

Background and Analysis: "Roman Poets of the Republic" by William Sellar (1881)

Post by "Cassius" of July 4, 2020 at 10:52 AM

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BOOK I NOTES II

Horace too and Ovid had carefully studied him: this commentary will in some degree shew what they as well as Manilius owe to him, though this last disciple is not worth much. Lucretius thus exercised indirectly no slight influence on the whole future career of Latin poetry. To pass to modern times, the Italian scholars of the fifteenth century, full of enthusiasm for everything classical, yet admired no Latin poet more than Lucretius, Virgil alone excepted. The illustrious French scholars of the sixteenth century, Lambinus Turnebus Scaliger, pronounced him one of the greatest, if not the greatest of Roman poets. In the seventeenth, the century of English erudition, he was of course well known to Milton and has been often imitated by him in the *Paradise Lost*: he had the fortune too to be entirely translated by one of the most accomplished cavalier gentlemen and by the most accomplished of puritan ladies before Dryden and Creech turned their thoughts to the same task. In more recent times he has been perhaps less praised and read; yet in France he has never been without enthusiastic admirers: it will be enough to specify Voltaire in the last century; Villemain, Sainte-Beuve and Martha in the present. Among Germans Goethe never failed in sympathy and admiration for Lucretius. In this country the most recent account of the philosophy and poetry of Lucretius is at the same time the fullest and most favourable and by far the best: I speak of that given by Professor Sellar in the Roman poets of the republic.

the Munro translation, and

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