

testimony of the senses, there probably has never been a *practical* sceptic on that point. It is stated in the life of Pyrrho by Diogenes Laertius, that though that philosopher asserted the nonexistence of matter, and pretended therefore to universal indifference, he was sometimes overcome by his feelings, and would then act as other men act on such occasions; and, when reminded of the inconsequence of his conduct with reference to his doctrine, he would excuse himself by asserting, that it is difficult entirely to put off human nature, (ὡς χαλεπὸν εἶη ὀλοσχερῶς ἐκδύναι ἄνθρωπον): and it must be confessed that, in this apology, he offered the best comment on the character of his doctrine. And most philosophically does Lucretius^z argue, in noticing the apparent modifications of form which bodies undergo, in consequence of being viewed at different distances, that, although no satisfactory reason can be given of the real cause of the illusion, it is preferable to assign a false reason, rather than, by a consequent want of reliance on our senses, to overturn those foundations of all belief, on which our safety and life depend.

We have seen, in the course of the foregoing inquiry, how extensively the various objects of the material world are applicable to the wants and conveniences of man in every stage of society; and we cannot reasonably doubt that

^z Lib. IV. 502—512.