

taking is one that requires great care, and is well worthy of a philosopher.

Strabo, the most famous geographer of ancient times, lived just at the beginning of our era. He was born at Amasea in Pontus, about sixty years before the birth of Christ, and died, probably at Rome, about twenty-five years after the birth of Christ,—that is, just as Christ was beginning his public ministry. He lived, therefore, during the reign at Rome of Julius Cæsar, Augustus, and Tiberius. His earliest writings were two historical works now lost. Plutarch calls him "the philosopher," and quotes his *Memoirs*. But his great work is his *Geography*. There had been Greek geographers before Strabo, and Eratosthenes is considered by some scholars an even greater geographer than Strabo; but Strabo's work is the most comprehensive that had been attempted up to his time, giving a survey of the whole world as then known. His work, as Humboldt remarked, "surpasses all the geographical writings of antiquity, both in grandeur of plan and in the abundance and variety of its materials." Strabo was a great traveller, although he had of course seen but a comparatively small portion of the regions he describes, and necessarily relies on other travellers and writers. He had a passionate love for Homer, as appears from the passage given in the present leaflet, and accepted fully the Homeric geography. Towards Herodotus, on the other hand, he is very unjust, and his slight regard for the accounts of Herodotus betrays him into mistakes. He refers to Cæsar's *Commentaries* once, and evidently made further use of them. He designed his work, he tells us, largely for the statesman; and his observations upon the people, productions, and political conditions of the different countries are therefore especially full.

Strabo's *Geography* consists of seventeen books. The first two form a general introduction, the next ten deal with Europe, the four following with Asia, and the last with Africa. His discussions, in his introduction, of the changes in the earth's surface effected by earthquakes and otherwise are praised by Sir Charles Lyell and others for the soundness of their geological theories. He denies the existence of Thule, making Ireland (Ierne), which he places north of Britain, the farthest land in that direction. He regards the Caspian Sea as opening into the Northern Ocean, here following Patrocles. Of Eastern Asia and Northern Africa of course he knows but little. He held the earth to be spherical, and placed in the centre of the universe. His illustrations of the spheroidal form of the earth are the same as in our own school geographies. The earth's circumference he makes 25,200 geographical miles. He gives directions for making a plane map of the world, as a globe of sufficient size is so cumbrous. The most famous passage in his book is that (Book I., chap. iv., § 6) in which he conjectures that, as the inhabited world was only one-third of the globe's circumference, there might be two or more continents besides that then known. "It is quite possible," are his words, "that in the temperate zone there may be two or even more habitable earths, especially near the circle of latitude which is drawn through Athens and the Atlantic Ocean."

There is an English translation of Strabo's *Geography*, in three volumes, in Bohn's Library. The student should also read the article on Strabo in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The more thorough student will consult Bunbury's great *History of Ancient Geography*: the account of Strabo and his work is in the second volume of this work. The work is full of most valuable maps of the world, according to Eratosthenes, Ptolemy, and others, including the map reproduced in the present leaflet.