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To Dante.

How shall we speak of him? for our blind eyes
Are all unequal to his dazzling rays!
Easier it is to blame his enemies,
Than for the tongue to tell his highest praise.
For us did he explore the realms of woe;
And at his coming did high heaven expand
Her lofty gate, to whom his native land
Refused to open hers. Yet shalt thou know,
Ungrateful city, in thine own despite,
That thou hast foster'd best thy Dante's fame;
For virtue when oppressed appears more bright;
And brighter therefore shall his glory be,
Suffering of all mankind most wrongfully,
Since in the world there lives no greater name.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The Philosophy of the Stoics and Epicureans Contrasted.

Athens, the city of Solon and Pericles, of Plato and Aristotle, the eye of Greece, the cradle of taste and thought, early became to the whole civilized world the centre of intellect and genius. Hither tended the poets, the artists, the philosophers, of all regions. Here, amid the enchanting Parks, the Lyceum, the Academy, the Stoa of Zeno, and the Garden of Epicurus, and in view of the Parthenon, the Pnyx, the Propylæa of the Acropolis, and the marble temples of Nike Apteros and Theseus, they caught the flame of knowledge from Athenian sage, or lent to Attic schools the lore of distant states and cities. The glory of Athens culminated in her schools of Philosophy, where men sought truth with incomparable zeal, holding it more dear than the transitory pleasures of the world, more valuable than its sordid dust.

About 300 B.C., four schools of Philosophy existed in this remarkable city; and, de-

spite the Pagan darkness by which they were surrounded, the many errors incident to the infancy of research, and the pressure of popular delusion, they evolved some grand moral truths, which have passed through the crucible of ages comparatively unalloyed, and whose power continues in no small degree to mould and invigorate modern thought. Two of the most prominent, in which much truth was embodied, were those of the Stoics and Epicureans.

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was born in Cyprus, of poor parents. Early in life he evinced a fervid desire for the study of Philosophy; visiting Athens, he there attended the various schools, ingeniously culling from each those principles which he thought best adapted to a system of his own. "I know your Phœnician arts," said one philosopher, as Zeno entered his school; "I perceive that your design is to creep slyly into my garden and steal away my fruit." Thus the doctrines of the Stoa were a skillful blending of the doctrines of other schools. Their morals were assimilated to the system of the Cynics, and in Physics they imitated the views expounded by Pythagoras and Heraclitus.

Their doctrines in regard to nature were, that all things existed from eternity in darkness and chaos, and will never cease to exist. We have here two principles, the one active, the reason or God; the other passive, that is to say, pure matter possessing no qualities. From this chaotic mass the world eventually emerged; hence, as the present condition of things had a beginning, so will it have an end, its existence balancing between moisture and dryness,—too much of either being followed by dissolution and destruction, the one terminating in universal inundation, the other