

religious pretence, though from the same real motive of hostility to Pericles, that Pheidias was cast into prison, where he was allowed to die, if he was not actually poisoned. Diagoras of Melos was hunted with a more ferocious malice. The reward of a talent was offered to any one who would slay him; even two talents were offered to capture him alive. Yet it does not appear that he was guilty of any worse offence than a refusal to accept popular religious ideas with uncritical credulity; for that is all that is necessarily implied in the common description of him as an atheist.¹ These persecutions, it is scarcely necessary to be reminded, were followed, at the opening of the next century, by the sacrifice of Socrates to popular prejudices; and it was in the latter part of this century that Aristotle was very reluctantly obliged to exile himself from Athens in order, as he alleged, to prevent the Athenians from sinning against philosophy a second time. In fact it was in Athens during her most brilliant period, that the popular sentiment of Greece betrayed its fiercest hostility to any intellectual freedom in the domain of religion.

Those ancient persecutions may, indeed, perhaps be palliated as aiming, though very blindly, at a movement which might not unreasonably be attacked in some of its representatives. For every great intellectual movement is apt to gather into its ranks a crowd of undesirable followers who can but imperfectly interpret, if they do not wholly misinterpret, its real significance; and there is abundant evidence to prove that men of true philosophic spirit, like Socrates, were, not unnaturally at times, confounded with a host of mere pretenders who had caught little more than the language and outward show of philosophic culture. It was, in fact, during the Socratic period that one of the noblest names for a teacher that any language has ever employed—sophist, σοφιστής, literally one who makes wise—began to fall into that degraded use which has supplanted its original meaning. Even, therefore, with the lofty ideals of education

¹ ἄθεος. It should not be forgotten that this term was commonly applied at a later date to the early Christians.