

that a Latin version of *excerpta* from Aesop contained this fable: 'Aesopus . . . Graece scripsit magnum opus, ex quo defloratus fuit *iste parvus libellus quo Latini utuntur*,' &c. This is interesting because it suggests a possible similar source for several other quotations by Dante, especially some of those which are difficult to identify in the authors cited. There must have been many 'libelli' of *excerpta*, or 'elegant extracts' 'in usum scholarum,' which are now lost. (See further on this *supra*, p. 14.)

2. LUCRETIUS.

This poet is never, I believe, mentioned or referred to by Dante, though we might have expected so distinguished an example of one 'che il mondo a caso pone,' to have been found among those enumerated in *Inf. iv. sub fin.* Dean Plumtre (vol. ii. p. 26) remarks that there is no trace of Dante's having known Lucretius¹. Mr. Butler, indeed, has pointed out a remarkable resemblance between the language of Dante, *Par. xiv. 112 seqq.*—

Così si veggion qui diritte e torte,
 Veloci e tarde, rinnovando vista,
 Le minuzie dei corpi lunghe e corte
 Moversi per lo raggio, onde si lista
 Tal volta l' ombra, &c.—

with that of Lucretius ii. 115, 6—

Multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis
 Corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso.

At any rate, even if the passage of Lucretius be copied here (which seems to me very doubtful), it was probably found by Dante as quoted by some other author, or else it may be in some of the *Florilegia*, though the former would here seem the more probable supposition, if any is needed.

¹ Lucretius however is said by Jourdain (*Traductions d'Aristote*, p. 21) to be one of those authors who was read at all periods of the Middle Ages.