, it was no longer necessary for them to make the assertion of its claims a principal element in their exposition. Secondly, for the sake of novelty they extended their range, including scientific and technical subjects, but handling them, and teaching their pupils to handle them, in a popular way. In this stage of sophistry then, the sophist, though not a specialist, trenched upon the provinces of specialists; and accordingly Plato (*Prot.* 318 E) makes Protagoras pointedly refer to sophists who, “ when young men have made their escape from the arts, plunge them once more into technical study, and teach them such subjects as arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music.” The sophist of whom the Platonic Protagoras is here thinking was Hippias of Elis, who gave popular lectures, not only upon the four subjects just mentioned, but also upon grammar, mythology, family history, archaeology, Homerology and the education of youth. In this polymath we see at once the degradation of the sophistry of culture and the link which connects Protagoras and Prodicus with the eristics, who at a later period taught, not, like Hippias, all branches of learning, but a universally applicable method of disputation.

Meanwhile, Gorgias of Leontini, who, as has been seen, had studied and rejected the philosophy of western Greece, gave to sophistry a new direction by bringing to the mother country the technical study of rhetoric—especially forensic rhetoric (Plato, *Gorg.* 454 B; cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1354, b 26)—which study had begun in Sicily with Corax and Tisias nearly forty years before. Gorgias was already advanced in years and rich in honours when, in 427, he visited Athens as the head of an embassy sent to solicit aid against Syracuse. Received with acclamation, he spent the rest of his long life in central Greece, winning applause by the display of his oratorical gifts and acquiring wealth by the teaching of rhetoric. There is no evi­dence to show that at any period of his life he called himself a sophist; and, as Plato *{Gorg.* 449 A) makes him describe himself as a *pτγτωρi* it is reasonable to suppose that he preferred that title. That he should do so was only natural, since his position as a teacher of rhetoric was already secure when Protagoras made his first appearance in the character of a sophist; and, as Protagoras, Prodicus and the rest of the sophists of culture offered a comprehensive education, of which oratory formed only a part, whilst Gorgias made no pretence of teaching “ civic excellence ” (Plato, *Meno,* 95 C), and found a substitute for philosophy, not in literature generally, but in the professional study of rhetoric alone, it would have been convenient if the distinction between sophistry and rhetoric had been maintained. But though, as will be seen hereafter, these two sorts of educa­tion were sometimes distinguished, Gorgias and those who succeeded him as teachers of rhetoric, such as Thrasymachus of Chalcedon and Polus of Agrigentum, were commonly called by the title which Protagoras had assumed and brought into familiar use.

Rhetorical sophistry, as taught by Gorgias with special reference to the requirements of the law courts, led by an easy transition to political sophistry. During the century which had elapsed since the expulsion of the Peisistratids and the establish­ment of the democracy, the Athenian constitution had developed with a rapidity which produced an oligarchical reaction, and the discussion of constitutional principles and precedents, always familiar to the citizen of Athens, was thus abnormally stimulated. The Peloponnesian War, too, not only added a deeper interest to ordinary questions of policy, but also caused the relations of dissentient parties, of allied and belligerent states, of citizens and aliens, of bond and free, of Greeks and barbarians, to be eagerly debated in the light of present experience. It was only natural then that some of those who professed to prepare young Athenians for public life should give to their teaching a distinctively political direction ; and accordingly we find Isocrates recognizing teachers of politics, and discriminating them at once from those earlier sophists who gave popular instruction in the arts and from the contemporary eristics. To this class, that of the political sophists, may be assigned Lycophron, Alcidamas and Isocrates himself. For, though that celebrated personage would have liked to be called, not “ sophist ” but “ political philosopher,” and tried to fasten the name of “ sophist ” upon his opponents the Socratics, it is clear from his own statement that he was commonly ranked with the sophists, and that he had no claim, except on the score of superior popu­larity and success, to be dissociated from the other teachers of political rhetoric. It is true that he was not a political sophist of the vulgar type, that as a theorist he was honest and patriotic, and that, in addition to his fame as a teacher, he