



Philostratus, Vol. 1 of 2: In Honour of Apollonius of Tyana (Classic Reprint)

Athenian Philostratus

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Excerpt from Philostratus, Vol. 1 of 2: In Honour of Apollonius of Tyana

'What labour took Philostratus to make a book full of lies whereby he would have had Apollonius Tyaneus in miracles match unto Christ? And when he had all done, he never found one old wife so fond to believe him.'

So wrote Thomas More in his Dialogue, Bk. II (Works, p. 201 B).

Old wives are easier to find now; and particularly during the last century, this caste has risen to take an honoured place in our intellectual scheme. The rapid modern revival of the credulous, and decline of the rational, habit of mind brings in a renewal of interest in Apollonius of Tyana. Brunetière had the pleasure of remarking that the nineteenth century, which at its opening affected to regard Religion as vteux jeu, went on to spend an unprecedented deal of ink and thought and passion on religious debates. And now the difficulty is how to keep any question away from this obsession. Apollonius interests our time just because we are repeating the experiences of the third and fourth centuries: the ignoble welter of modern variations recognizes its own forecast image in those times. All the principal heresies of the early period are now thriving again: nothing of them is unpopular but the names. We have our Gnostics, our Montanists, &c. And above all we have a modern Syncretism which corresponds to those courtly polygamies of the Soul, with which the Graeco-Levantine influences under the Severian dynasty attempted to debauch Europe.

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