

Athens: Its Rise and Fall, Book V.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF CIMON, B. C. 449, TO THE DEATH OF PERICLES, IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, B. C. 429.

CHAPTER I.

Thucydides chosen by the Aristocratic Party to oppose Pericles.--His Policy.--Munificence of Pericles.--Sacred War.--Battle of Coronea.--Revolt of Euboea and Megara.--Invasion and Retreat of the Peloponnesians.--Reduction of Euboea.--Punishment of Histiaea--A Thirty Years' Truce concluded with the Peloponnesians.--Ostracism of Thucydides.

I. On the death of Cimon (B. C. 449) the aristocratic party in Athens felt that the position of their antagonists and the temper of the times required a leader of abilities widely distinct from those which had characterized the son of Miltiades. Instead of a skilful and enterprising general, often absent from the city on dazzling but distant expeditions, it was necessary to raise up a chief who could contend for their enfeebled and disputed privileges at home, and meet the formidable Pericles, with no unequal advantages of civil experience and oratorical talent, in the lists of the popular assembly, or in the stratagems of political intrigue. Accordingly their choice fell neither on Myronides nor Tolmides, but on one who, though not highly celebrated for military exploits, was deemed superior to Cimon, whether as a practical statesman or a popular orator. Thucydides, their new champion, united with natural gifts whatever advantage might result from the memory of Cimon; and his connexion with that distinguished warrior, to whom he was brother-in-law, served to keep together the various partisans of the faction, and retain to the eupatrids something of the respect and enthusiasm which the services of Cimon could not fail to command, even among the democracy. The policy embraced by Thucydides was perhaps the best which the state of affairs would permit; but it was one which was fraught with much danger. Hitherto the eupatrids and the people, though ever in dispute, had not been absolutely and totally divided; the struggles of either faction being headed by nobles, scarcely permitted to the democracy the perilous advantage of the cry--that the people were on one side, and the nobles on the other. But Thucydides, seeking to render his party as strong, as compact, and as united as possible, brought the main bulk of the eupatrids to act together in one body. The means by which he pursued and attained this object are not very clearly narrated; but it was probably by the formation of a political club--a species of social combination, which afterward became very common to all classes in Athens. The first effect of this policy favoured the aristocracy, and the energy and union they displayed restored for a while the equilibrium of parties; but the aristocratic influence, thus made clear and open, and brought into avowed hostility with the popular cause, the city was rent in two, and the community were plainly invited to regard the nobles as their foes

[251]. Pericles, thus more and more thrown upon the democracy, became identified with their interests, and he sought, no less by taste than policy, to prove to the populace that they had grown up into a wealthy and splendid nation, that could dispense with the bounty, the shows, and the exhibitions of individual nobles. He lavished the superfluous treasures of the state upon public festivals, stately processions, and theatrical pageants. As if desirous of elevating the commons to be themselves a nobility, all by which he appealed to their favour served to refine their taste and to inspire the meanest Athenian with a sense of the Athenian grandeur. It was said by his enemies, and the old tale has been credulously repeated, that his own private fortune not allowing him to vie with the wealthy nobles whom he opposed, it was to supply his deficiencies from the public stock that he directed some part of the national wealth to the encouragement of the national arts and the display of the national magnificence. But it is more than probable that it was rather from principle than personal ambition that Pericles desired to discountenance and eclipse the interested bribes to public favour with which Cimon and others had sought to corrupt the populace. Nor was Pericles without the means or the spirit to devote his private fortune to proper objects of generosity. "It was his wealth and his prudence," says Plutarch, when, blaming the improvidence of Anaxagoras, "that enabled him to relieve the distressed." What he spent in charity he might perhaps have spent more profitably in display, had he not conceived that charity was the province of the citizen, magnificence the privilege of the state. It was in perfect consonance with the philosophy that now began to spread throughout Greece, and with which the mind of this great political artist was so deeply imbued, to consider that the graces ennobled the city they adorned, and that the glory of a state was intimately connected with the polish of the people.

II. While, at home, the divisions of the state were progressing to that point in which the struggle between the opposing leaders must finally terminate in the ordeal of the ostracism--abroad, new causes of hostility broke out between the Athenians and the Spartans. The sacred city of Delphi formed a part of the Phocian station; but, from a remote period, its citizens appear to have exercised the independent right of managing to affairs of the temple [252], and to have elected their own superintendents of the oracle and the treasures. In Delphi yet lingered the trace of the Dorian institutions and the Dorian blood, but the primitive valour and hardy virtues of the ancestral tribe had long since mouldered away. The promiscuous intercourse of strangers, the contaminating influence of unrelaxing imposture and priestcraft--above all, the wealth of the city, from which the natives drew subsistence, and even luxury, without labour [253], contributed to enfeeble and corrupt the national character. Unable to defend themselves by their own exertions against any enemy, the Delphians relied on the passive protection afforded by the superstitious reverence of their neighbours, or on the firm alliance that existed between themselves and the great Spartan representatives of their common Dorian race. The Athenian government could not but deem it desirable to wrest from the Delphians the charge over the oracle and the temple, since that charge might at any time be rendered subservient to the Spartan cause; and accordingly they appear to have connived at a bold attempt of the Phocians, who were now their allies. These hardier neighbours of the sacred city claimed and forcibly seized the right of superintendence of the temple. The Spartans, alarmed and aroused, despatched an armed force to Delphi, and restored their former privileges to the citizens. They piously gave to their

excursion the name of the Sacred War. Delphi formally renounced the Phocian league, declared itself an independent state, and even defined the boundaries between its own and the Phocian domains. Sparta was rewarded for its aid by the privilege of precedence in consulting the oracle, and this decree the Spartans inscribed on a brazen wolf in the sacred city. The Athenians no longer now acted through others--they recognised all the advantage of securing to their friends and wresting from their foes the management of an oracle, on whose voice depended fortune in war and prosperity in peace. Scarce had the Spartans withdrawn, than an Athenian force, headed by Pericles, who is said to have been freed by Anaxagoras from superstitious prejudices, entered the city, and restored the temple to the Phocians. The same image which had recorded the privilege of the Spartans now bore an inscription which awarded the right of precedence to the Athenians. The good fortune of this expedition was soon reversed.

III. When the Athenians, after the battle of Oenophyta, had established in the Boeotian cities democratic forms of government, the principal members of the defeated oligarchy, either from choice or by compulsion, betook themselves to exile. These malecontents, aided, no doubt, by partisans who did not share their banishment, now seized upon Chaeronea, Orchomenus, and some other Boeotian towns. The Athenians, who had valued themselves on restoring liberty to Boeotia, and, for the first time since the Persian war, had honoured with burial at the public expense those who fell under Myronides, could not regard this attempt at counterrevolution with indifference. Policy aided their love of liberty; for it must never be forgotten that the change from democratic to oligarchic government in the Grecian states was the formal exchange of the Athenian for the Spartan alliance. Yet Pericles, who ever unwillingly resorted to war, and the most remarkable attribute of whose character was a profound and calculating caution, opposed the proposition of sending an armed force into Boeotia. His objections were twofold--he considered the time unseasonable, and he was averse to hazard upon an issue not immediately important to Athens the flower of her Hoplites, or heavy-armed soldiery, of whom a thousand had offered their services in the enterprise. Nevertheless, the counsel of Tolmides, who was eager for the war, and flushed with past successes, prevailed. "If," said Pericles, "you regard not my experience, wait, at least, for the advice of TIME, that best of counsellors." The saying was forgotten in the popular enthusiasm it opposed--it afterward attained the veneration of a prophecy. [254]

IV. Aided by some allied troops, and especially by his thousand volunteers, Tolmides swept into Boeotia--reduced Chaeronea--garrisoned the captured town, and was returning homeward, when, in the territory of Coronea, he suddenly fell in with a hostile ambush [255], composed of the exiled bands of Orchomenus, of Opuntian Locrians, and the partisans of the oligarchies of Euboea. Battle ensued--the Athenians received a signal and memorable defeat (B. C. 447); many were made prisoners, many slaughtered: the pride and youth of the Athenian Hoplites were left on the field; the brave and wealthy Clinias (father to the yet more renowned Alcibiades), and Tolmides himself, were slain. But the disaster of defeat was nothing in comparison with its consequences. To recover their prisoners, the Athenian government were compelled to enter into a treaty with the hostile oligarchies and withdraw their forces from Boeotia. On their departure, the old oligarchies everywhere replaced the friendly democracies, and the nearest neighbours of Athens were again her foes. Nor was this change

confined to Boeotia. In Locris and Phocis the popular party fell with the fortunes of Coronea--the exiled oligarchies were re-established--and when we next read of these states, they are the allies of Sparta. At home, the results of the day of Coronea were yet more important. By the slaughter of so many of the Hoplites, the aristocratic party in Athens were greatly weakened, while the neglected remonstrances and fears of Pericles, now remembered, secured to him a respect and confidence which soon served to turn the balance against his competitor Thucydides.

V. The first defeat of the proud mistress of the Grecian sea was a signal for the revolt of disaffected dependants. The Isle of Euboea, the pasturages of which were now necessary to the Athenians, encouraged by the success that at Coronea had attended the arms of the Euboean exiles, shook off the Athenian yoke (B. C. 445). In the same year expired the five years truce with Sparta, and that state forthwith prepared to avenge its humiliation at Delphi. Pericles seems once more to have been called into official power--he was not now supine in action. At the head of a sufficient force he crossed the channel, and landed in Euboea. Scarce had he gained the island, when he heard that Megara had revolted--that the Megarians, joined by partisans from Sicyon, Epidaurus, and Corinth, had put to the sword the Athenian garrison, save a few who had ensconced themselves in Nisaea, and that an army of the Peloponnesian confederates was preparing to march to Attica. On receiving these tidings, Pericles re-embarked his forces and returned home. Soon appeared the Peloponnesian forces, commanded by the young Pleistoanax, king of Sparta, who, being yet a minor, was placed under the guardianship of Cleandridas; the lands by the western frontier of Attica, some of the most fertile of that territory, were devastated, and the enemy penetrated to Eleusis and Thria. But not a blow was struck--they committed the aggression and departed. On their return to Sparta, Pleistoanax and Cleandridas were accused of having been bribed to betray the honour or abandon the revenge of Sparta. Cleandridas fled the prosecution, and was condemned to death in his exile. Pleistoanax also quitted the country, and took refuge in Arcadia, in the sanctuary of Mount Lycaeus. The suspicions of the Spartans appear to have been too well founded, and Pericles, on passing his accounts that year, is stated to have put down ten talents [256] as devoted to a certain use --an item which the assembly assented to in conscious and sagacious silence. This formidable enemy retired, Pericles once more entered Euboea, and reduced the isle (B. C. 445). In Chalcis he is said by Plutarch to have expelled the opulent landowners, who, no doubt, formed the oligarchic chiefs of the revolt, and colonized Histiaeia with Athenians, driving out at least the greater part of the native population [257]. For the latter severity was given one of the strongest apologies that the stern justice of war can plead for its harshest sentences--the Histiaeans had captured an Athenian vessel and murdered the crew. The rest of the island was admitted to conditions, by which the amount of tribute was somewhat oppressively increased. [258]

VI. The inglorious result of the Peloponnesian expedition into Attica naturally tended to make the Spartans desirous of peace upon honourable terms, while the remembrance of dangers, eluded rather than crushed, could not fail to dispose the Athenian government to conciliate a foe from whom much was to be apprehended and little gained. Negotiations were commenced and completed (B. C. 445). The Athenians surrendered some of the most valuable fruits of their

victories in their hold on the Peloponnesus. They gave up their claim on Nisaea and Pegae--they renounced the footing they had established in Troezen--they abandoned alliance or interference with Achaia, over which their influence had extended to a degree that might reasonably alarm the Spartans, since they had obtained the power to raise troops in that province, and Achaean auxiliaries had served under Pericles at the siege of Oeniadae [259]. Such were the conditions upon which a truce of thirty years was based [260]. The articles were ostensibly unfavourable to Athens. Boeotia was gone--Locris, Phocis, an internal revolution (the result of Coronea) had torn from their alliance. The citizens of Delphi must have regained the command of their oracle, since henceforth its sacred voice was in favour of the Spartans. Megara was lost--and now all the holds on the Peloponnesus were surrendered. These reverses, rapid and signal, might have taught the Athenians how precarious is ever the military eminence of small states. But the treaty with Sparta, if disadvantageous, was not dishonourable. It was founded upon one broad principle, without which, indeed, all peace would have been a mockery--viz., that the Athenians should not interfere with the affairs of the Peloponnesus. This principle acknowledged, the surrender of advantages or conquests that were incompatible with it was but a necessary detail. As Pericles was at this time in office [261], and as he had struggled against an armed interference with the Boeotian towns, so it is probable that he followed out his own policy in surrendering all right to interfere with the Peloponnesian states. Only by peace with Sparta could he accomplish his vast designs for the greatness of Athens--designs which rested not upon her land forces, but upon her confirming and consolidating her empire of the sea; and we shall shortly find, in our consideration of her revenues, additional reasons for approving a peace essential to her stability.

VII. Scarce was the truce effected ere the struggle between Thucydides and Pericles approached its crisis. The friends of the former never omitted an occasion to charge Pericles with having too lavishly squandered the public funds upon the new buildings which adorned the city. This charge of extravagance, ever an accusation sure to be attentively received by a popular assembly, made a sensible impression. "If you think," said Pericles to the great tribunal before which he urged his defence, "that I have expended too much, charge the sums to my account, not yours--but on this condition, let the edifices be inscribed with my name, not that of the Athenian people." This mode of defence, though perhaps but an oratorical hyperbole [262], conveyed a rebuke which the Athenians were an audience calculated to answer but in one way--they dismissed the accusation, and applauded the extravagance.

VIII. Accusations against public men, when unsuccessful, are the fairest stepping-stones in their career. Thucydides failed against Pericles. The death of Tolmides--the defeat of Coronea--the slaughter of the Hoplites--weakened the aristocratic party; the democracy and the democratic administration seized the occasion for a decisive effort. Thucydides was summoned to the ostracism, and his banishment freed Pericles from his only rival for the supreme administration of the Athenian empire.

Causes of the Power of Pericles.--Judicial Courts of the dependant Allies transferred to Athens.--Sketch of the Athenian Revenues.--Public Buildings the Work of the People rather than of Pericles.--Vices and Greatness of Athens had the same Sources.--Principle of Payment characterizes the Policy of the Period.--It is the Policy of Civilization.--Colonization, Cleruchia.

I. In the age of Pericles (B. C. 444) there is that which seems to excite, in order to disappoint, curiosity. We are fully impressed with the brilliant variety of his gifts--with the influence he exercised over his times. He stands in the midst of great and immortal names, at the close of a heroic, and yet in the sudden meridian of a civilized age. And scarcely does he recede from our gaze, ere all the evils which only his genius could keep aloof, gather and close around the city which it was the object of his life not less to adorn as for festival than to crown as for command. It is almost as if, with Pericles, her very youth departed from Athens. Yet so scanty are our details and historical materials, that the life of this surprising man is rather illustrated by the general light of the times than by the blaze of his own genius. His military achievements are not dazzling. No relics, save a few bold expressions, remain of the eloquence which awed or soothed, excited or restrained, the most difficult audience in the world. It is partly by analyzing the works of his contemporaries--partly by noting the rise of the whole people--and partly by bringing together and moulding into a whole the scattered masses of his ambitious and thoughtful policy, that we alone can gauge and measure the proportions of the master-spirit of the time. The age of Pericles is the sole historian of Pericles.

This statesman was now at that period of life when public men are usually most esteemed--when, still in the vigour of manhood, they have acquired the dignity and experience of years, outlived the earlier prejudices and jealousies they excited, and see themselves surrounded by a new generation, among whom rivals must be less common than disciples and admirers. Step by step, through a long and consistent career, he had ascended to his present eminence, so that his rise did not startle from its suddenness; while his birth, his services, and his genius presented a combination of claims to power that his enemies could not despise, and that justified the enthusiasm of his friends. His public character was unsullied; of the general belief in his integrity there is the highest evidence [263]; and even the few slanders afterward raised against him--such as that of entering into one war to gratify the resentment of Aspasia, and into another to divert attention from his financial accounts, are libels so unsupported by any credible authority, and so absurd in themselves, that they are but a proof how few were the points on which calumny could assail him.

II. The obvious mode to account for the moral power of a man in any particular time, is to consider his own character, and to ascertain how far it is suited to command the age in which he lived and the people whom he ruled. No Athenian, perhaps, ever possessed so many qualities as Pericles for obtaining wide and lasting influence over the various classes of his countrymen. By his attention to maritime affairs, he won the sailors, now the most difficult part of the population to humour or control; his encouragement to commerce secured the merchants and conciliated the alien settlers; while the stupendous

works of art, everywhere carried on, necessarily obtained the favour of the mighty crowd of artificers and mechanics whom they served to employ. Nor was it only to the practical interests, but to all the more refined, yet scarce less powerful sympathies of his countrymen, that his character appealed for support. Philosophy, with all parties, all factions, was becoming an appetite and passion. Pericles was rather the friend than the patron of philosophers. The increasing refinement of the Athenians--the vast influx of wealth that poured into the treasury from the spoils of Persia and the tributes of dependant cities, awoke the desire of art; and the graceful intellect of Pericles at once indulged and directed the desire, by advancing every species of art to its perfection. The freedom of democracy--the cultivation of the drama (which is the oratory of poetry)--the rise of prose literature--created the necessity of popular eloquence--and with Pericles the Athenian eloquence was born. Thus his power was derived from a hundred sources: whether from the grosser interests--the mental sympathies--the vanity--ambition--reason--or imagination of the people. And in examining the character of Pericles, and noting its harmony with his age, the admiration we bestow on himself must be shared by his countrymen. He obtained a greater influence than Pisistratus, but it rested solely on the free-will of the Athenians--it was unsupported by armed force--it was subject to the laws--it might any day be dissolved; and influence of this description is only obtained, in free states, by men who are in themselves the likeness and representative of the vast majority of the democracy they wield. Even the aristocratic party that had so long opposed him appear, with the fall of Thucydides, to have relaxed their hostilities. In fact, they had less to resent in Pericles than in any previous leader of the democracy. He was not, like Themistocles, a daring upstart, vying with, and eclipsing their pretensions. He was of their own order. His name was not rendered odious to them by party proscriptions or the memory of actual sufferings. He himself had recalled their idol Cimon--and in the measures that had humbled the Areopagus, so discreetly had he played his part, or so fortunately subordinate had been his co-operation, that the wrath of the aristocrats had fallen only on Ephialtes. After the ostracism of Thucydides, "he became," says Plutarch [264], "a new man--no longer so subservient to the multitude--and the government assumed an aristocratical, or rather monarchical, form." But these expressions in Plutarch are not to be literally received. The laws remained equally democratic--the agora equally strong--Pericles was equally subjected to the popular control; but having now acquired the confidence of the people, he was enabled more easily to direct them, or, as Thucydides luminously observes, "Not having obtained his authority unworthily, he was not compelled to flatter or to sooth the popular humours, but, when occasion required, he could even venture vehemently to contradict them." [265] The cause which the historian assigns to the effect is one that deserves to be carefully noted by ambitious statesmen--because the authority of Pericles was worthily acquired, the people often suffered it to be even unpopularly exercised. On the other hand, this far-seeing and prudent statesman was, no doubt, sufficiently aware of the dangers to which the commonwealth was exposed, if the discontents of the great aristocratic faction were not in some degree conciliated, to induce his wise and sober patriotism, if not actually to seek the favour of his opponents, at least cautiously to shun all idle attempts to revenge past hostilities or feed the sources of future irritation. He owed much to the singular moderation and evenness of his temper; and his debt to Anaxagoras must have been indeed great, if the lessons of that preacher of those cardinal virtues of the intellect, serenity and

order, had assisted to form the rarest of all unions--a genius the most fervid, with passions the best regulated.

III. It was about this time, too, in all probability, that Pericles was enabled to consummate the policy he had always adopted with respect to the tributary allies. We have seen that the treasury had been removed from Delos to Athens; it was now resolved to make Athens also the seat and centre of the judicial authority. The subject allies were compelled, if not on minor, at least on all important cases, to resort to Athenian courts of law for justice [266]. And thus Athens became, as it were, the metropolis of the allies. A more profound and sagacious mode of quickly establishing her empire it was impossible for ingenuity to conceive; but as it was based upon an oppression that must have been daily and intolerably felt--that every affair of life must have called into irritating action, so, with the establishment of the empire was simultaneously planted an inevitable cause of its decay. For though power is rarely attained without injustice, the injustice, if continued, is the never-failing principle of its corruption. And, in order to endure, authority must hasten to divest itself of all the more odious attributes of conquest.

IV. As a practical statesman, one principal point of view in which we must regard Pericles is in his capacity of a financier. By English historians his policy and pretensions in this department have not been sufficiently considered; yet, undoubtedly, they made one of the most prominent features of his public character in the eyes of his countrymen. He is the first minister in Athens who undertook the scientific management of the national revenues, and partly from his scrupulous integrity, partly from his careful wisdom, and partly from a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, the Athenian revenues, even when the tribute was doubled, were never more prosperously administered. The first great source of the revenue was from the tributes of the confederate cities [267]. These, rated at four hundred and sixty talents in the time of Aristides, had increased to six hundred in the time of Pericles; but there is no evidence to prove that the increased sum was unfairly raised, or that fresh exactions were levied, save in rare cases [268], on the original subscribers to the league. The increase of a hundred and forty talents is to be accounted for partly by the quota of different confederacies acquired since the time of Aristides, partly by the exemption from military or maritime service, voluntarily if unwisely purchased, during the administration of Cimon, by the states themselves. So far as tribute was a sign of dependance and inferiority, the impost was a hardship; but for this they who paid it are to be blamed rather than those who received. Its practical burden on each state, at this period, appears, in most cases, to have been incredibly light; and a very trifling degree of research will prove how absurdly exaggerated have been the invectives of ignorant or inconsiderate men, whether in ancient or modern times, on the extortions of the Athenians, and the impoverishment of their allies. Aristophanes [269] attributes to the empire of Athens a thousand tributary cities: the number is doubtless a poetical license; yet, when we remember the extent of territory which the league comprehended, and how crowded with cities were all the coasts and islands of Greece, we should probably fall short of the number of tributary cities if we estimated it at six hundred; so that the tribute would not in the time of Pericles average above a talent, or 241l. 13s. 4d. [270] English money, for each city! Even when in a time of urgent demand on the resources of the state [271], Cythera fell into the hands of the Athenians [272], the tribute of that island

was assessed but at four talents. And we find, by inscriptions still extant, that some places were rated only at two thousand, and even one thousand drachmas. [273]

Finally, if the assessment by Aristides, of four hundred and sixty talents, was such as to give universal satisfaction from its equity and moderation, the additional hundred and forty talents in the time of Pericles could not have been an excessive increase, when we consider how much the league had extended, how many states had exchanged the service for the tribute, and how considerable was the large diffusion of wealth throughout the greater part of Greece, the continued influx of gold [274], and the consequent fall in value of the precious metals.

V. It was not, then, the amount of the tribute which made its hardship, nor can the Athenian government be blamed for having continued, a claim voluntarily conceded to them. The original object of the tribute was the maintenance of a league against the barbarians--the Athenians were constituted the heads of the league and the guardians of the tribute; some states refused service and offered money--their own offers were accepted; other states refused both--it was not more the interest than the duty of Athens to maintain, even by arms, the condition of the league--so far is her policy justifiable. But she erred when she reduced allies to dependants--she erred when she transferred the treasury from the central Delos to her own state--she erred yet more when she appropriated a portion of these treasures to her own purposes. But these vices of Athens are the vices of all eminent states, monarchic or republican--for they are the vices of the powerful. "It was," say the Athenian ambassadors in Thucydides, with honest candour and profound truth--"it was from the nature of the thing itself that we were at first compelled to advance our empire to what it is--chiefly through fear--next for honour--and, lastly, for interest; and then it seemed no longer safe for us to venture to let go the reins of government, for the revolvers would have gone over to you" (viz., to the Spartans) [275]. Thus does the universal lesson of history teach us that it is the tendency of power, in what hands soever it be placed, to widen its limits, to increase its vigour, in proportion as the counteracting force resigns the security for its administration, or the remedy for its abuse.

VI. Pericles had not scrupled, from the date of the transfer of the treasury to Athens, to devote a considerable proportion of the general tribute to public buildings and sacred exhibitions--purposes purely Athenian. But he did so openly--he sought no evasion or disguise--he maintained in the face of Greece that the Athenians were not responsible to the allies for these contributions; that it was the Athenians who had resisted and defended the barbarians, while many of the confederate states had supplied neither ships nor soldiers; that Athens was now the head of a mighty league; and that, to increase her glory, to cement her power, was a duty she owed no less to the allies than to herself. Arguments to which armies, and not orators, could alone reply. [276]

The principal other sources whence the Athenian revenue was derived, it may be desirable here to state as briefly and as clearly as the nature of the subject will allow. By those who would search more deeply, the long and elaborate statistics of Boeckh must be carefully explored. Those sources of revenue were--

1st. Rents from corporate estates--such as pastures, forests, rivers, salt-works, houses, theatres, etc., and mines, let for terms of years, or on heritable leases.

2dly. Tolls, export and import duties, probably paid only by strangers, and amounting to two per cent., a market excise, and the twentieth part of all exports and imports levied in the dependant allied cities--the last a considerable item.

3dly. Tithes, levied only on lands held in usufruct, as estates belonging to temples.

4thly. A protection tax [277], paid by the settlers, or Metoeci, common to most of the Greek states, but peculiarly productive in Athens from the number of strangers that her trade, her festivals, and her renown attracted. The policy of Pericles could not fail to increase this source of revenue.

5thly. A slave tax of three obols per head. [278]

Most of these taxes appear to have been farmed out.

6thly. Judicial fees and fines. As we have seen that the allies in most important trials were compelled to seek justice in Athens, this, in the time of Pericles, was a profitable source of income. But it was one, the extent of which necessarily depended upon peace.

Fines were of many classes, but not, at least in this period, of very great value to the state. Sometimes (as in all private accusations) the fine fell to the plaintiff, sometimes a considerable proportion enriched the treasury of the tutelary goddess. The task of assessing the fines was odious, and negligently performed by the authorities, while it was easy for those interested to render a false account of their property.

Lastly. The state received the aid of annual contributions, or what were termed liturgies, from individuals for particular services.

The ordinary liturgies were, 1st. The Choregia, or duty of furnishing the chorus for the plays--tragic, comic, and satirical--of remunerating the leader of the singers and musicians--of maintaining the latter while trained--of supplying the dresses, the golden crowns and masks, and, indeed, the general decorations and equipments of the theatre. He on whom this burdensome honour fell was called Choregus; his name, and that of his tribe, was recorded on the tripod which commemorated the victory of the successful poet, whose performances were exhibited. [279]

2dly. The Gymnasiarchy, or charge of providing for the expense of the torch-race, celebrated in honour of the gods of fire, and some other sacred games. In later times the gymnasiarchy comprised the superintendence of the training schools, and the cost of ornamenting the arena.

3dly. The Architheoria, or task of maintaining the embassy to sacred games and festivals.

And, 4thly, the Hestiasis, or feasting of the tribes, a costly obligation incurred by some wealthy member of each tribe for

entertaining the whole of the tribe at public, but not very luxurious, banquets. This last expense did not often occur. The hestiasis was intended for sacred objects, connected with the rites of hospitality, and served to confirm the friendly intercourse between the members of the tribe.

These three ordinary liturgies had all a religious character; they were compulsory on those possessed of property not less than three talents--they were discharged in turn by the tribes, except when volunteered by individuals.

VII. The expenses incurred for the defence or wants of the state were not regular, but extraordinary liturgies--such as the TRIERARCHY, or equipment of ships, which entailed also the obligation of personal service on those by whom the triremes were fitted out. Personal service was indeed the characteristic of all liturgies, a property-tax, which was not yet invented, alone excepted; and this, though bearing the name, has not the features, of a liturgy. Of the extraordinary liturgies, the trierarchy was the most important. It was of very early origin. Boeckh observes [280] that it was mentioned in the time of Hippias. At the period of which we treat each vessel had one trierarch. The vessel was given to the trierarch, sometimes ready equipped; he also received the public money for certain expenses; others fell on himself [281]. Occasionally, but rarely, an ambitious or patriotic trierarch defrayed the whole cost; but in any case he rendered strict account of the expenses incurred. The cost of a whole trierarchy was not less than forty minas, nor more than a talent.

VIII. Two liturgies could not be demanded simultaneously from any individual, nor was he liable to any one more often than every other year. He who served the trierarchies was exempted from all other contributions. Orphans were exempted till the year after they had obtained their majority, and a similar exemption was, in a very few instances, the reward of eminent public services. The nine archons were also exempted from the trierarchies.

IX. The moral defects of liturgies were the defects of a noble theory, which almost always terminates in practical abuses. Their principle was that of making it an honour to contribute to the public splendour or the national wants. Hence, in the earlier times, an emulation among the rich to purchase favour by a liberal, but often calculating and interested ostentation; hence, among the poor, actuated by an equal ambition, was created so great a necessity for riches as the means to power [282], that the mode by which they were to be acquired was often overlooked. What the theory designed as the munificence of patriotism, became in practice but a showy engine of corruption; and men vied with each other in the choregia or the trierarchy, not so much for the sake of service done to the state, as in the hope of influence acquired over the people. I may also observe, that in a merely fiscal point of view, the principle of liturgies was radically wrong; that principle went to tax the few instead of the many; its operation was therefore not more unequal in its assessments than it was unproductive to the state in proportion to its burden on individuals.

X. The various duties were farmed--a pernicious plan of finance common to most of the Greek states. The farmers gave sureties, and punctuality was rigorously exacted from them, on penalty of

imprisonment, the doubling of the debt, the confiscation of their properties, the compulsory hold upon their sureties.

XI. Such were the main sources of the Athenian revenue.

Opportunities will occur to fill up the brief outline and amplify each detail. This sketch is now presented to the reader as comprising a knowledge necessary to a clear insight into the policy of Pericles. A rapid glance over the preceding pages will suffice to show that it was on a rigid avoidance of all unnecessary war--above all, of distant and perilous enterprises, that the revenue of Athens rested. Her commercial duties--her tax on settlers--the harvest of judicial fees, obtained from the dependant allies--the chief profits from the mines--all rested upon the maintenance of peace: even the foreign tribute, the most productive of the Athenian resources, might fail at once, if the Athenian arms should sustain a single reverse, as indeed it did after the fatal battle of Aegospotamos [283]. This it was which might have shown to the great finance minister that peace with the Peloponnesus could scarce be too dearly purchased [284]. The surrender of a few towns and fortresses was nothing in comparison with the arrest and paralysis of all the springs of her wealth, which would be the necessary result of a long war upon her own soil. For this reason Pericles strenuously checked all the wild schemes of the Athenians for extended empire. Yet dazzled with the glories of Cimon, some entertained the hopes of recovering Egypt, some agitated the invasion of the Persian coasts; the fair and fatal Sicily already aroused the cupidity and ambition of others; and the vain enthusiasts of the Agora even dreamed of making that island the base and centre of a new and vast dominion, including Carthage on one hand and Etruria on the other [285]. Such schemes it was the great object of Pericles to oppose. He was not less ambitious for the greatness of Athens than the most daring of these visionaries; but he better understood on what foundations it should be built. His objects were to strengthen the possessions already acquired, to confine the Athenian energies within the frontiers of Greece, and to curb, as might better be done by peace than war, the Peloponnesian forces to their own rocky barriers. The means by which he sought to attain these objects were, 1st, by a maritime force; 2dly, by that inert and silent power which springs as it were from the moral dignity and renown of a nation; whatever, in this latter respect, could make Athens illustrious, made Athens formidable.

XII. Then rapidly progressed those glorious fabrics which seemed, as Plutarch gracefully expresses it, endowed with the bloom of a perennial youth. Still the houses of private citizens remained simple and unadorned; still were the streets narrow and irregular; and even centuries afterward, a stranger entering Athens would not at first have recognised the claims of the mistress of Grecian art. But to the homeliness of her common thoroughfares and private mansions, the magnificence of her public edifices now made a dazzling contrast. The Acropolis, that towered above the homes and thoroughfares of men--a spot too sacred for human habitation--became, to use a proverbial phrase, "a city of the gods." The citizen was everywhere to be reminded of the majesty of the STATE--his patriotism was to be increased by the pride in her beauty--his taste to be elevated by the spectacle of her splendour. Thus flocked to Athens all who throughout Greece were eminent in art. Sculptors and architects vied with each other in adorning the young empress of the seas [286]; then rose the masterpieces of Phidias, of Callicrates, of Mnesicles [287], which even, either in their broken remains, or in the feeble copies of

imitators less inspired, still command so intense a wonder, and furnish models so immortal. And if, so to speak, their bones and relics excite our awe and envy, as testifying of a lovelier and grander race, which the deluge of time has swept away, what, in that day, must have been their brilliant effect--unmutilated in their fair proportions--fresh in all their lineaments and hues? For their beauty was not limited to the symmetry of arch and column, nor their materials confined to the marbles of Pentelicus and Paros. Even the exterior of the temples glowed with the richest harmony of colours, and was decorated with the purest gold; an atmosphere peculiarly favourable both to the display and the preservation of art, permitted to external pediments and friezes all the minuteness of ornament--all the brilliancy of colours; such as in the interior of Italian churches may yet be seen--vitiating, in the last, by a gaudy and barbarous taste. Nor did the Athenians spare any cost upon the works that were, like the tombs and tripods of their heroes, to be the monuments of a nation to distant ages, and to transmit the most irrefragable proof "that the power of ancient Greece was not an idle legend." [288] The whole democracy were animated with the passion of Pericles; and when Phidias recommended marble as a cheaper material than ivory for the great statue of Minerva, it was for that reason that ivory was preferred by the unanimous voice of the assembly. Thus, whether it were extravagance or magnificence, the blame in one case, the admiration in another, rests not more with the minister than the populace. It was, indeed, the great characteristic of those works, that they were entirely the creations of the people: without the people, Pericles could not have built a temple or engaged a sculptor. The miracles of that day resulted from the enthusiasm of a population yet young--full of the first ardour for the beautiful--dedicating to the state, as to a mistress, the trophies, honourably won or the treasures injuriously extorted--and uniting the resources of a nation with the energy of an individual, because the toil, the cost, were borne by those who succeeded to the enjoyment and arrogated the glory.

XIII. It was from two sources that Athens derived her chief political vices; 1st, Her empire of the seas and her exactions from her allies; 2dly, an unchecked, unmitigated democratic action, void of the two vents known in all modern commonwealths--the press, and a representative, instead of a popular, assembly. But from these sources she now drew all her greatness also, moral and intellectual. Before the Persian war, and even scarcely before the time of Cimon, Athens cannot be said to have eclipsed her neighbours in the arts and sciences. She became the centre and capital of the most polished communities of Greece, and she drew into a focus all the Grecian intellect; she obtained from her dependants the wealth to administer the arts, which universal traffic and intercourse taught her to appreciate; and thus the Odeon, and the Parthenon, and the Propylaea arose! During the same administration, the fortifications were completed, and a third wall, parallel [289] and near to that uniting Piraeus with Athens, consummated the works of Themistocles and Cimon, and preserved the communication between the twofold city, even should the outer walls fall into the hands of an enemy.

But honour and wealth alone would not have sufficed for the universal emulation, the universal devotion to all that could adorn or exalt the nation. It was the innovations of Aristides and Ephialtes that breathed into that abstract and cold formality, THE STATE, the breath and vigour of a pervading people, and made the meanest citizen struggle for Athens with that zeal with which an ambitious statesman

struggles for himself [290]. These two causes united reveal to us the true secret why Athens obtained a pre-eminence in intellectual grandeur over the rest of Greece. Had Corinth obtained the command of the seas and the treasury of Delos--had Corinth established abroad a power equally arbitrary and extensive, and at home a democracy equally broad and pure--Corinth might have had her Pericles and Demosthenes, her Phidias, her Sophocles, her Aristophanes, her Plato--and posterity might not have allowed the claim of Athens to be the Hellas Hellados, "the Greece of Greece."

XIV. But the increase of wealth bounded not its effects to these magnificent works of art--they poured into and pervaded the whole domestic policy of Athens. We must recollect, that as the greatness of the state was that of the democracy, so its treasures were the property of the free population. It was the people who were rich; and according to all the notions of political economy in that day, the people desired practically to enjoy their own opulence. Thus was introduced the principal of payment for service, and thus was sanctioned and legalized the right of a common admission to spectacles, the principal cost of which was defrayed from common property. That such innovations would be the necessary and unavoidable result of an overflowing treasury in a state thus democratic is so obvious, that nothing can be more absurd than to lay the blame of the change upon Pericles. He only yielded to, and regulated the irresistible current of the general wish. And we may also observe, that most of those innovations, which were ultimately injurious to Athens, rested upon the acknowledged maxims of modern civilization; some were rather erroneous from details than principles; others, from the want of harmony between the new principles and the old constitution to which then were applied. Each of the elements might be healthful--amalgamated, they produced a poison.

XV. It is, for instance, an axiom in modern politics that judges should receive a salary [291]. During the administration of Pericles, this principle was applied to the dicasts in the popular courts of judicature. It seems probable that the vast accession of law business which ensued from the transfer of the courts in the allied states to the Athenian tribunal was the cause of this enactment. Lawsuits became so common, that it was impossible, without salaries, that the citizens could abandon their own business for that of others. Payment was, therefore, both equitable and unavoidable, and, doubtless, it would have seemed to the Athenians, as now to us, the best means, not only of securing the attention, but of strengthening the integrity, of the judges or the jurors. The principle of salaries was, therefore, right, but its results were evil, when applied to the peculiar constitution of the courts. The salary was small--the judges numerous, and mostly of the humblest class--the consequences I have before shown [292]. Had the salaries been high and the number of the judges small, the means of a good judicature would have been attained. But, then, according to the notions, not only of the Athenians, but of all the Hellenic democracies, the democracy itself, of which the popular courts were deemed the constitutional bulwark and the vital essence, would have been at an end. In this error, therefore, however fatal it might be, neither Pericles nor the Athenians, but the theories of the age, are to be blamed [293]. It is also a maxim formerly acted upon in England, to which many political philosophers now incline, and which is yet adopted in the practice of a great and enlightened portion of the world, that the members of the legislative assembly should receive salaries. This principle was now applied in

Athens [294]. But there the people themselves were the legislative assembly, and thus a principle, perhaps sound in itself, became vitiated to the absurdity of the people as sovereign paying the people as legislative. Yet even this might have been necessary to the preservation of the constitution, as meetings became numerous and business complicated; for if the people had not been tempted and even driven to assemble in large masses, the business of the state would have been jobbed away by active minorities, and the life of a democracy been lost [295]. The payment was first one obolus--afterward increased to three. Nor must we suppose, as the ignorance or effrontery of certain modern historians has strangely asserted, that in the new system of payments the people were munificent only to themselves. The senate was paid--the public advocates and orators were paid--so were the ambassadors, the inspectors of the youths in the trading schools, the nomothetae or law-commissioners, the physicians, the singers, even the poets; all the servants of the different officers received salaries. And now, as is the inevitable consequence of that civilization in a commercial society which multiplies and strongly demarcates the divisions of labour, the safety of the state no longer rested solely upon the unpurchased arms and hearts of its citizens--but not only were the Athenians themselves who served as soldiers paid, but foreign mercenaries were engaged--a measure in consonance with the characteristic policy of Pericles, which was especially frugal of the lives of the citizens. But peculiar to the Athenians of all the Grecian states was the humane and beautiful provision for the poor, commenced under Solon or Pisistratus. At this happy and brilliant period few were in need of it--war and disaster, while they increased the number of the destitute, widened the charity of the state.

XVI. Thus, then, that general system of payment which grew up under Pericles, and produced many abuses under his successors, was, after all, but the necessary result of the increased civilization and opulence of the period. Nor can we wonder that the humbler or the middle orders, who, from their common stock, lavished generosity upon genius [296], and alone, of all contemporaneous states, gave relief to want--who maintained the children of all who died in war--who awarded remunerations for every service, should have deemed it no grasping exaction to require for their own attendance on offices forced on them by the constitution a compensation for the desertion of their private affairs, little exceeding that which was conferred upon the very paupers of the state. [297]

XVII. But there was another abuse which sprang out of the wealth of the people, and that love for spectacles and exhibitions which was natural to the lively Ionic imagination, and could not but increase as leisure and refinement became boons extended to the bulk of the population--an abuse trifling in itself--fatal in the precedent it set. While the theatre was of wood, free admissions were found to produce too vast a concourse for the stability of the building; and once, indeed, the seats gave way. It was, therefore, long before the present period, deemed advisable to limit the number of the audience by a small payment of two obols for each seat; and this continued after a stately edifice of stone replaced the wooden temple of the earlier drama.

But as riches flowed into the treasury, and as the drama became more and more the most splendid and popular of the national exhibitions, it seemed but just to return to the ancient mode of gratuitous

admissions. It was found, however, convenient, partly, perhaps, for greater order and for the better allotment of the seats--partly, also, for the payment of several expenses which fell not on the state, but individuals--and partly, no doubt, to preserve the distinctions between the citizens and the strangers, to maintain the prices, but to allow to those whose names were enrolled in the book of the citizens the admittance money from the public treasury. This fund was called the THEORICON. But the example once set, Theorica were extended to other festivals besides those of the drama [298], and finally, under the plausible and popular pretext of admitting the poorer classes to those national or religious festivals, from which, as forming the bulk of the nation, it was against the theory of the constitution to exclude them, paved the way to lavish distributions of the public money, which at once tended to exhaust the wealth of the state, and to render effeminate and frivolous the spirit of the people. But these abuses were not yet visible: on the contrary, under Pericles, the results of the Theoricon were highly favourable to the manners and genius of the people. Art was thus rendered the universal right, and while refinement of taste became diffused, the patriotism of the citizens was increased by the consciousness that they were the common and legitimate arbiters of all which augmented the splendour and renown of Athens.

Thus, in fact, the after evils that resulted from the more popular part of the internal policy of Pericles, it was impossible to foresee; they originated not in a single statement, but in the very nature of civilization. And as in despotisms, a coarse and sensual luxury, once established, rots away the vigour and manhood of a conquering people, so in this intellectual republic it was the luxury of the intellect which gradually enervated the great spirit of the victor race of Marathon and Salamis, and called up generations of eloquent talkers and philosophical dreamers from the earlier age of active freemen, restless adventurers, and hardy warriors. The spirit of poetry, or the pampered indulgence of certain faculties to the prejudice of others, produced in a whole people what it never fails to produce in the individual: it unfitted them just as they grew up into a manhood exposed to severer struggles than their youth had undergone--for the stern and practical demands of life; and suffered the love of the beautiful to subjugate or soften away the common knowledge of the useful. Genius itself became a disease, and poetry assisted towards the euthanasia of the Athenians.

XVIII. As all the measures of Pericles were directed towards consolidating the Athenian empire, so under his administration was not omitted the politic expedient of colonization. Of late years, states having become confirmed and tribes settled, the Grecian migrations were far less frequent than of old; and one principal cause of colonization, in the violent feud of parties, and the expulsion of a considerable number of citizens, arose from the disasters of infant communities, and was no longer in force under the free but strong government of Athens. As with the liberties fell the commerce of Miletus and Ionia, so also another principal source of the old colonization became comparatively languid and inert. But now, under the name of Cleruchi [299], a new description of colonists arose--colonists by whom the mother country not only draughted off a redundant population, or rid herself of restless adventurers, but struck the roots of her empire in the various places that came under her control. In the classic as in the feudal age, conquest gave the right to the lands of the conquered country. Thus had arisen, and

thus still existed, upon the plundered lands of Laconia, the commonwealth of Sparta--thus were maintained the wealthy and luxurious nobles of Thessaly--and thus, in fine, were created all the ancient Dorian oligarchies. After the return of the Heraclidae, this mode of consummating conquest fell into disuse, not from any moral conviction of its injustice, but because the wars between the various states rarely terminated in victories so complete as to permit the seizure of the land and the subjugation of the inhabitants. And it must be ever remembered, that the old Grecian tribes made war to procure a settlement, and not to increase dominion. The smallness of their population rendered human life too valuable to risk its waste in the expeditions that characterized the ambition of the leaders of oriental hordes. But previous to the Persian wars, the fertile meadows of Euboea presented to the Athenians a temptation it could scarcely be expected that victorious neighbours would have the abstinence to forego; and we have seen that they bestowed the lands of the Hippobotae on Athenian settlers. These colonists evacuated their possessions during the Persian war: the Hippobotae returned, and seem to have held quiet, but probably tributary, possession of their ancient estates, until after the recent retreat of the Peloponnesians. Pericles defeated and displaced them; their lands fell once more to Athenian colonists; and the north of Euboea was protected and garrisoned by the erection of Oreus, a new town that supplanted the old Histiaea. Territories in Scyros, Lemnos, and Imbros had been also bestowed on Athenian settlers during the earlier successes of the Athenian arms--and the precedent thus set, examples became more numerous, under the profound and systematic policy of Pericles. This mode of colonization, besides the ordinary advantages of all colonization, proffered two peculiar to itself. In the first place, it supplied the deficiency of land, which was one of the main inconveniences of Attica, and rewarded the meritorious or appeased the avaricious citizens, with estates which it did not impoverish the mother country to grant. 2dly. It secured the conquests of the state by planting garrisons which it cost little to maintain [300]. Thus were despatched by Pericles a thousand men to the valuable possessions in the Chersonese, two hundred and fifty to Andros, five hundred to Naxos, a thousand to Thrace. At another period, the date of which is uncertain, but probably shortly subsequent to the truce with the Peloponnesians, a large fleet, commanded by Pericles, swept the Euxine, in order to awe and impress the various states and nations along the adjacent coasts, whether Greek or barbarian, with the display of the Athenian power; and the city of Sinope, being at that time divided with contentions for and against its tyrant Timesilaus, the republican party applied to the head of the Greek democracies for aid. Lamachus, a warrior to whose gallant name, afterward distinguished in the Peloponnesian war, Aristophanes has accorded the equal honour of his ridicule and his praise, was intrusted with thirteen galleys and a competent force for the expulsion of the tyrant and his adherents. The object effected, the new government of Sinope rewarded six hundred Athenians with the freedom of the city and the estates of the defeated faction.

While thus Athens fixed her footing on remoter lands, gradually her grasp extended over the more near and necessary demesnes of Euboea, until the lands of more than two thirds of that island were in the possession of Athenians [301]. At a later period, new opportunities gave rise to new cleruchiae. [302]

XIX. Besides these cleruchiae, in the second year of the supreme

administration of Pericles a colony, properly so called, was established in Western Italy--interesting alike from the great names of its early adventurers, the beauty of its site, and from the circumstance of its being, besides that at Amphipolis, the only pure and legitimate colony [303], in contradistinction to the cleruchiae, founded by Athens, since her ancient migrations to Ionia and the Cyclades. Two centuries before, some Achaeans, mingled with Troezenians, had established, in the fertile garden of Magna Graecia, the state of Sybaris. Placed between two rivers, the Crathis and the Sybaris--possessing extraordinary advantages of site and climate, this celebrated colony rose with unparalleled rapidity to eminence in war and luxury in peace. So great were its population and resources, that it is said by Diodorus to have brought at one time three hundred thousand men into the field--an army which doubled that which all Greece could assemble at Plataea! The exaggeration is evident; but it still attests the belief of a populousness and power which must have rested upon no fabulous foundation. The state of Sybaris had prospered for a time by the adoption of a principle which is ever apt to force civilization to premature development, and not unfrequently to end in the destruction of national character and internal stability--viz., it opened its arms to strangers of every tribe and class. Thronged by mercantile adventurers, its trade, like that of Agrigentum, doubtless derived its sources from the oil and wine which it poured into the harbours of Africa and Gaul. As with individuals, so with states, wealth easily obtained is prodigally spent, and the effeminate and voluptuous ostentation of Sybaris passed into a proverb more enduring than her prosperity. Her greatness, acquired by a tempered and active democracy, received a mortal blow by the usurpation of a tyrant named Telys, who, in 510 B. C., expelled five hundred of the principal citizens. Croton received the exiles, a war broke out, and in the same year, or shortly afterward, the Crotoniates, under Milo, defeated the Sybarites with prodigious slaughter, and the city was abandoned to pillage, and left desolate and ruined. Those who survived fled to Laos and Scidrus. Fifty-eight years afterward, aided by some Thessalians, the exiled Sybarites again sought possession of their former settlement, but were speedily expelled by the Crotoniates. It was now that they applied to Sparta and Athens for assistance. The former state had neither population to spare, nor commerce to strengthen, nor ambition to gratify, and rejected the overtures of the Sybarite envoys. But a different success awaited the exiles at Athens. Their proposition, timed in a period when it was acceptable to the Athenian policy (B. C. 443), was enforced by Pericles. Adventurers from all parts of Greece, but invited especially from the Peloponnesus, swelled the miscellaneous band: eminent among the rest were Lysias, afterward so celebrated as a rhetorician [304], and Herodotus, the historian.

As in the political code of Greece the religious character of the people made a prevailing principle, so in colonization the deity of the parent state transplanted his worship with his votaries, and the relation between the new and the old country was expressed and perpetuated by the touching symbol of taking fire from the Prytaneum of the native city. A renowned diviner, named Lampon [305], whose sacred pretensions did not preserve him from the ridicule of the comic poets [306], accompanied the emigrants (B. C. 440), and an oracle dictated the site of the new colony near the ancient city, and by the fountain of Thurium. The Sybarites, with the common vanity of men whose ancestors have been greater than themselves, increased their pretensions in proportion as they lost their power; they affected

superiority over their companions, by whose swords alone they again existed as a people; claimed the exclusive monopoly of the principal offices of government, and the first choice of lands; and were finally cut off by the very allies whose aid they had sought, and whose resentment they provoked. New adventurers from Greece replaced the Sybarites, and the colonists of Thurium, divided into ten tribes (four, the representatives of the united Ionians, Euboeans, Islanders, and Athenians; three of the Peloponnesians; and three of the settlers from Northern Greece)--retained peaceable possession of their delightful territory, and harmonized their motley numbers by the adoption of the enlightened laws and tranquil institutions of Charondas. Such was the home of Herodotus, the historian.

CHAPTER III.

Revision of the Census.--Samian War.--Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Athenian Comedy to the Time of Aristophanes.

I. In proportion as it had become matter of honourable pride and lucrative advantage to be a citizen of Athens, it was natural that the laws defining and limiting the freedom of the city should increase in strictness. Even before the time of Themistocles, those only were considered legitimate [307] who, on either side, derived parentage from Athenian citizens. But though illegitimate, they were not therefore deprived of the rights of citizenship; nor had the stain upon his birth been a serious obstacle to the career of Themistocles himself. Under Pericles, the law became more severe, and a decree was passed (apparently in the earlier period of his rising power), which excluded from the freedom of the city those whose parents were not both Athenian. In the very year in which he attained the supreme administration of affairs, occasion for enforcing the law occurred: Psammetichus, the pretender to the Egyptian throne, sent a present of corn to the Athenian people (B. C. 444); the claimants for a share in the gift underwent the ordeal of scrutiny as to their titles to citizenship, and no less than five thousand persons were convicted of having fraudulently foisted themselves into rights which were now tantamount to property; they were disfranchised [308]; and the whole list of the free citizens was reduced to little more than fourteen thousand. [309]

II. While under this brilliant and energetic administration Athens was daily more and more concentrating on herself the reluctant admiration and the growing fears of Greece, her policy towards her dependant allies involved her in a war which ultimately gave, if not a legal, at least an acknowledged, title to the pretensions she assumed. Hostilities between the new population of Miletus and the oligarchic government of Samos had been for some time carried on; the object of contention was the city of Priene--united, apparently, with rival claims upon Anaea, a town on the coast opposite Samos. The Milesians, unsuccessful in the war, applied to Athens for assistance. As the Samians were among the dependant allies, Pericles, in the name of the Athenian people, ordered them to refer to Athens the decision of the dispute; on their refusal an expedition of forty galleys was conducted against them by Pericles in person. A still more plausible colour than that of the right of dictation was given to this interference;

for the prayer of the Milesians was backed and sanctioned by many of the Samians themselves, oppressed by the oligarchic government which presided over them. A ridiculous assertion was made by the libellers of the comic drama and the enemies of Pericles, that the war was undertaken at the instigation of Aspasia, with whom that minister had formed the closest connexion; but the expedition was the necessary and unavoidable result of the twofold policy by which the Athenian government invariably directed its actions; 1st, to enforce the right of ascendancy over its allies; 2dly, to replace oligarchic by democratic institutions. Nor, on this occasion, could Athens have remained neutral or supine without materially weakening her hold upon all the states she aspired at once to democratize and to govern.

III. The fleet arrived at Samos--the oligarchic government was deposed--one hundred hostages (fifty men--fifty boys) from its partisans were taken and placed at Lemnos, and a garrison was left to secure the new constitution of the island. Some of the defeated faction took refuge on the Asiatic continent--entered into an intrigue with the Persian Pissuthnes, satrap of Sardis; and having, by continued correspondence with their friends at Samos, secured connivance at their attempt, they landed by night at Samos with a hired force of seven hundred soldiers, and succeeded in mastering the Athenian garrison, and securing the greater part of the chiefs of the new administration; while, by a secret and well-contrived plot, they regained their hostages left at Lemnos. They then openly proclaimed their independence--restored the oligarchy--and, as a formal proof of defiance, surrendered to Pissuthnes the Athenians they had captured. Byzantium hastened to join the revolt. Their alliance with Pissuthnes procured the Samians the promised aid of a Phoenician fleet, and they now deemed themselves sufficiently strong to renew their hostilities with Miletus. Their plans were well laid, and their boldness made a considerable impression on the states hostile to Athens. Among the Peloponnesian allies it was debated whether or not, despite the treaty, the Samians should be assisted: opinions were divided, but Corinth [310], perhaps, turned the scale, by insisting on the right of every state to deal with its dependants. Corinth had herself colonies over which she desired to preserve a dictatorial sway; and she was disposed to regard the Samian revolution less as the gallantry of freemen than the enterprise of rebels. It was fortunate, too, perhaps, for Athens, that the Samian insurgents had sought their ally in the Persian satrap; nor could the Peloponnesian states at that time have decorously assisted the Persian against the Athenian arms. But short time for deliberation was left by a government which procured for the Athenians the character to be not more quick to contrive than to execute--to be the only people who could simultaneously project and acquire--and who even considered a festival but as a day on which some necessary business could be accomplished [311]. With a fleet of sixty sail, Pericles made for Samos; some of the vessels were stationed on the Carian coast to watch the movements of the anticipated Phoenician re-enforcement; others were despatched to collect aid from Chios and Lesbos. Meanwhile, though thus reduced to forty-four sail, Pericles, near a small island called Tragia, engaged the Samian fleet returning from Miletus, consisting of seventy vessels, and gained a victory. Then, re-enforced by forty galleys from Athens, and twenty-five from Lesbos and Chios, he landed on the island, defeated the Samians in a pitched battle, drove them into their city, invested it with a triple line of ramparts, and simultaneously blockaded the city by sea. The besieged were not, however, too discouraged to sally out; and, under Melissus, who was at once a philosopher and a hero, they even obtained

advantage in a seafight. But these efforts were sufficiently unimportant to permit Pericles to draw off sixty of his vessels, and steer along the Carian coast to meet the expected fleet of the Phoenicians. The besieged did not suffer the opportunity thus afforded them to escape--they surprised the naval blockading force, destroyed the guard-ships, and joining battle with the rest of the fleet, obtained a decisive victory (B. C. 440), which for fourteen days left them the mastery of the open sea, and enabled them to introduce supplies.

IV. While lying in wait for the Phoenician squadron, which did not, however, make its appearance, tidings of the Samian success were brought to Pericles. He hastened back and renewed the blockade--fresh forces were sent to his aid--from Athens, forty-eight ships, under three generals, Thucydides [312], Agnon, and Phormio; followed by twenty more under Tlepolemus and Anticles, while Chios and Lesbos supplied an additional squadron of thirty. Still the besieged were not disheartened; they ventured another engagement, which was but an ineffectual struggle, and then, shut up within their city, stood a siege of nine months.

With all the small Greek states it had ever been the policy of necessity to shun even victories attended with great loss. This policy was refined by Pericles into a scientific system. In the present instance, he avoided all assaults which might weaken his forces, and preferred the loss of time to the loss of life. The tedious length of the blockade occasioned some murmurs among the lively and impatient forces he commanded; but he is said to have diverted the time by the holiday devices, which in the middle ages often so graced and softened the rugged aspect of war. The army was divided into eight parts, and by lot it was decided which one of the eight divisions should, for the time, encounter the fatigues of actual service; the remaining seven passed the day in sports and feasting [313]. A concourse of women appear to have found their way to the encampment [314], and a Samian writer ascribes to their piety or their gratitude the subsequent erection of a temple to Venus. The siege, too, gave occasion to Pericles to make experiment of military engines, which, if invented before, probably now received mechanical improvement. Although, in the earlier contest, mutual animosities had been so keen that the prisoners on either side had been contumeliously branded [315], it was, perhaps, the festive and easy manner in which the siege was afterward carried on, that, mitigating the bitterness of prolonged hostilities, served to procure, at last, for the Samians articles of capitulation more than usually mild. They embraced the conditions of demolishing their fortifications, delivering up their ships, and paying by instalments a portion towards the cost of the siege [316]. Byzantium, which, commanding the entrance of the Euxine, was a most important possession to the Athenians [317], whether for ambition or for commerce, at the same time accepted, without resistance, the terms held out to it, and became once more subject to the Athenian empire.

V. On his return, Pericles was received with an enthusiasm which attested the sense entertained of the value of his conquest. He pronounced upon those who had fallen in the war a funeral oration. [318] When he descended from the rostrum, the women crowded round and showered fillets and chaplets on the eloquent victor. Elpinice, the sister of Cimon, alone shared not the general enthusiasm. "Are these actions," she said to Pericles, "worthy of chaplets and garlands?"

actions purchased by the loss of many gallant citizens--not won against the Phoenician and the Mede, like those of Cimon, but by the ruin of a city united with ourselves in amity and origin." The ready minister replied to the invective of Elpinice by a line from Archilochus, which, in alluding to the age and coquetry of the lady, probably answered the oratorical purpose of securing the laugh on his own side. [319]

While these events confirmed the authority of Athens and the Athenian government, a power had grown up within the city that assumed a right, the grave assertion of which without the walls would have been deeply felt and bitterly resented--a power that sat in severe and derisive judgment upon Athens herself, her laws, her liberties, her mighty generals, her learned statesmen, her poets, her sages, and her arrogant democracy--a power that has come down to foreign nations and distant ages as armed with irresistible weapons--which now is permitted to give testimony, not only against individuals, but nations themselves, but which, in that time, was not more effective in practical results than at this day a caricature in St. James's-street, or a squib in a weekly newspaper--a power which exposed to relentless ridicule, before the most susceptible and numerous tribunal, the loftiest names in rank, in wisdom, and in genius--and which could not have deprived a beggar of his obol or a scavenger of his office: THE POWER OF THE COMIC MUSE.

VI. We have seen that in the early village festivals, out of which grew the tragedy of Phrynichus and Aeschylus, there were, besides the Dithyramb and the Satyrs, the Phallic processions, which diversified the ceremony by the lowest jests mingled with the wildest satire. As her tragedy had its origin in the Dithyramb--as her satyric after-piece had its origin in the satyric buffooneries--so out of the Phallic processions rose the Comedy of Greece (B. C. 562) [320]. Susarion is asserted by some to have been a Megarian by origin; and while the democracy of Megara was yet in force, he appears to have roughly shaped the disorderly merriment of the procession into a rude farce, interspersed with the old choral songs. The close connexion between Megara and Athens soon served to communicate to the latter the improvements of Susarion; and these improvements obtained for the Megarian the title of inventor of comedy, with about the same justice as a similar degree of art conferred upon the later Thespis the distinction of the origin of tragedy. The study of Homer's epics had suggested its true province to tragedy; the study of the Margites, attributed also to Homer, seems to have defined and enlarged the domain of comedy. Eleven years after Phrynichus appeared, and just previous to the first effort of Aeschylus (B. C. 500), Epicharmus, who appears to have been a native of Cos [321], produced at Syracuse the earliest symmetrical and systematic form of comic dialogue and fable. All accounts prove him to have been a man of extraordinary genius, and of very thoughtful and accomplished mind. Perhaps the loss of his works is not the least to be lamented of those priceless treasures which time has destroyed. So uncertain, after all, is the great tribunal of posterity, which is often as little to be relied upon as the caprice of the passing day! We have the worthless Electra of Euripides--we have lost all, save the titles and a few sententious fragments, of thirty-five comedies of Epicharmus! Yet if Horace inform us rightly, that the poet of Syracuse was the model of Plautus, perhaps in the Amphitryon we can trace the vein and genius of the father of true comedy; and the thoughts and the plot of the lost Epicharmus may still exist, mutilated and disguised, in the humours of

the greatest comic poet [322] of modern Europe.

VII. It was chiefly from the rich stores of mythology that Epicharmus drew his fables; but what was sublimity with the tragic poet, was burlesque with the comic. He parodied the august personages and venerable adventures of the gods of the Greek Pantheon. By a singular coincidence, like his contemporary Aeschylus [323], he was a Pythagorean, and it is wonderful to observe how rapidly and how powerfully the influence of the mysterious Samian operated on the most original intellects of the age. The familiar nature of the Hellenic religion sanctioned, even in the unphilosophical age of Homer, a treatment of celestial persons that to our modern notions would, at first glance, evince a disrespect for the religion itself. But wherever homage to "dead men" be admitted, we may, even in our own times, find that the most jocular legends are attached to names held in the most reverential awe. And he who has listened to an Irish or an Italian Catholic's familiar stories of some favourite saint, may form an adequate notion of the manner in which a pious Greek could jest upon Bacchus to-day and sacrifice to Bacchus to-morrow. With his mythological travesties the Pythagorean mingled, apparently, many earnest maxims of morality [324], and though not free, in the judgment of Aristotle, from a vice of style usually common only to ages the most refined [325]; he was yet proverbial, even in the most polished period of Grecian letters, for the graces of his diction and the happy choice of his expressions.

Phormis, a contemporary of Epicharmus, flourished also at Syracuse, and though sometimes classed with Epicharmus, and selecting his materials from the same source, his claims to reputation are immeasurably more equivocal. Dinolochus continued the Sicilian school, and was a contemporary of the first Athenian comic writer.

VIII. Hence it will be seen that the origin of comedy does not rest with the Athenians; that Megara, if the birthplace of Susarion, may fairly claim whatever merit belongs to the first rude improvement, and that Syracuse is entitled to the higher distinction of raising humour into art. So far is comedy the offspring of the Dorians--not the Dorians of a sullen oligarchy, with whom to vary an air of music was a crime--not the Dorians of Lacedaemon--but of Megara and Syracuse--of an energetic, though irregular democracy--of a splendid, though illegitimate monarchy. [326]

But the comedy of Epicharmus was not altogether the old comedy of Athens. The last, as bequeathed to us by Aristophanes, has features which bear little family resemblance to the philosophical parodies of the Pythagorean poet. It does not confine itself to mythological subjects--it avoids the sententious style--it does not preach, but ridicule philosophy--it plunges amid the great practical business of men--it breathes of the Agora and the Piraeus--it is not a laughing sage, but a bold, boisterous, gigantic demagogue, ever in the thickest mob of human interests, and wielding all the various humours of a democracy with a brilliant audacity, and that reckless ease which is the proof of its astonishing power.

IX. Chionides was the first Athenian comic writer. We find him before the public three years after the battle of Marathon (B. C. 487), when the final defeat of Hippias confirmed the stability of the republic; and when the improvements of Aeschylus in tragedy served to communicate new attractions to the comic stage. Magnes, a writer of

great wit, and long popular, closely followed, and the titles of some of the plays of these writers confirm the belief that Attic comedy, from its commencement, took other ground than that occupied by the mythological burlesques of Epicharmus. So great was the impetus given to the new art, that a crowd of writers followed simultaneously, whose very names it is wearisome to mention. Of these the most eminent were Cratinus and Crates. The earliest _recorded_ play of Cratinus, though he must have exhibited many before [327], appeared the year prior to the death of Cimon (the Archilochi, B. C. 448). Plutarch quotes some lines from this author, which allude to the liberality of Cimon with something of that patron-loving spirit which was rather the characteristic of a Roman than an Athenian poet. Though he himself, despite his age, was proverbially of no very abstemious or decorous habits, Cratinus was unsparing in his attacks upon others, and wherever he found or suspected vice, he saw a subject worthy of his genius. He was admired to late posterity, and by Roman critics, for the grace and even for the grandeur of his hardy verses; and Quintilian couples him with Eupolis and Aristophanes as models for the formation of orators. Crates appeared (B. C. 451) two years before the first _recorded_ play of Cratinus. He had previously been an actor, and performed the principal characters in the plays of Cratinus. Aristophanes bestows on him the rare honour of his praise, while he sarcastically reminds the Athenian audience of the ill reception that so ingenious a poet often received at their hands. Yet, despite the excellence of the earlier comic writers, they had hitherto at Athens very sparingly adopted the artistical graces of Epicharmus. Crates, who did not write before the five years' truce with Sparta, is said by Aristotle not only to have been the first who abandoned the iambic form of comedy, but the first Athenian who invented systematic fable or plot--a strong argument to show how little the Athenian borrowed from the Sicilian comedy, since, if the last had been its source of inspiration, the invented stories of Epicharmus (by half a century the predecessor of Crates) would naturally have been the most striking improvement to be imitated. The Athenian comedy did not receive the same distinctions conferred upon tragedy. So obscure was its rise to its later eminence, that even Aristotle could not determine when or by whom the various progressive improvements were made: and, regarded with jealous or indifferent eyes by the magistrature as an exhibition given by private competitors, nor calling for the protection of the state, which it often defied, it was long before its chorus was defrayed at the public cost.

Under Cratinus and Crates [328], however, in the year of the Samian war, the comic drama assumed a character either so personally scurrilous, or so politically dangerous, that a decree was passed interdicting its exhibitions (B. C. 440). The law was repealed three years afterward (B. C. 437) [329]. Viewing its temporary enforcement, and the date in which it was passed, it appears highly probable that the critical events of the Samian expedition may have been the cause of the decree. At such a time the opposition of the comic writers might have been considered dangerous. With the increased stability of the state, the law was, perhaps, deemed no longer necessary. And from the recommencement of the comic drama, we may probably date both the improvements of Crates and the special protection of the state; for when, for the first time, Comedy was formally authorized by the law, it was natural that the law should recognise the privileges it claimed in common with its sister Tragedy. There is no authority for supposing that Pericles, whose calm temper and long novitiate in the stormy career of public life seem to have

rendered him callous to public abuse, was the author of this decree. It is highly probable, indeed, that he was absent at the siege of Samos [330] when it was passed; but he was the object of such virulent attacks by the comic poets that we might consider them actuated by some personal feeling of revenge and spleen, were it not evident that Cratinus at least (and probably Crates, his disciple) was attached to the memory of Cimon, and could not fail to be hostile to the principles and government of Cimon's successor. So far at this period had comedy advanced; but, in the background, obscure and undreamed of, was one, yet in childhood, destined to raise the comic to the rank of the tragic muse; one who, perhaps, from his earliest youth, was incited by the noisy fame of his predecessors, and the desire of that glorious, but often perverted power, so palpable and so exultant, which rides the stormy waves of popular applause [331]. About thirteen years after the brief prohibition of comedy appeared that wonderful genius, the elements and attributes of whose works it will be a pleasing, if arduous task, in due season, to analyze and define; matchless alike in delicacy and strength, in powers the most gigantic, in purpose the most daring--with the invention of Shakspeare--the playfulness of Rabelais--the malignity of Swift--need I add the name of Aristophanes?

X. But while comedy had thus progressed to its first invidious dignity, that of proscription, far different was the reward that awaited the present representative and master of the tragic school. In the year that the muse of Cratinus was silenced, Sophocles was appointed one of the colleagues with Pericles in the Samian war.

CHAPTER IV.

The Tragedies of Sophocles.

I. It was in the very nature of the Athenian drama, that, when once established, it should concentrate and absorb almost every variety of the poetical genius. The old lyrical poetry, never much cultivated in Athens, ceased in a great measure when tragedy arose, or rather tragedy was the complete development, the new and perfected consummation of the Dithyrambic ode. Lyrical poetry transmigrated into the choral song, as the epic merged into the dialogue and plot, of the drama. Thus, when we speak of Athenian poetry, we speak of dramatic poetry--they were one and the same. As Helvetius has so luminously shown [332], genius ever turns towards that quarter in which fame shines brightest, and hence, in every age, there will be a sympathetic connexion between the taste of the public and the direction of the talent.

Now in Athens, where audiences were numerous and readers few, every man who felt within himself the inspiration of the poet would necessarily desire to see his poetry put into action--assisted with all the pomp of spectacle and music, hallowed by the solemnity of a religious festival, and breathed by artists elaborately trained to heighten the eloquence of words into the reverent ear of assembled Greece.

Hence the multitude of dramatic poets, hence the mighty fertility of

each; hence the life and activity of this--the comparative torpor and barrenness of every other--species of poetry. To add to the pre-eminence of the art, the applauses of the many were sanctioned by the critical canons of the few. The drama was not only the most alluring form which the Divine Spirit could assume--but it was also deemed the loftiest and the purest; and when Aristotle ranked [333] the tragic higher than even the epic muse, he probably did but explain the reasons for a preference which the generality of critics were disposed to accord to her. [334]

II. The career of the most majestic of the Greek poets was eminently felicitous. His birth was noble, his fortune affluent; his natural gifts were the rarest which nature bestows on man, genius and beauty. All the care which the age permitted was lavished on his education. For his feet even the ordinary obstacles in the path of distinction were smoothed away. He entered life under auspices the most propitious and poetical. At the age of sixteen he headed the youths who performed the triumphant paeon round the trophy of Salamis. At twenty-five, when the bones of Theseus were borne back to Athens in the galley of the victorious Cimon, he exhibited his first play, and won the prize from Aeschylus. That haughty genius, whether indignant at the success of a younger rival, or at a trial for impiety before the Areopagus, to which (though acquitted) he was subjected, or at the rapid ascendancy of a popular party, that he seems to have scorned with the disdain at once of an eupatrid and a Pythagorean, soon after retired from Athens to the Syracusan court; and though he thence sent some of his dramas to the Athenian stage [335], the absent veteran could not but excite less enthusiasm than the young aspirant, whose artful and polished genius was more in harmony with the reigning taste than the vast but rugged grandeur of Aeschylus, who, perhaps from the impossibility tangibly and visibly to body forth his shadowy Titans and obscure sublimity of design, does not appear to have obtained a popularity on the stage equal to his celebrity as a poet [336]. For three-and-sixty years did Sophocles continue to exhibit; twenty times he obtained the first prize, and he is said never to have been degraded to the third. The ordinary persecutions of envy itself seem to have spared this fortunate poet. Although his moral character was far from pure [337], and even in extreme old age he sought after the pleasures of his youth [339], yet his excesses apparently met with a remarkable indulgence from his contemporaries. To him were known neither the mortifications of Aeschylus nor the relentless mockery heaped upon Euripides. On his fair name the terrible Aristophanes himself affixes no brand [339]. The sweetness of his genius extended indeed to his temper, and personal popularity assisted his public triumphs. Nor does he appear to have keenly shared the party animosities of his day; his serenity, like that of Goethe, has in it something of enviable rather than honourable indifference. He owed his first distinction to Cimon, and he served afterward under Pericles; on his entrance into life, he led the youths that circled the trophy of Grecian freedom--and on the verge of death, we shall hereafter see him calmly assent to the surrender of Athenian liberties. In short, Aristophanes perhaps mingled more truth than usual with his wit, when even in the shades below he says of Sophocles, "He was contented here--he's contented there." A disposition thus facile, united with an admirable genius, will, not unoften, effect a miracle, and reconcile prosperity with fame. [340]

At the age of fifty-seven, Sophocles was appointed, as I before said [341], to a command, as one of the ten generals in the Samian war; but

history is silent as to his military genius [342]. In later life we shall again have occasion to refer to him, condemned as he was to illustrate (after a career of unprecedented brilliancy--nor ever subjected to the caprice of the common public) the melancholy moral inculcated by himself [343], and so often obtruded upon us by the dramatists of his country, "never to deem a man happy till death itself denies the hazard of reverses." Out of the vast, though not accurately known, number of the dramas of Sophocles, seven remain.

III. A great error has been committed by those who class Aeschylus and Sophocles together as belonging to the same era, and refer both to the age of Pericles, because each was living while Pericles was in power. We may as well class Dr. Johnson and Lord Byron in the same age, because both lived in the reign of George III. The Athenian rivals were formed under the influences of very different generations; and if Aeschylus lived through a considerable portion of the career of the younger Sophocles, the accident of longevity by no means warrants us to consider then the children of the same age--the creatures of the same influences. Aeschylus belonged to the race and the period from which emerged Themistocles and Aristides--Sophocles to those which produced Phidias and Pericles. Sophocles indeed, in the calmness of his disposition, and the symmetry and stateliness of his genius, might almost be entitled the Pericles of poetry. And as the statesman was called the Olympian, not from the headlong vehemence, but the serene majesty of his strength; so of Sophocles also it may be said, that his power is visible in his repose, and his thunders roll from the depth of a clear sky.

IV. The age of Pericles is the age of art [344]. It was not Sophocles alone that was an artist in that time; he was but one of the many who, in every department, sought, in study and in science, the secrets of the wise or the beautiful. Pericles and Phidias were in their several paths of fame what Sophocles was in his. But it was not the art of an emasculate or effeminate period--it grew out of the example of a previous generation of men astonishingly great. It was art still fresh from the wells of nature. Art with a vast field yet unexplored, and in all its youthful vigour and maiden enthusiasm. There was, it is true, at a period a little later than that in which the genius of Sophocles was formed, one class of students among whom a false taste and a spurious refinement were already visible--the class of rhetoricians and philosophical speculators. For, in fact, the art which belongs to the imagination is often purest in an early age; but that which appertains to the reason and intellect is slow before it attains mature strength and manly judgment. Among these students was early trained and tutored the thoughtful mind of Euripides; and hence that art which in Sophocles was learned in more miscellaneous and active circles, and moulded by a more powerful imagination, in Euripides often sickens us with the tricks of a pleader, the quibbles of a schoolman, or the dullness of a moralizing declaimer. But as, in the peculiar attributes and character of his writings, Euripides somewhat forestalled his age--as his example had a very important influence upon his successors--as he did not exhibit till the fame of Sophocles was already confirmed--and as his name is intimately associated with the later age of Aristophanes and Socrates--it may be more convenient to confine our critical examination at present to the tragedies of Sophocles.

Although the three plays of the "Oedipus Tyrannus," the "Oedipus at Coloneus," and the "Antigone," were composed and exhibited at very

wide intervals of time, yet, from their connexion with each other, they may almost be said to form one poem. The "Antigone," which concludes the story, was the one earliest written; and there are passages in either "Oedipus" which seem composed to lead up, as it were, to the catastrophe of the "Antigone," and form a harmonious link between the several dramas. These three plays constitute, on the whole, the greatest performance of Sophocles, though in detached parts they are equalled by passages in the "Ajax" and the "Philoctetes."

V. The "Oedipus Tyrannus" opens thus. An awful pestilence devastates Thebes. Oedipus, the king, is introduced to us, powerful and beloved; to him whose wisdom had placed him on the throne, look up the priest and the suppliants for a remedy even amid the terrors of the plague. Oedipus informs them that he has despatched Creon (the brother of his wife Jocasta) to the Pythian god to know by what expiatory deed the city might be delivered from its curse. Scarce has he concluded, when Creon himself enters, and announces "glad tidings" in the explicit answer of the oracle. The god has declared--that a pollution had been bred in the land, and must be expelled the city--that Laius, the former king, had been murdered--and that his blood must be avenged. Laius had left the city never to return; of his train but one man escaped to announce his death by assassins. Oedipus instantly resolves to prosecute the inquiry into the murder, and orders the people to be summoned. The suppliants arise from the altar, and a solemn chorus of the senators of Thebes (in one of the most splendid lyrics of Sophocles) chant the terrors of the plague--"that unarmed Mars"--and implore the protection of the divine averters of destruction. Oedipus then, addressing the chorus, demands their aid to discover the murderer, whom he solemnly excommunicates, and dooms, deprived of aid and intercourse, to waste slowly out a miserable existence; nay, if the assassin should have sought refuge in the royal halls, there too shall the vengeance be wreaked and the curse fall.

"For I," continued Oedipus,

"I, who the sceptre which he wielded wield;
I, who have mounted to his marriage bed;
I, in whose children (had he issue known)
His would have claimed a common brotherhood;
Now that the evil fate hath fallen o'er him--
I am the heir of that dead king's revenge,
Not less than if these lips had hailed him 'father!'"

A few more sentences introduce to us the old soothsayer Tiresias--for whom, at the instigation of Creon, Oedipus had sent. The seer answers the adjuration of the king with a thrilling and ominous burst--

"Wo--wo!--how fearful is the gift of wisdom,
When to the wise it bears no blessing!--wo!"

The haughty spirit of Oedipus breaks forth at the gloomy and obscure warnings of the prophet. His remonstrances grow into threats. In his blindness he even accuses Tiresias himself of the murder of Laius--and out speaks the terrible diviner:

"Ay--is it so? Abide then by thy curse
And solemn edict--never from this day
Hold human commune with these men or me;
Lo, where thou standest--lo, the land's polluter!"

A dialogue of great dramatic power ensues. Oedipus accuses Tiresias of abetting his kinsman, Creon, by whom he had been persuaded to send for the soothsayer, in a plot against his throne--and the seer, who explains nothing and threatens all things, departs with a dim and fearful prophecy.

After a song from the chorus, in which are imbodyed the doubt, the trouble, the terror which the audience may begin to feel--and here it may be observed, that with Sophocles the chorus always carries on, not the physical, but the moral, progress of the drama [345]--Creon enters, informed of the suspicion against himself which Oedipus had expressed. Oedipus, whose whole spirit is disturbed by the weird and dark threats of Tiresias, repeats the accusation, but wildly and feebly. His vain worldly wisdom suggests to him that Creon would scarcely have asked him to consult Tiresias, nor Tiresias have ventured on denunciations so tremendous, had not the two conspired against him: yet a mysterious awe invades him--he presses questions on Creon relative to the murder of Laius, and seems more anxious to acquit himself than accuse another.

While the princes contend, the queen, Jocasta, enters. She chides their quarrel, learns from Oedipus that Tiresias had accused him of the murder of the deceased king, and, to convince him of the falseness of prophetic lore, reveals to him, that long since it was predicted that Laius should be murdered by his son joint offspring of Jocasta and himself. Yet, in order to frustrate the prophecy, the only son of Laius had been exposed to perish upon solitary and untrodden mountains, while, in after years, Laius himself had fallen, in a spot where three roads met, by the hand of a stranger; so that the prophecy had not come to pass.

At this declaration terror seizes upon Oedipus. He questions Jocasta eagerly and rapidly--the place where the murder happened, the time in which it occurred, the age and personal appearance of Laius--and when he learns all, his previous arrogant conviction of innocence deserts him; and as he utters a horrid exclamation, Jocasta fixes her eyes upon him, and "shudders as she gazes." [346] He inquires what train accompanied Laius--learns that there were five persons; that but one escaped; that on his return to Thebes, seeing Oedipus on the throne, the survivor had besought the favour to retire from the city. Oedipus orders this witness of the murder to be sent for, and then proceeds to relate his own history. He has been taught to believe that Polybus of Corinth and Merope of Doris were his parents. But once at a banquet he was charged with being a supposititious child; the insult galled him, and he went to Delphi to consult the oracle. It was predicted to him that he should commit incest with his mother, and that his father should fall by his hand. Appalled and horror-stricken, he resolves to fly the possible fulfilment of the prophecy, and return no more to Corinth. In his flight by the triple road described by Jocasta he meets an old man in a chariot, with a guide or herald, and other servitors. They attempt to thrust him from the road--a contest ensues--he slays the old man and his train. Could this be Laius? Can it be to the marriage couch of the man he slew that he has ascended? No, his fears are too credulous! he clings to a straw; the herdsman who had escaped the slaughter of Laius and his attendants may prove that it was not the king whom he encountered. Jocasta sustains this hope--she cannot believe a prophecy--for it had been foretold that Laius should fall by the hand of his son, and that son had long since

perished on the mountains. The queen and Oedipus retire within their palace; the chorus resume their strains; after which, Jocasta reappears on her way to the temple of Apollo, to offer sacrifice and prayer. At this time a messenger arrives to announce to Oedipus the death of Polybus, and the wish of the Corinthians to elect Oedipus to the throne! At these tidings Jocasta is overjoyed.

"Predictions of the gods, where are ye now?
Lest by the son's doomed hand the sire should fall,
The son became a wanderer on the earth,
Lo, not the son, but Nature, gives the blow!"

Oedipus, summoned to the messenger, learns the news of his supposed father's death! It is a dread and tragic thought, but the pious Oedipus is glad that his father is no more, since he himself is thus saved from parricide; yet the other part of the prediction haunts him. His mother!--she yet lives. He reveals to the messenger the prophecy and his terror. To cheer him, the messenger now informs him that he is not the son of Merope and Polybus. A babe had been found in the entangled forest-dells of Cithaeron by a herdsman and slave of Laius --he had given the infant to another--that other, the messenger who now tells the tale. Transferred to the care of Polybus and Merope, the babe became to them as a son, for they were childless. Jocasta hears--stunned and speechless--till Oedipus, yet unconscious of the horrors still to come, turns to demand of her if she knew the herdsman who had found the child. Then she gasps wildly out--

"Whom speaks he of? Be silent--heed it not--
Blot it out from thy memory!--it is evil!
Oedipus. It cannot be--the clew is here; and I
Will trace it through that labyrinth--my birth.
Jocasta. By all the gods I warn thee; for the sake
Of thine own life beware; it is enough
For me to hear and madden!"

Oedipus (suspecting only that the pride of his queen revolts from the thought of her husband's birth being proved base and servile) replies,

"Nay, nay, cheer thee!
Were I through three descents threefold a slave,
My shame would not touch thee.
Jocasta. I do implore thee,
This once obey me--this once.
Oedipus I will not!
To truth I grope my way.
Jocasta. And yet what love
Speaks in my voice! Thine ignorance is thy bliss.
Oedipus. A bliss that tortures!
Jocasta. Miserable man!
Oh couldst thou never learn the thing thou art!
Oedipus. Will no one quicken this slow herdsman's steps
The unquestioned birthright of a royal name
Let this proud queen possess!
Jocasta. Wo! wo! thou wretch!
Wo! my last word!--words are no more for me!"

With this Jocasta rushes from the scene. Still Oedipus misconstrues her warning; he ascribes her fears to the royalty of her spirit. For himself, Fortune was his mother, and had blessed him; nor could the

accident of birth destroy his inheritance from nature. The chorus give way to their hopes! their wise, their glorious Oedipus might have been born a Theban! The herdsman enters: like Tiresias, he is loath to speak. The fiery king extorts his secret. Oedipus is the son of Laius and Jocasta--at his birth the terrible prophecies of the Pythian induced his own mother to expose him on the mountains--the compassion of the herdsman saved him--saved him to become the bridegroom of his mother, the assassin of his sire. The astonishing art with which, from step to step, the audience and the victim are led to the climax of the discovery, is productive of an interest of pathos and of terror which is not equalled by the greatest masterpieces of the modern stage [347], and possesses that species of anxious excitement which is wholly unparalleled in the ancient. The discovery is a true catastrophe--the physical denouement is but an adjunct to the moral one. Jocasta, on quitting the scene, had passed straight to the bridal-chamber, and there, by the couch from which had sprung a double and accursed progeny, perished by her own hands. Meanwhile, the predestined parricide, bursting into the chamber, beheld, as the last object on earth, the corpse of his wife and mother! Once more Oedipus reappears, barred for ever from the light of day. In the fury of his remorse, he "had smote the balls of his own eyes," and the wise baffler of the sphinx, Oedipus, the haughty, the insolent, the illustrious, is a forlorn and despairing outcast. But amid all the horror of the concluding scene, a beautiful and softening light breaks forth. Blind, powerless, excommunicated, Creon, whom Oedipus accused of murder, has now become his judge and his master. The great spirit, crushed beneath its intolerable woes, is humbled to the dust; and the "wisest of mankind" implores but two favours--to be thrust from the land an exile, and once more to embrace his children. Even in translation the exquisite tenderness of this passage cannot altogether fail of its effect.

"For my fate, let it pass! My children, Creon!
 My sons--nay, they the bitter wants of life
 May master--they are MEN?--my girls--my darlings--
 Why, never sat I at my household board
 Without their blessed looks--our very bread
 We brake together; thou'lt be kind to them
 For my sake, Creon--and (oh, latest prayer!)
 Let me but touch them--feel them with these hands,
 And pour such sorrow as may speak farewell
 O'er ills that must be theirs! By thy pure line--
 For thin is pure--do this, sweet prince. Methinks
 I should not miss these eyes, could I but touch them.
 What shall I say to move thee?

Sobs! And do I,
 Oh do I hear my sweet ones? Hast thou sent,
 In mercy sent, my children to my arms?
 Speak--speak--I do not dream!
 Creon. They are thy children;
 I would not shut thee from the dear delight
 In the old time they gave thee.
 Oedipus. Blessings on thee
 For this one mercy mayst thou find above
 A kinder God than I have. Ye--where are ye?
 My children--come!--nearer and nearer yet," etc.

The pathos of this scene is continued to the end; and the very last words Oedipus utters as his children cling to him, implore that they

at least may not be torn away.

It is in this concluding scene that the art of the play is consummated; the horrors of the catastrophe, which, if a last impression, would have left behind a too painful and gloomy feeling, are softened down by this beautiful resort to the tenderest and holiest sources of emotion. And the pathos is rendered doubly effective, not only from the immediate contrast of the terror that preceded it, but from the masterly skill with which all display of the softer features in the character of Oedipus is reserved to the close. In the breaking up of the strong mind and the daring spirit, when empire, honour, name, are all annihilated, the heart is seen, as it were, surviving the wrecks around it, and clinging for support to the affections.

VII. In the "Oedipus at Coloneus," the blind king is presented to us, after the lapse of years, a wanderer over the earth, unconsciously taking his refuge in the grove of the furies [348]--"the awful goddesses, daughters of Earth and Darkness." His young daughter, Antigone, one of the most lovely creations of poetry, is his companion and guide; he is afterward joined by his other daughter, Ismene, whose weak and selfish character is drawn in strong contrast to the heroism and devotion of Antigone. The ancient prophecies that foretold his woes had foretold also his release. His last shelter and resting-place were to be obtained from the dread deities, and a sign of thunder, or earthquake, or lightning was to announce his parting hour. Learning the spot to which his steps had been guided, Oedipus solemnly feels that his doom approaches: thus, at the very opening of the poem, he stands before us on the verge of a mysterious grave.

The sufferings which have bowed the parricide to a premature old age [349] have not crushed his spirit; the softness and self-humiliation which were the first results of his awful affliction are passed away. He is grown once more vehement and passionate, from the sense of wrong; remorse still visits him, but is alternated with the yet more human feeling of resentment at the unjust severity of his doom [350]. His sons, who, "by a word," might have saved him from the expulsion, penury, and wanderings he has undergone, had deserted his cause--had looked with indifferent eyes on his awful woes--had joined with Creon to expel him from the Theban land. They are the Goneril and Regan of the classic Lear, as Antigone is the Cordelia on whom he leans--a Cordelia he has never thrust from him. "When," says Oedipus, in stern bitterness of soul,

"When my soul boiled within me--when 'to die'
Was all my prayer--and death was sweetness, yea,
Had they but stoned me like a dog, I'd blessed them;
Then no man rose against me--but when time
Brought its slow comfort--when my wounds were scarred--
All my griefs mellow'd, and remorse itself
Judged my self-penance mightier than my sins,
Thebes thrust me from her breast, and they, my sons,
My blood, mine offspring, from their father shrunk:
A word of theirs had saved me--one small word--
They said it not--and lo! the wandering beggar!"

In the mean while, during the exile of Oedipus, strife had broken out between the brothers: Eteocles, here represented as the younger, drove out Polynices, and seized the throne; Polynices takes refuge at Argos,

where he prepares war against the usurper: an oracle declares that success shall be with that party which Oedipus joins, and a mysterious blessing is pronounced on the land which contains his bones. Thus, the possession of this wild tool of fate--raised up in age to a dread and ghastly consequence--becomes the argument of the play, as his death must become the catastrophe. It is the deep and fierce revenge of Oedipus that makes the passion of the whole. According to a sublime conception, we see before us the physical Oedipus in the lowest state of destitution and misery--in rags, blindness, beggary, utter and abject impotence. But in the moral, Oedipus is all the majesty of a power still royal. The oracle has invested one, so fallen and so wretched in himself, with the power of a god--the power to confer victory on the cause he adopts, prosperity on the land that becomes his tomb. With all the revenge of age, all the grand malignity of hatred, he clings to this shadow and relic of a sceptre. Creon, aware of the oracle, comes to recall him to Thebes. The treacherous kinsman humbles himself before his victim--he is the suppliant of the beggar, who defies and spurns him. Creon avenges himself by seizing on Antigone and Ismene. Nothing can be more dramatically effective than the scene in which these last props of his age are torn from the desolate old man. They are ultimately restored to him by Theseus, whose amiable and lofty character is painted with all the partial glow of colouring which an Athenian poet would naturally lavish on the Athenian Alfred. We are next introduced to Polynices. He, like Creon, has sought Oedipus with the selfish motive of recovering his throne by means of an ally to whom the oracle promises victory. But there is in Polynices the appearance of a true penitence, and a mingled gentleness and majesty in his bearing which interests us in his fate despite his faults, and which were possibly intended by Sophocles to give a new interest to the plot of the "Antigone," composed and exhibited long before. Oedipus is persuaded by the benevolence of Theseus, and the sweet intercession of Antigone, to admit his son. After a chant from the chorus on the ills of old age [351], Polynices enters. He is struck with the wasted and miserable appearance of the old man, and bitterly reproaches his own desertion.

"But since," he says, with almost a Christian sentiment--

"Since o'er each deed, upon the Olympian throne,
Mercy sits joint presider with great Jove,
Let her, oh father, also take her stand
Within thy soul--and judge me! The past sins
Yet have their cure--ah, would they had recall!
Why are you voiceless? Speak to me, my father?
Turn not away--will you not answer me?" etc.

Oedipus retains his silence in spite of the prayers of his beloved Antigone, and Polynices proceeds to narrate the wrongs he has undergone from Eteocles, and, warming with a young warrior's ardour, paints the array that he has mustered on his behalf--promises to restore Oedipus to his palace--and, alluding to the oracle, throws himself on his father's pardon.

Then, at last, outspeaks Oedipus, and from reproach bursts into curses.

"And now you weep; you wept not at these woes
Until you wept your own. But I--I weep not.

These things are not for tears, but for Endurance.
 My son is like his sire--a parricide!
 Toil, exile, beggary--daily bread doled out
 From stranger hands--these are your gifts, my son!
 My nurses, guardians--they who share the want,
 Or earn the bread, are daughters; call them not
 Women, for they to me are men. Go to!
 Thou art not mine--I do disclaim such issue.
 Behold, the eyes of the avenging God
 Are o'er thee! but their ominous light delays
 To blast thee yet. March on--march on--to Thebes!
 Not--not for thee, the city and the throne;
 The earth shall first be reddened with thy blood--
 Thy blood and his, thy foe--thy brother! Curses!
 Not for the first time summoned to my wrongs--
 Curses! I call ye back, and make ye now
 Allies with this old man!

* * * * *

Yea, curses shall possess thy seat and throne,
 If antique Justice o'er the laws of earth
 Reign with the thunder-god. March on to ruin!
 Spurned and disowned--the basest of the base--
 And with thee bear this burden: o'er thine head
 I pour a prophet's doom; nor throne nor home
 Waits on the sharpness of the levelled spear:
 Thy very land of refuge hath no welcome;
 Thine eyes have looked their last on hollow Argos.
 Death by a brother's hand--dark fratricide,
 Murdering thyself a brother--shall be thine.
 Yea, while I curse thee, on the murky deep
 Of the primeval hell I call! Prepare
 These men their home, dread Tartarus! Goddesses,
 Whose shrines are round me--ye avenging Furies!
 And thou, oh Lord of Battle, who hast stirred
 Hate in the souls of brethren, hear me--hear me!--
 And now, 'tis past!--enough!--depart and tell
 The Theban people, and thy fond allies,
 What blessings, from his refuge with the Furies,
 The blind old Oedipus awards his sons!" [352]

As is usual with Sophocles, the terrific strength of these execrations
 is immediately followed by a soft and pathetic scene between Antigone
 and her brother. Though crushed at first by the paternal curse, the
 spirit of Polynices so far recovers its native courage that he will
 not listen to the prayer of his sister to desist from the expedition
 to Thebes, and to turn his armies back to Argos. "What," he says,

"Lead back an army that could deem I trembled!"

Yet he feels the mournful persuasion that his death is doomed; and a
 glimpse of the plot of the "Antigone" is opened upon us by his prayer
 to his sister, that if he perish, they should lay him with due honours
 in the tomb. The exquisite loveliness of Antigone's character touches
 even Polynices, and he departs, saying,

"With the gods rests the balance of our fate;
 But thee, at least--oh never upon thee

May evil fall! Thou art too good for sorrow!"

The chorus resume their strains, when suddenly thunder is heard, and Oedipus hails the sign that heralds him to the shades. Nothing can be conceived more appalling than this omen. It seems as if Oedipus had been spared but to curse his children and to die. He summons Theseus, tells him that his fate is at hand, and that without a guide he himself will point out the spot where he shall rest. Never may that spot be told--that secret and solemn grave shall be the charm of the land and a defence against its foes. Oedipus then turns round, and the instinct within guides him as he gropes along. His daughters and Theseus follow the blind man, amazed and awed. "Hither," he says,

"Hither--by this way come--for this way leads
The unseen conductor of the dead [353]--and she
Whom shadows call their queen! [354] Oh light, sweet light,
Rayless to me--mine once, and even now
I feel thee palpable, round this worn form,
Clinging in last embrace--I go to shroud
The waning life in the eternal Hades!"

Thus the stage is left to the chorus, and the mysterious fate of Oedipus is recited by the Nuntius, in verses which Longinus has not extolled too highly. Oedipus had led the way to a cavern, well known in legendary lore as the spot where Perithous and Theseus had pledged their faith, by the brazen steps which make one of the entrances to the infernal realms;

"Between which place and the Thorician stone--
The hollow thorn, and the sepulchral pile
He sat him down."

And when he had performed libations from the stream, and laved, and decked himself in the funeral robes, Jove thundered beneath the earth, and the old man's daughters, aghast with horror, fell at his knees with sobs and groans.

"Then o'er them as they wept, his hands he clasped,
And 'Oh my children,' said he, 'from this day
Ye have no more a father--all of me
Withers away--the burden and the toil
Of mine old age fall on ye nevermore.
Sad travail have ye home for me, and yet
Let one thought breathe a balm when I am gone--
The thought that none upon the desolate world
Loved you as I did; and in death I leave
A happier life to you!"

Thus movingly,
With clinging arms and passionate sobs, the three
Wept out aloud, until the sorrow grew
Into a deadly hush--nor cry nor wail
Starts the drear silence of the solitude.
Then suddenly a bodiless voice is heard
And fear came cold on all. They shook with awe,
And horror, like a wind, stirred up their hair.
Again, the voice--again--'Ho! Oedipus, Why linger we so long?
Come--hither--come.'"

Oedipus then solemnly consigns his children to Theseus, dismisses them, and Theseus alone is left with the old man.

"So groaning we depart--and when once more
We turned our eyes to gaze, behold, the place
Knew not the man! The king alone was there,
Holding his spread hands o'er averted brows
As if to shut from out the quailing gaze
The horrid aspect of some ghastly thing
That nature durst not look on. So we paused
Until the king awakened from the terror,
And to the mother Earth, and high Olympus,
Seat of the gods, he breathed awe--stricken prayer
But, how the old man perished, save the king,
Mortal can ne'er divine; for bolt, nor levin,
Nor blasting tempest from the ocean borne,
Was heard or seen; but either was he rapt
Aloft by wings divine, or else the shades,
Whose darkness never looked upon the sun,
Yawned in grim mercy, and the rent abyss
Ingulf'd the wanderer from the living world."

Such, sublime in its wondrous power, its appalling mystery, its dim, religious terror, is the catastrophe of the "Oedipus at Coloneus." The lines that follow are devoted to the lamentations of the daughters, and appear wholly superfluous, unless we can consider that Sophocles desired to indicate the connexion of the "Oedipus" with the "Antigone," by informing us that the daughters of Oedipus are to be sent to Thebes at the request of Antigone herself, who hopes, in the tender courage of her nature, that she may perhaps prevent the predicted slaughter of her brothers.

VII. Coming now to the tragedy of "Antigone," we find the prophecy of Oedipus has been fulfilled--the brothers have fallen by the hand of each other--the Argive army has been defeated--Creon has obtained the tyranny, and interdicts, on the penalty of death, the burial of Polynices, whose corpse remains guarded and unhonoured. Antigone, mindful of her brother's request to her in their last interview, resolves to brave the edict, and perform those rites so indispensably sacred in the eyes of a Greek. She communicates her resolution to her sister Ismene, whose character, still feeble and commonplace, is a perpetual foil to the heroism of Antigone. She acts upon her resolutions, baffles the vigilant guards, buries the corpse. Creon, on learning that his edict has been secretly disobeyed, orders the remains to be disinterred, and in a second attempt Antigone is discovered, brought before him, and condemned to death. Haemon, the son of Creon, had been affianced to Antigone. On the news of her sentence he seeks Creon, and after a violent scene between the two, which has neither the power nor the dignity common to Sophocles, departs with vague menaces. A short but most exquisite invocation to love from the chorus succeeds, and in this, it may be observed, the chorus express much left not represented in the action--they serve to impress on the spectator all the irresistible effects of the passion which the modern artist would seek to represent in some moving scene between Antigone and Haemon. The heroine herself now passes across the stage on her way to her dreadful doom, which is that of living burial in "the cavern of a rock." She thus addresses the chorus--

"Ye, of the land wherein my fathers dwelt,

Behold me journeying to my latest bourne!
 Time hath no morrow for these eyes. Black Orcus,
 Whose court hath room for all, leads my lone steps,
 E'en while I live, to shadows. Not for me
 The nuptial blessing or the marriage hymn:
 Acheron, receive thy bride!
 (Chorus.) Honoured and mourned
 Nor struck by slow disease or violent hand,
 Thy steps glide to the grave! Self-judged, like Freedom, [355]
 Thou, above mortals gifted, shalt descend
 All living to the shades.
 Antigone. Methinks I have heard--
 So legends go--how Phrygian Niobe
 (Poor stranger) on the heights of Sipylus
 Mournfully died. The hard rock, like the tendrils
 O' the ivy, clung and crept unto her heart--
 Her, nevermore, dissolving into showers,
 Pale snows desert; and from her sorrowful eyes,
 As from unfailing founts adown the cliffs,
 Fall the eternal dews. Like her, the god
 Lulls me to sleep, and into stone!"

Afterward she adds in her beautiful lament, "That she has one comfort
 --that she shall go to the grave dear to her parents and her brother."

The grief of Antigone is in perfect harmony with her character--it betrays no repentance, no weakness--it is but the natural sorrow, of youth and womanhood, going down to that grave which had so little of hope in the old Greek religion. In an Antigone on our stage we might have demanded more reference to her lover; but the Grecian heroine names him not, and alludes rather to the loss of the woman's lot of wedlock than the loss of the individual bridegroom. But it is not for that reason that we are to conclude, with M. Schlegel and others, that the Greek women knew not the sentiment of love. Such a notion, that has obtained an unaccountable belief, I shall hereafter show to be at variance with all the poetry of the Greeks--with their drama itself--with their modes of life--and with the very elements of that human nature, which is everywhere the same. But Sophocles, in the character of Antigone, personifies duty, not passion. It is to this, her leading individuality, that whatever might weaken the pure and statue-like effect of the creation is sacrificed. As she was to her father, so is she to her brother. The sorrows and calamities of her family have so endeared them to her heart that she has room for little else. "Formed," as she exquisitely says of herself, "to love, not to hate," [356] she lives but to devote affections the most sacred to sad and pious tasks, and the last fulfilled, she has done with earth.

When Antigone is borne away, an august personage is presented to us, whose very name to us, who usually read the Oedipus Tyrannus before the Antigone, is the foreteller of omen and doom. As in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Tiresias the soothsayer appears to announce all the terrors that ensue--so now, at the crowning desolation of that fated house, he, the solemn and mysterious survivor of such dark tragedies, is again brought upon the stage. The auguries have been evil--birds battle with each other in the air--the flame will not mount from the sacrificial victim--and the altars and hearths are full of birds and dogs, gathering to their feast on the corpse of Polynices. The soothsayer enjoins Creon not to war against the dead, and to accord the rites of burial to the prince's body. On the obstinate refusal of

Creon, Tiresias utters prophetic maledictions and departs. Creon, whose vehemence of temper is combined with a feeble character, and strongly contrasts the mighty spirit of Oedipus, repents, and is persuaded by the chorus to release Antigone from her living prison, as well as to revoke the edict which denies sepulture to Polynices. He quits the stage for that purpose, and the chorus burst into one of their most picturesque odes, an Invocation to Bacchus, thus inadequately presented to the English reader.

"Oh thou, whom earth by many a title hails,
Son of the thunder-god, and wild delight
Of the wild Theban maid!
Whether on far Italia's shores obey'd,
Or where Eleusis joins thy solemn rites
With the great mother's [357], in mysterious vales--
Bacchus in Bacchic Thebes best known,
Thy Thebes, who claims the Thyads as her daughters;
Fast by the fields with warriors dragon-sown,
And where Ismenus rolls his rapid waters.
It saw thee, the smoke,
On the horned height--[358]
It saw thee, and broke
With a leap into light;
Where roam Corycian nymphs the glorious mountain,
And all melodious flows the old Castalian fountain
Vocal with echoes wildly glad,
The Nysian steeps with ivy clad,
And shores with vineyards greenly blooming,
Proclaiming, steep to shore,
That Bacchus evermore
Is guardian of the race,
Where he holds his dwelling-place
With her [359], beneath the breath
Of the thunder's glowing death,
In the glare of her glory consuming.

Oh now with healing steps along the slope
Of loved Parnassus, or in gliding motion,
O'er the far-sounding deep Euboean ocean--
Come! for we perish--come!--our Lord and hope!
Leader of the stately choir
Of the great stars, whose very breath is light,
Who dost with hymns inspire
Voices, oh youngest god, that sound by night;
Come, with thy Maenad throng,
Come with the maidens of thy Naxian isle,
Who chant their Lord Bacchus--all the while
Maddening, with mystic dance, the solemn midnight long!"

At the close of the chorus the Nuntius enters to announce the catastrophe, and Eurydice, the wife of Creon, disturbed by rumours within her palace, is made an auditor of the narration. Creon and his train, after burying Polynices, repair to the cavern in which Antigone had been immured. They hear loud wailings within "that unconsecrated chamber"--it is the voice of Haemon. Creon recoils--the attendants enter--within the cavern they behold Antigone, who, in the horror of that deathlike solitude, had strangled herself with the zone of her robe; and there was her lover lying beside, his arms clasped around her waist. Creon at length advances, perceives his son, and conjures

him to come forth.

"Then, glaring on his father with wild eyes,
The son stood dumb, and spat upon his face,
And clutched the unnatural sword--the father fled,
And, wroth, as with the arm that missed a parent,
The wretched man drove home unto his breast
The abhorrent steel; yet ever, while dim sense
Struggled within the fast-expiring soul--
Feebler, and feebler still, his stiffening arms
Clung to that virgin form--and every gasp
Of his last breath with bloody dew distained
The cold white cheek that was his pillow. So
Lies death embracing death!" [360]

In the midst of this description, by a fine stroke of art, Euridice, the mother of Haemon, abruptly and silently quits the stage [361]. When next we hear of her, she has destroyed herself, with her last breath cursing her husband as the murderer of her child. The end of the play leaves Creon the survivor. He himself does not perish, for he himself has never excited our sympathies [362]. He is punished through his son and wife--they dead, our interest ceases in him, and to add his death to theirs and to that of Antigone would be bathos.

VIII. In the tragedy of "Electra," the character of the heroine stands out in the boldest contrast to the creation of the Antigone; both are endowed with surpassing majesty and strength of nature--they are loftier than the daughters of men, their very loveliness is of an age when gods were no distant ancestors of kings--when, as in the early sculptors of Pallas, or even of Aphrodite, something of the severe and stern was deemed necessary to the realization of the divine; and the beautiful had not lost the colossal proportions of the sublime. But the strength and heroism of Antigone is derived from love--love, sober, serene, august--but still love. Electra, on the contrary, is supported and exalted above her sex by the might of her hatred. Her father, "the king of men," foully murdered in his palace--herself compelled to consort with his assassins--to receive from their hands both charity and insult--the adulterous murderer on her father's throne, and lord of her father's marriage bed [363]--her brother a wanderer and an outcast. Such are the thoughts unceasingly before her!--her heart and soul have for years fed upon the bitterness of a resentment, at once impotent and intense, and nature itself has

turned to gall. She sees not in Clytemnestra a mother, but the murderess of a father. The doubt and the compunction of the modern Hamlet are unknown to her more masculine spirit. She lives on but in the hope of her brother's return and of revenge. The play opens with the appearance of Orestes, Pylades, and an old attendant--arrived at break of day at the habitation of the Pelopidae--"reeking with blood"--the seats of Agamemnon. Orestes, who had been saved in childhood by his sister from the designs of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, has now returned in manhood. It is agreed that, in order to lull all suspicion in the royal adulterers, a false account of the death of Orestes by an accident in the Pythian Games shall be given to Clytemnestra; and Orestes and Pylades themselves are afterward to be introduced in the character of Phocians, bearing the ashes of the supposed dead. Meanwhile the two friends repair to the sepulchre of Agamemnon to offer libations, etc. Electra then appears, indulges her indignant lamentations at her lot, and consoles herself with the hope

of her brother's speedy return.

She is joined by her sister Chrysothemis, who is bearing sepulchral offerings to the tomb of Agamemnon; and in this interview Sophocles, with extraordinary skill and deep knowledge of human nature, contrives to excite our admiration and sympathy for the vehement Electra by contrasting her with the weak and selfish Chrysothemis. Her very bitterness against her mother is made to assume the guise of a solemn duty to her father. Her unfeminine qualities rise into courage and magnanimity--she glories in the unkindness and persecution she meets with from Clytemnestra and Aegisthus--they are proofs of her reverence to the dead. Woman as she is, she is yet the daughter of a king--she cannot submit to a usurper--"she will not, add cowardice to misery." Chrysothemis informs Electra that on the return of Aegisthus it is resolved to consign her to a vault" where she may chant her woes unheard." Electra learns the meditated sentence undismayed--she will not moderate her unwelcome wo--"she will not be a traitress to those she loves." But a dream has appalled Clytemnestra--Agamemnon has appeared to her as in life. In the vision he seemed to her to fix his sceptre on the soil, whence it sprouted up into a tree that overshadowed the whole land. Disquieted and conscience-stricken, she now sends Chrysothemis with libations to appease the manes of the dead. Electra adjures Chrysothemis not to render such expiations to scatter them to the winds or on the dust--to let them not approach the resting-place of the murdered king. Chrysothemis promises to obey the injunction, and departs. A violent and powerful scene between Clytemnestra and Electra ensues, when the attendant enters (as was agreed on) to announce the death of Orestes. In this recital he portrays the ceremony of the Pythian races in lines justly celebrated, and which, as an animated and faithful picture of an exhibition so renowned, the reader may be pleased to see, even in a feeble and cold translation. Orestes had obtained five victories in the first day--in the second he starts with nine competitors in the chariot-race--an Achaean, a Spartan, two Libyans--he himself with Thessalian steeds--a sixth from Aetolia, a Magnesian, an Enian, an Athenian, and a Boeotian complete the number.

"They took their stand where the appointed judges
Had cast their lots, and ranged the rival cars;
Rang out the brazen trump! Away they bound,
Cheer the hot steeds and shake the slackened reins
As with a body the large space is filled
With the huge clangour of the rattling cars:
High whirl aloft the dust-clouds; blent together
Each presses each--and the lash rings--and loud
Snort the wild steeds, and from their fiery breath,
Along their manes and down the circling wheels,
Scatter the flaking foam. Orestes still,
Ay, as he swept around the perilous pillar
Last in the course, wheel'd in the rushing axle,
The left rein curbed--that on the dexter hand
Flung loose. So on erect the chariots rolled!
Sudden the Aenian's fierce and headlong steeds
Broke from the bit--and, as the seventh time now
The course was circled, on the Libyan car
Dash'd their wild fronts: then order changed to ruin:
Car crashed on car--the wide Crissaeon plain
Was, sealike, strewn with wrecks: the Athenian saw,
Slackened his speed, and, wheeling round the marge,

Unscathed and skilful, in the midmost space,
Left the wild tumult of that tossing storm.
Behind, Orestes, hitherto the last,
Had yet kept back his coursers for the close;
Now one sole rival left--on, on he flew,
And the sharp sound of the impelling scourge
Rang in the keen ears of the flying steeds.
He nears--he reaches--they are side by side
Now one--the other--by a length the victor.
The courses all are past--the wheels erect
All safe--when as the hurrying coursers round
The fatal pillar dash'd, the wretched boy
Slackened the left rein; on the column's edge
Crash'd the frail axle--headlong from the car,
Caught and all meshed within the reins he fell;
And masterless, the mad steeds raged along!

Loud from that mighty multitude arose
A shriek--a shout! But yesterday such deeds
To-day such doom! Now whirled upon the earth,
Now his limbs dash'd aloft, they dragged him--those
Wild horses--till all gory from the wheels
Released--and no man, not his nearest friends,
Could in that mangled corpse have traced Orestes.
They laid the body on the funeral pyre,
And while we speak, the Phocian strangers bear,
In a small, brazen, melancholy urn,
That handful of cold ashes to which all
The grandeur of the beautiful hath shrunk.
Hither they bear him--in his father's land
To find that heritage--a tomb!"

It is much to be regretted that this passage, so fine in the original, is liable to one great objection--it has no interest as connected with the play, because the audience know that Orestes is not dead; and though the description of the race retains its animation, the report of the catastrophe loses the terror of reality, and appears but a highly-coloured and elaborate falsehood.

The reader will conceive the lamentations of Electra and the fearful joy of Clytemnestra at a narrative by which the one appears to lose a brother and a friend--the other a son and an avenging foe.

Chrysothemis joyfully returns to announce, that by the tomb of Agamemnon she discovers a lock of hair; libations yet moisten the summit of the mound, and flowers of every hue are scattered over the grave. "These," she thinks, "are signs that Orestes is returned." Electra, informing her of the fatal news, proposes that they, women as they are, shall attempt the terrible revenge which their brother can no longer execute. When Chrysothemis recoils and refuses, Electra still nurses the fell design. The poet has more than once, and now again with judgment, made us sensible of the mature years of Electra [364]; she is no passionate, wavering, and inexperienced girl, but the eldest born of the house; the guardian of the childhood of its male heir; unwedded and unloving, no soft matron cares, no tender maiden affections, have unbent the nerves of her stern, fiery, and concentrated soul. Year after year has rolled on to sharpen her hatred--to disgust her with the present--to root her to one bloody memory of the past--to sour and freeze up the gentle thoughts of

womanhood--to unsex

"And fill her from the crown to the toe, topful
Of direst cruelty--make thick her blood
Stop up the access and passage to remorse," [365]

and fit her for one crowning deed, for which alone the daughter of the king of men lives on.

At length the pretended Phocians enter, bearing the supposed ashes of Orestes; the chief of the train addresses himself to Electra, and this is the most dramatic and touching scene in the whole tragedy. When the urn containing, as she believes, the dust of her brother, is placed in the hands of Electra, we can well overleap time and space, and see before us the great actor who brought the relics of his own son upon the stage, and shed no mimic sorrows [366]--we can well picture the emotions that circle round the vast audience--pity itself being mingled with the consciousness to which the audience alone are admitted, that lamentation will soon be replaced by joy, and that the living Orestes is before his sister. It is by a most subtle and delicate art that Sophocles permits this struggle between present pain and anticipated pleasure, and carries on the passion of the spectators to wait breathlessly the moment when Orestes shall be discovered. We now perceive why the poet at once, in the opening of the play, announced to us the existence and return of Orestes--why he disdained the vulgar source of interest, the gross suspense we should have felt, if we had shared the ignorance of Electra, and not been admitted to the secret we impatiently long to be communicated to her. In this scene, our superiority to Electra, in the knowledge we possess, refines and softens our compassion, blending it with hope. And most beautifully here does Sophocles remove far from us the thought of the hard hatred that hitherto animates the mourner--the strong, proud spirit is melted away--the woman and the sister alone appear. He whom she had loved more dearly than a mother--whom she had nursed, and saved, and prayed for, is "a nothing" in her hands; and the last rites it had not been hers to pay. He had been

"By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned."

All things had vanished with him--"vanished in a day"--"vanished as by a hurricane"--she is left with her foes alone. "Admit me" (she cries), "to thy refuge--make room for me in thy home."

In these lamentations, the cold, classic drama seems to warm into actual life. Art, exquisite because invisible, unites us at once with imperishable nature--we are no longer delighted with Poetry--we are weeping with Truth.

At length Orestes reveals himself, and now the plot draws to its catastrophe. Clytemnestra is alone in her house, preparing a caldron for the burial; Electra and the chorus are on the stage; the son--the avenger, is within; suddenly the cries of Clytemnestra are heard. Again--again! Orestes re-enters a parricide! [367] He retires as Aegisthus is seen approaching; and the adulterous usurper is now presented to us for the first and last time--the crowning victim of the sacrifice. He comes flushed with joy and triumph. He has heard that the dreaded Orestes is no more. Electra entertains him a few moments with words darkly and exultingly ambiguous. He orders the doors to be thrown open, that all Argos and Mycenae may see the

remains of his sole rival for the throne. The scene opens. On the threshold (where, with the Greeks, the corpse of the dead was usually set out to view) lies a body covered with a veil or pall. Orestes (the supposed Phocian) stands beside.

"Aegisthus. Great Jove! a grateful spectacle!--if thus
May it be said unsinning; yet if she,
The awful Nemesis, be nigh and hear,
I do recall the sentence! Raise the pall.
The dead was kindred to me, and shall know
A kinsman's sorrow.

Orestes. Lift thyself the pall;
Not mine, but thine, the office to survey
That which lies mute beneath, and to salute,
Lovingly sad, the dead one.

Aegisthus. Be it so--
It is well said. Go thou and call the queen:
Is she within?

Orestes. Look not around for her--
She is beside thee!"

Aegisthus lifts the pall, and beholds the body of Clytemnestra! He knows his fate at once. He knows that Orestes is before him. He attempts to speak. The fierce Electra cuts him short, and Orestes, with stern solemnity, conducts him from the stage to the spot on which Aegisthus had slain Agamemnon, so that the murderer might die by the son's hand in the place where the father fell. Thus artistically is the catastrophe not lessened in effect, but heightened, by removing the deed of death from the scene--the poetical justice, in the calm and premeditated selection of the place of slaughter, elevates what on the modern stage would be but a spectacle of physical horror into the deeper terror and sublimer gloom of a moral awe; and vindictive murder, losing its aspect, is idealized and hallowed into religious sacrifice.

IX. Of the seven plays left to us, "The Trachiniae" is usually considered the least imbued with the genius of Sophocles; and Schlegel has even ventured on the conjecture, singularly destitute of even plausible testimony, that Sophocles himself may not be the author. The plot is soon told. The play is opened by Deianira, the wife of Hercules, who indulges in melancholy reflections on the misfortunes of her youth, and the continual absence of her husband, of whom no tidings have been heard for months. She soon learns from her son, Hyllus, that Hercules is said to be leading an expedition into Euboea; and our interest is immediately excited by Deianira's reply, which informs us that oracles had foretold that this was to be the crisis [368] in the life of Hercules--that he was now to enjoy rest from his labours, either in a peaceful home or in the grave; and she sends Hyllus to join his father, share his enterprise and fate. The chorus touchingly paint the anxious love of Deianira in the following lines:

"Thou, whom the starry-spangled Night did lull
Into the sleep from which--her journey done
Her parting steps awake thee--beautiful
Fountain of flame, oh Sun!
Say, on what seagirt strand, or inland shore
(For earth is bared before thy solemn gaze),
In orient Asia, or where milder rays
Tremble on western waters, wandereth he

Whom bright Alcmena bore?
Ah! as some bird within a lonely nest
The desolate wife puts sleep away with tears;
And ever ill to be
Haunting the absence with dim hosts of fears,
Fond fancy shapes from air dark prophets of the breast."

In her answer to the virgin chorus, Deianira weaves a beautiful picture of maiden youth as a contrast to the cares and anxieties of wedded life:

"Youth pastures in a valley of its own;
The scorching sun, the rains and winds of Heaven,
Mar not the calm--yet virgin of all care;
But ever with sweet joys it buildeth up
The airy halls of life."

Deianira afterward receives fresh news of Hercules. She gives way to her joy. Lichas, the herald, enters, and confides to her charge some maidens whom the hero had captured. Deianira is struck with compassion for their lot, and with admiration of the noble bearing of one of them, Iole. She is about to busy herself in preparation for their comfort, when she learns that Iole is her rival--the beloved mistress of Hercules. The jealousy evinced by Deianira is beautifully soft and womanly [369]. Even in uttering a reproach on Hercules, she says she cannot feel anger with him, yet how can she dwell in the same house with a younger and fairer rival;

"She in whose years the flower that fades in mine
Opens the leaves of beauty."

Her affection, her desire to retain the love of the hero, suggests to her remembrance a gift she had once received from a centaur who had fallen by the shaft of Hercules. The centaur had assured her that the blood from his wound, if preserved, would exercise the charm of a filter over the heart of Hercules, and would ever recall and fix upon her his affection. She had preserved the supposed charm--she steeps with it a robe that she purposes to send to Hercules as a gift; but Deianira, in this fatal resolve, shows all the timidity and sweetness of her nature; she even questions if it be a crime to regain the heart of her husband; she consults the chorus, who advise the experiment (and here, it may be observed, that this is skilfully done, for it conveys the excuse of Deianira, the chorus being, as it were, the representative of the audience). Accordingly, she sends the garment by Lichas. Scarce has the herald gone, ere Deianira is terrified by a strange phenomenon: a part of the wool with which the supposed filter had been applied to the garment was thrown into the sunlight, upon which it withered away--"crumbling like sawdust"--while on the spot where it fell a sort of venomous foam froths up. While relating this phenomenon to the chorus, her son, Hyllus, returns [370], and relates the agonies of his father under the poisoned garment: he had induced the robe on the occasion of solemn sacrifice, and all was rejoicing, when,

"As from the sacred offering and the pile
The flame broke forth,"

the poison began to work, the tunic clung to the limbs of the hero, glued as if by the artificer, and, in his agony and madness, Hercules

dashes Lichas, who brought him the fatal gift, down the rock, and is now on his way home. On hearing these news and the reproaches of her son, Deianira steals silently away, and destroys herself upon the bridal-bed. The remainder of the play is very feeble. Hercules is represented in his anguish, which is but the mere raving of physical pain; and after enjoining his son to marry Iole (the innocent cause of his own sufferings), and to place him yet living upon his funeral pyre, the play ends.

The beauty of the "Trachiniae" is in detached passages, in some exquisite bursts by the chorus, and in the character of Deianira, whose artifice to regain the love of her consort, unhappily as it terminates, is redeemed by a meekness of nature, a delicacy of sentiment, and an anxious, earnest, unreproachful devotion of conjugal love, which might alone suffice to show the absurdity of modern declamations on the debasement of women, and the absence of pure and true love in that land from which Sophocles drew his experience.

X. The "Ajax" is far superior to the "Trachiniae." The subject is one that none but a Greek poet could have thought of or a Greek audience have admired. The master-passion of a Greek was emulation--the subject of the "Ajax" is emulation defeated. He has lost to Ulysses the prize of the arms of Achilles, and the shame of being vanquished has deprived him of his senses.

In the fury of madness he sallies from his tent at night--slaughters the flocks, in which his insanity sees the Greeks, whose award has galled and humbled him--and supposes he has slain the Atridae and captured Ulysses. It is in this play that Sophocles has, to a certain extent, attempted that most effective of all combinations in the hands of a master--the combination of the ludicrous and the terrible [371]: as the chorus implies, "it is to laugh and to weep." But when the scene, opening, discovers Ajax sitting amid the slaughtered victims--when that haughty hero awakens from his delirium--when he is aware that he has exposed himself to the mockery and derision of his foes--the effect is almost too painful even for tragedy. In contrast to Ajax is the soothing and tender Tecmessa. The women of Sophocles are, indeed, gifted with an astonishing mixture of majesty and sweetness. After a very pathetic farewell with his young son, Ajax affects to be reconciled to his lot, disguises the resolution he has formed, and by one of those artful transitions of emotion which at once vary and heighten interest on the stage, the chorus, before lamenting, bursts into a strain of congratulation and joy. The heavy affliction has passed away--Ajax is restored. The Nuntius arrives from the camp. Calchas, the soothsayer, has besought Teucer, the hero's brother, not to permit Ajax to quit his tent that day, for on that day only Minerva persecutes him; and if he survive it, he may yet be preserved and prosper. But Ajax has already wandered away, none know whither. Tecmessa hastens in search of him, and, by a very rare departure from the customs of the Greek stage, the chorus follow.

Ajax appears again. His passions are now calm and concentrated, but they lead him on to death. He has been shamed, dishonoured--he has made himself a mockery to his foes. Nobly to live or nobly to die is the sole choice of a brave man. It is characteristic of the Greek temperament, that the personages of the Greek poetry ever bid a last lingering and half-reluctant farewell to the sun. There is a magnificent fulness of life in those children of the beautiful West; the sun is to them as a familiar friend--the affliction or the terror

of Hades is in the thought that its fields are sunless. The orb which animated their temperate heaven, which ripened their fertile earth, in which they saw the type of eternal youth, of surpassing beauty, of incarnate poetry--human in its associations, and yet divine in its nature--is equally beloved and equally to be mourned by the maiden tenderness of Antigone or the sullen majesty of Ajax. In a Chaldaean poem the hero would have bid farewell to the stars!

It is thus that Ajax concludes his celebrated soliloquy.

"And thou that mak'st high heaven thy chariot-course,
Oh sun--when gazing on my father-land,
Draw back thy golden rein, and tell my woes
To the old man, my father--and to her
Who nursed me at her bosom--my poor mother!
There will be wailing through the echoing walls
When--but away with thoughts like these!--the hour
Brings on the ripening deed. Death, death, look on me!
Did I say death?--it was a waste of words;
We shall be friends hereafter.

'Tis the DAY,
Present and breathing round me, and the car
Of the sweet sun, that never shall again
Receive my greeting!--henceforth time is sunless,
And day a thing that is not! Beautiful light,
My Salamis--my country--and the floor
Of my dear household hearth--and thou, bright Athens,
Thou--for thy sons and I were boys together--
Fountains and rivers, and ye Trojan plains,
I loved ye as my fosterers--fare ye well!
Take in these words, the last earth hears from Ajax--
All else unspoken, in a spectre land
I'll whisper to the dead!"

Ajax perishes on his sword--but the interest of the play survives him. For with the Greeks, burial rather than death made the great close of life. Teucer is introduced to us; the protector of the hero's remains and his character, at once fierce and tender, is a sketch of extraordinary power. Agamemnon, on the contrary--also not presented to us till after the death of Ajax--is but a boisterous tyrant [372]. Finally, by the generous intercession of Ulysses, who redeems his character from the unfavourable conception we formed of him at the commencement of the play, the funeral rites are accorded, and a didactic and solemn moral from the chorus concludes the whole.

XI. The "Philoctetes" has always been ranked by critics among the most elaborate and polished of the tragedies of Sophocles. In some respects it deserves the eulogies bestowed on it. But one great fault in the conception will, I think, be apparent on the simple statement of the plot.

Philoctetes, the friend and armour-bearer of Hercules, and the heir of that hero's unerring shafts and bow, had, while the Grecian fleet anchored at Chryse (a small isle in the Aegaeon), been bitten in the foot by a serpent; the pain of the wound was insufferable--the shrieks and groans of Philoctetes disturbed the libations and sacrifices of the Greeks. And Ulysses and Diomed, when the fleet proceeded, left him, while asleep, on the wild and rocky solitudes of Lemnos. There, till the tenth year of the Trojan siege, he dragged out an agonizing

life. The soothsayer, Helenus, then declared that Troy could not fall till Philoctetes appeared in the Grecian camp with the arrows and bow of Hercules. Ulysses undertakes to effect this object, and, with Neoptolemus (son of Achilles), departs for Lemnos. Here the play opens. A wild and desolate shore--a cavern with two mouths (so that in winter there might be a double place to catch the sunshine, and in summer a twofold entrance for the breeze), and a little fountain of pure water, designate the abode of Philoctetes.

Agreeably to his character, it is by deceit and stratagem that Ulysses is to gain his object. Neoptolemus is to dupe him whom he has never seen with professions of friendship and offers of services, and to snare away the consecrated weapons. Neoptolemus--whose character is a sketch which Shakspeare alone could have bodied out--has all the generous ardour and honesty of youth, but he has also its timid irresolution--its docile submission to the great--its fear of the censure of the world. He recoils from the base task proposed to him; he would prefer violence to fraud; yet he dreads lest, having undertaken the enterprise, his refusal to act should be considered treachery to his coadjutor. It is with a deep and melancholy wisdom that Ulysses, who seems to contemplate his struggles with compassionate and not displeased superiority, thus attempts to reconcile the young man:

"Son of a noble sire! I too, in youth,
Had thy plain speech and thine impatient arm:
But a stern test is time! I have lived to see
That among men the tools of power and empire
Are subtle words--not deeds."

Neoptolemus is overruled. Ulysses withdraws, Philoctetes appears. The delight of the lonely wretch on hearing his native language; on seeing the son of Achilles--his description of his feelings when he first found himself abandoned in the desert--his relation of the hardships he has since undergone, are highly pathetic. He implores Neoptolemus to bear him away, and when the youth consents, he bursts into an exclamation of joy, which, to the audience, in the secret of the perfidy to be practised on him, must have excited the most lively emotions. The characteristic excellence of Sophocles is, that in his most majestic creations he always contrives to introduce the sweetest touches of humanity.--Philoctetes will not even quit his miserable desert until he has returned to his cave to bid it farewell--to kiss the only shelter that did not deny a refuge to his woes. In the joy of his heart he thinks, poor dupe, that he has found faith in man--in youth. He trusts the arrows and the bow to the hand of Neoptolemus. Then, as he attempts to crawl along, the sharp agony of his wound completely overmasters him. He endeavours in vain to stifle his groans; the body conquers the mind. This seems to me, as I shall presently again observe, the blot of the play; it is a mere exhibition of physical pain. The torture exhausts, till insensibility or sleep comes over him. He lies down to rest, and the young man watches over him. The picture is striking. Neoptolemus, at war with himself, does not seize the occasion. Philoctetes wakes. He is ready to go on board; he implores and urges instant departure. Neoptolemus recoils--the suspicions of Philoctetes are awakened; he thinks that this stranger, too, will abandon him. At length the young man, by a violent effort, speaks abruptly out, "Thou must sail to Troy--to the Greeks--the Atridae."

"The Greeks--the Atridae!" the betrayers of Philoctetes--those beyond pardon--those whom for ten years he has pursued with the curses of a wronged, and deserted, and solitary spirit. "Give me back," he cries, "my bow and arrows." And when Neoptolemus refuses, he pours forth a torrent of reproach. The son of the truth--telling Achilles can withstand no longer. He is about to restore the weapons, when Ulysses rushes on the stage and prevents him.

At length, the sufferer is to be left--left once more alone in the desert. He cannot go with his betrayers--he cannot give glory and conquest to his inhuman foes; in the wrath of his indignant heart even the desert is sweeter than the Grecian camp. And how is he to sustain himself without his shafts! Famine adds a new horror to his dreary solitude, and the wild beasts may now pierce into his cavern: but their cruelty would be mercy! His contradictory and tempestuous emotions, as the sailors that compose the chorus are about to depart, are thus told.

The chorus entreat him to accompany them.

Phil. Begone.

Chor. It is a friendly bidding--we obey--
Come, let us go. To ship, my comrades.

Phil. No--
No, do not go--by the great Jove, who hears
Men's curses--do not go.

Chor. Be calm.

Phil. Sweet strangers!
In mercy, leave me not.

* * * * *

Chor. But now you bade us!

Phil. Ay--meet cause for chiding,
That a poor desperate wretch, maddened with pain,
Should talk as madmen do!

Chor. Come, then, with us.

Phil. Never! oh--never! Hear me--not if all
The lightnings of the thunder-god were made
Allies with you, to blast me! Perish Troy,
And all beleaguered round its walls--yea; all
Who had the heart to spurn a wounded wretch;
But, but--nay--yes--one prayer, one boon accord me.

Chor. What wouldst thou have?

Phil. A sword, an axe, a something;
So it can strike, no matter!

Chor. Nay--for what?

Phil. What! for this hand to hew me off this head--
These limbs! To death, to solemn death, at last
My spirit calls me.

Chor. Why?

Phil. To seek my father.

Chor. On earth?

Phil. In Hades.

Having thus worked us up to the utmost point of sympathy with the abandoned Philoctetes, the poet now gradually sheds a gentler and holier light over the intense gloom to which we had been led. Neoptolemus, touched with generous remorse, steals back to give the

betrayed warrior his weapons--he is watched by the vigilant Ulysses--an angry altercation takes place between them. Ulysses, finding he cannot intimidate, prudently avoids personal encounter with the son of Achilles, and departs to apprise the host of the backsliding of his comrade.--A most beautiful scene, in which Neoptolemus restores the weapons to Philoctetes--a scene which must have commanded the most exquisite tears and the most rapturous applauses of the audience, ensues; and, finally, the god so useful to the ancient poets brings all things, contrary to the general rule of Aristotle [373], to a happy close. Hercules appears and induces his former friend to accompany Neoptolemus to the Grecian camp, where his wound shall be healed.. The farewell of Philoctetes to his cavern--to the nymphs of the meadows--to the roar of the ocean, whose spray the south wind dashed through his rude abode--to the Lycian stream and the plain of Lemnos--is left to linger on the ear like a solemn hymn, in which the little that is mournful only heightens the majestic sweetness of all that is musical. The dramatic art in the several scenes of this play Sophocles has never excelled, and scarcely equalled. The contrast of character in Ulysses and Neoptolemus has in it a reality, a human strength and truth, that is more common to the modern than the ancient drama. But still the fault of the story is partly that the plot rests upon a base and ignoble fraud, and principally that our pity is appealed to by the coarse sympathy with physical pain: the rags that covered the sores, the tainted corruption of the ulcers, are brought to bear, not so much on the mind as on the nerves; and when the hero is represented as shrinking with corporeal agony--the blood oozing from his foot, the livid sweat rolling down the brow--we sicken and turn away from the spectacle; we have no longer that pleasure in our own pain which ought to be the characteristic of true tragedy. It is idle to vindicate this error by any dissimilarity between ancient and modern dramatic art. As nature, so art, always has some universal and permanent laws. Longinus rightly considers pathos a part of the sublime, for pity ought to elevate us; but there is nothing to elevate us in the noisome wounds, even of a mythical hero; our human nature is too much forced back into itself--and a proof that in this the ancient art did not differ from the modern, is in the exceeding rarity with which bodily pain is made the instrument of compassion with the Greek tragedians. The Philoctetes and the Hercules are among the exceptions that prove the rule. [374]

XII. Another drawback to our admiration of the Philoctetes is in the comparison it involuntarily courts with the Prometheus of Aeschylus. Both are examples of fortitude under suffering--of the mind's conflict with its fate. In either play a dreary waste, a savage solitude, constitute the scene. But the towering sublimity of the Prometheus dwarfs into littleness every image of hero or demigod with which we contrast it. What are the chorus of mariners, and the astute Ulysses, and the boyish generosity of Neoptolemus--what is the lonely cave on the shores of Lemnos--what the high-hearted old warrior, with his torturing wound and his sacred bow--what are all these to the vast Titan, whom the fiends chain to the rock beneath which roll the rivers of hell, for whom the daughters of Ocean are ministers, to whose primeval birth the gods of Olympus are the upstarts of a day, whose soul is the treasure-house of a secret which threatens the realm of heaven, and for whose unimaginable doom earth reels to its base, all the might of divinity is put forth, and Hades itself trembles as it receives its indomitable and awful guest! Yet, as I have before intimated, it is the very grandeur of Aeschylus that must have made his poems less attractive on the stage than those of the humane and

flexible Sophocles. No visible representation can body forth his thoughts--they overpower the imagination, but they do not come home to our household and familiar feelings. In the contrast between the "Philoctetes" and the "Prometheus" is condensed the contrast between Aeschylus and Sophocles. They are both poets of the highest conceivable order; but the one seems almost above appeal to our affections--his tempestuous gloom appals the imagination, the vivid glare of his thoughts pierces the innermost recesses of the intellect, but it is only by accident that he strikes upon the heart. The other, in his grandest flights, remembers that men make his audience, and seems to feel as if art lost the breath of its life when aspiring beyond the atmosphere of human intellect and human passions. The difference between the creations of Aeschylus and Sophocles is like the difference between the Satan of Milton and the Macbeth of Shakspeare. Aeschylus is equally artful with Sophocles--it is the criticism of ignorance that has said otherwise. But there is this wide distinction--Aeschylus is artful as a dramatist to be read, Sophocles as a dramatist to be acted. If we get rid of actors, and stage, and audience, Aeschylus will thrill and move us no less than Sophocles, through a more intellectual if less passionate medium. A poem may be dramatic, yet not theatrical--may have all the effects of the drama in perusal, but by not sufficiently enlisting the skill of the actor--nay, by soaring beyond the highest reach of histrionic capacities, may lose those effects in representation. The storm in "Lear" is a highly dramatic agency when our imagination is left free to conjure up the angry elements,

"Bid the winds blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters."

But a storm on the stage, instead of exceeding, so poorly mimics the reality, that it can never realize the effect which the poet designs, and with which the reader is impressed. So is it with supernatural and fanciful creations, especially of the more delicate and subtle kind. The Ariel of the "Tempest," the fairies of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and the Oceanides of the "Prometheus," are not to be represented by human shapes. We cannot say that they are not dramatic, but they are not theatrical. We can sympathize with the poet, but not with the actor. For the same reason, in a lesser degree, all creations, even of human character, that very highly task the imagination, that lift the reader wholly out of actual experience, and above the common earth, are comparatively feeble when reduced to visible forms. The most metaphysical plays of Shakspeare are the least popular in representation. Thus the very genius of Aeschylus, that kindles us in the closet, must often have militated against him on the stage. But in Sophocles all--even the divinities themselves--are touched with humanity; they are not too subtle or too lofty to be submitted to mortal gaze. We feel at once that on the stage Sophocles ought to have won the prize from Aeschylus; and, as a proof of this, if we look at the plays of each, we see that scarcely any of the great characters of Aeschylus could have called into sufficient exercise the powers of an actor. Prometheus on his rock, never changing even his position, never absent from the scene, is denied all the relief, the play and mobility, that an actor needs. His earthly representative could be but a grand reciter. In the "Persians," not only the theatrical, but the dramatic effect is wanting--it is splendid poetry put into various mouths, but there is no collision of passions, no surprise, no incident, no plot, no rapid dialogue in which words are but the types of emotions. In the "Suppliants" Garrick could have

made nothing of Pelasgus. In the "Seven before Thebes" there are not above twenty or thirty lines in the part of Eteocles in which the art of the actor could greatly assist the genius of the poet. In the trilogy of the "Agamemnon," the "Choephoroi," and the "Orestes," written in advanced years, we may trace the contagious innovation of Sophocles; but still, even in these tragedies, there is no part so effective in representation as those afforded by the great characters of Sophocles. In the first play the hypocrisy and power of Clytemnestra would, it is true, have partially required and elicited the talents of the player; but Agamemnon himself is but a thing of pageant, and the splendid bursts of Cassandra might have been effectively uttered by a very inferior histrionic artist. In the second play, in the scene between Orestes and his mother, and in the gathering madness of Orestes, the art of the poet would unquestionably task to the uttermost the skill of the performer. But in the last play (the Furies), perhaps the sublimest poem of the three, which opens so grandly with the parricide at the sanctuary, and the Furies sleeping around him, there is not one scene from the beginning to the end in which an eminent actor could exhibit his genius.

But when we come to the plays of Sophocles, we feel that a new era in the drama is created; we feel that the artist poet has called into full existence the artist actor. His theatrical effects [375] are tangible, actual--could be represented to-morrow in Paris--in London--everywhere. We find, therefore, that with Sophocles has passed down to posterity the name of the great actor [376] in his principal plays. And I think the English reader, even in the general analysis and occasional translations with which I have ventured to fill so many pages, will perceive that all the exertions of subtle, delicate, and passionate power, even in a modern actor, would be absolutely requisite to do justice to the characters of Oedipus at Coloneus, Antigone, Electra, and Philoctetes.

This, then, was the distinction between Aeschylus and Sophocles--both were artists, as genius always must be, but the art of the latter adapts itself better to representation. And this distinction in art was not caused merely by precedence in time. Had Aeschylus followed Sophocles, it would equally have existed--it was the natural consequence of the distinctions in their genius--the one more sublime, the other more impassioned--the one exalting the imagination, the other appealing to the heart. Aeschylus is the Michael Angelo of the drama, Sophocles the Raffaele.

XIII. Thus have I presented to the general reader the outline of all the tragedies of Sophocles. In the great length at which I have entered in this, not the least difficult, part of my general task, I have widely innovated on the plan pursued by the writers of Grecian history. For this innovation I offer no excuse. It is her poetry at the period we now examine, as her philosophy in a later time, that makes the individuality of Athens. In Sophocles we behold the age of Pericles. The wars of that brilliant day were as pastimes to the mighty carnage of oriental or northern battle. The reduction of a single town, which, in our time, that has no Sophocles and no Pericles, a captain of artillery would demolish in a week, was the proudest exploit of the Olympian of the Agora; a little while, and one defeat wrests the diadem of the seas from the brows of "The Violet Queen;" scanty indeed the ruins that attest the glories of "The Propylaea, the Parthenon, the Porticoes, and the Docks," to which the eloquent orator appealed as the "indestructible possessions" of

Athens; along the desolate site of the once tumultuous Agora the peasant drives his oxen--the champion deity [377] of Phidias, whose spectral apparition daunted the barbarian Alaric [378], and the gleam of whose spear gladdened the mariner beneath the heights of Sunium, has vanished from the Acropolis; but, happily, the age of Pericles has its stamp and effigy in an art more imperishable than that of war--in materials more durable than those of bronze and marble, of ivory and gold. In the majestic harmony, the symmetrical grace of Sophocles, we survey the true portraiture of the genius of the times, and the old man of Coloneus still celebrates the name of Athens in a sweeter song than that of the nightingale [379], and melodies that have survived the muses of Cephissus [380]. Sophocles was allegorically the prophet when he declared that in the grave of Oedipus was to be found the sacred guardian and the everlasting defence of the city of Theseus.

FOOTNOTES.

[1] "Cum consuetudine ad imperii cupiditatem trahi videretur."--Nepos in Vit. Milt., cap. 8.

[2] Corn. Nepos in Vit. Milt., cap. 7.

[3] Nepos. in Vit. Milt., cap. 7.

[4] Herod., lib. vi., cap. cxxxvi.

[5] Nepos says the fine was estimated at the cost of the navy he had conducted to Paros; but Boeckh rightly observes, that it is an ignorant assertion of that author that the fine was intended for a compensation, being the usual mode of assessing the offence.

The case is simply this--Miltiades was accused--whether justly or unjustly no matter--it was clearly as impossible not to receive the accusation and to try the cause, as it would be for an English court of justice to refuse to admit a criminal action against Lord Grey or the Duke of Wellington. Was Miltiades guilty or not? This we cannot tell. We know that he was tried according to the law, and that the Athenians thought him guilty, for they condemned him. So far this is not ingratitude--it is the course of law. A man is tried and found guilty--if past services and renown were to save the great from punishment when convicted of a state offence, society would perhaps be disorganized, and certainly a free state would cease to exist. The question therefore shrinks to this--was it or was it not ungrateful in the people to relax the penalty of death, legally incurred, and commute it to a heavy fine? I fear we shall find few instances of greater clemency in monarchies, however mild. Miltiades unhappily died. But nature slew him, not the Athenian people. And it cannot be said with greater justice of the Athenians, than of a people no less illustrious, and who are now their judges, that it was their custom "de tuer en amiral pour encourager les autres."

[6] The taste of a people, which is to art what public opinion is to legislation, is formed, like public opinion, by habitual social intercourse and collision. The more men are brought together to converse and discuss, the more the principles of a general national

taste will become both diffused and refined. Less to their climate, to their scenery, to their own beauty of form, than to their social habits and preference of the public to the domestic life, did the Athenians, and the Grecian republics generally, owe that wonderful susceptibility to the beautiful and harmonious, which distinguishes them above all nations ancient or modern. Solitude may exalt the genius of a man, but communion alone can refine the taste of a people.

[7] It seems probable that the principal Bacchic festival was originally held at the time of the vintage--condita post frumenta. But from the earliest known period in Attica, all the triple Dionysia were celebrated during the winter and the spring.

[8] Egyptian, according to Herodotus, who asserts, that Melampus first introduced the Phallic symbol among the Greeks, though he never sufficiently explained its mysterious significations, which various sages since his time had, however, satisfactorily interpreted. It is just to the Greeks to add, that this importation, with the other rites of Bacchus, was considered at utter variance with their usual habits and manners.

[9] Herodotus asserts that Arion first named, invented, and taught the dithyramb at Corinth; but, as Bentley triumphantly observes, Athenaeus has preserved to us the very verses of Archilochus, his predecessor by a century, in which the song of the dithyramb is named.

[10] In these remarks upon the origin of the drama, it would belong less to history than to scholastic dissertation, to enter into all the disputed and disputable points. I do not, therefore, pause with every step to discuss the questions contested by antiquarians--such as, whether the word "tragedy," in its primitive and homely sense, together with the prize of the goat, was or was not known in Attica prior to Thespis (it seems to me that the least successful part of Bentley's immortal work is that which attempts to enforce the latter proposition); still less do I think a grave answer due to those who, in direct opposition to authorities headed by the grave and searching Aristotle, contend that the exhibitions of Thespis were of a serious and elevated character. The historian must himself weigh the evidences on which he builds his conclusions; and come to those conclusions, especially in disputes which bring to unimportant and detached inquiries the most costly expenditure of learning, without fatiguing the reader with a repetition of all the arguments which he accepts or rejects. For those who incline to go more deeply into subjects connected with the early Athenian drama, works by English and German authors, too celebrated to enumerate, will be found in abundance. But even the most careless general reader will do well to delight himself with that dissertation of Bentley on Phalaris, so familiar to students, and which, despite some few intemperate and bold assumptions, will always remain one of the most colossal monuments of argument and erudition.

[11] Aeschylus was a Pythagorean. "Veniat Aeschylus, sed etiam Pythagoreus."--Cic. Tusc. Dis., b. ii., 9.

[12] Out of fifty plays, thirty-two were satyrical.--Suidas in Prat.

[13] The Tetralogy was the name given to the fourfold exhibition of the three tragedies, or trilogy, and the Satyric Drama.

[14] Yet in Aeschylus there are sometimes more than two speaking actors on the stage,--as at one time in the *Choephoroi*, Clytemnestra, Orestes, Electra (to say nothing of Pylades, who is silent), and again in the same play, Orestes, Pylades, and Clytemnestra, also in the *Eumenides*, Apollo, Minerva, Orestes. It is truly observed, however, that these plays were written after Sophocles had introduced the third actor. [The Orestean tetralogy was exhibited B. C. 455, only two years before the death of Aeschylus, and ten years after Sophocles had gained his first prize.] Any number of mutes might be admitted, not only as guards, etc., but even as more important personages. Thus, in the *Prometheus*, the very opening of the play exhibits to us the demons of Strength and Force, the god Vulcan, and Prometheus himself; but the dialogue is confined to Strength and Vulcan.

[15] The celebrated temple of Bacchus; built after the wooden theatre had given way beneath the multitude assembled to witness a contest between Pratinas and Aeschylus.

[16] 1st. The rural Dionysia, held in the country districts throughout Attica about the beginning of January. 2d. The Lenaeon, or Anthesterial, Dionysia, in the end of February and beginning of March, in which principally occurred the comic contests; and the grand Dionysia of the city, referred to in the text. Afterward dramatic performances were exhibited also, in August, during the Panathenaea.

[17] That is, when three actors became admitted on the stage.

[18] For it is sufficiently clear that women were admitted to the tragic performances, though the arguments against their presence in comic plays preponderate. This admitted, the manners of the Greeks may be sufficient to prove that, as in the arena of the Roman games, they were divided from the men; as, indeed, is indirectly intimated in a passage of the *Gorgias* of Plato.

[19] Schlegel says truly and eloquently of the chorus--"that it was the idealized spectator"--"reverberating to the actual spectator a musical and lyrical expression of his own emotions."

[20] In this speech he enumerates, among other benefits, that of Numbers, "the prince of wise inventions"--one of the passages in which Aeschylus is supposed to betray his Pythagorean doctrines.

[21] It is greatly disputed whether Io was represented on the stage as transformed into the actual shape of a heifer, or merely accursed with a visionary phrensy, in which she believes in the transformation. It is with great reluctance that I own it seems to me not possible to explain away certain expressions without supposing that Io appeared on the stage at least partially transformed.

[22] Vit. Aesch.

[23] It is the orthodox custom of translators to render the dialogue of the Greek plays in blank verse; but in this instance the whole animation and rapidity of the original would be utterly lost in the stiff construction and protracted rhythm of that metre.

[24] Viz., the meadows around Asopus.

[25] To make the sense of this detached passage more complete, and

conclude the intelligence which the queen means to convey, the concluding line in the text is borrowed from the next speech of Clytemnestra--following immediately after a brief and exclamatory interruption of the chorus.

[26] i. e. Menelaus, made by grief like the ghost of his former self.

[27] The words in italics attempt to convey paraphrastically a new construction of a sentence which has puzzled the commentators, and met with many and contradictory interpretations. The original literally is--"I pity the last the most." Now, at first it is difficult to conjecture why those whose adversity is over, "blotted out with the moistened sponge," should be the most deserving of compassion. But it seems to me that Cassandra applies the sentiments to herself--she pities those whose career of grief is over, because it is her own lot which she commiserates, and by reference to which she individualizes a general reflection.

[28] Perhaps his mere diction would find a less feeble resemblance in passages of Shelley, especially in the Prometheus of that poet, than in any other poetry existent. But his diction alone. His power is in concentration--the quality of Shelley is diffuseness. The interest excited by Aeschylus, even to those who can no longer sympathize with the ancient associations, is startling, terrible, and intense--that excited by Shelley is lukewarm and tedious. The intellectuality of Shelley destroyed, that of Aeschylus only increased, his command over the passions.

[29] In the comedy of "The Frogs," Aristophanes makes it the boast of Aeschylus, that he never drew a single woman influenced by love. Spanheim is surprised that Aristophanes should ascribe such a boast to the author of the "Agamemnon." But the love of Clytemnestra for Aegisthus is never drawn--never delineated. It is merely suggested and hinted at--a sentiment lying dark and concealed behind the motives to the murder of Agamemnon ostensibly brought forward, viz., revenge for the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and jealousy of Cassandra.

[30] In plays lost to us.

[31] I reject the traditions which make Aristides and Themistocles rivals as boys, because chronology itself refutes them. Aristides must have been of mature age at the battle of Marathon, if he was the friend and follower of Clisthenes, one of the ten generals in the action, and archon in the following year. But both Plutarch and Justin assure us that Themistocles was very young at the battle of Marathon, and this assurance is corroborated by other facts connected with his biography. He died at the age of sixty-five, but he lived to see the siege of Cyprus by Cimon. This happened B. C. 449. If, then, we refer his death to that year, he was born 514 B. C., and therefore was about twenty-four at the battle of Marathon.

[32] Plut. in Vit. Them. Heraclides et Idomeneus ap. Athen., lib. 12.

[33] See Dodwell's "Tour through Greece," Gell's "Itinerary."

[34] "Called by some Laurion Oros, or Mount Laurion." Gell's Itinerary.

[35] Boeckh's Dissert. on the Silver Mines of Laurium.

[36] Boeckh's Dissert. on the Silver Mines of Laurium.

[37] On this point, see Boeckh. Dissert. on the Silver Mines of Laurion, in reference to the account of Diodorus.

[38] If we except the death of his brother, in the Cambyses of Ctesias, we find none of the crimes of the Cambyses of Herodotus--and even that fratricide loses its harsher aspect in the account of Ctesias, and Cambyses is represented as betrayed into the crime by a sincere belief in his brother's treason.

[39] The account of this conspiracy in Ctesias seems more improbable than that afforded to us by Herodotus. But in both the most extraordinary features of the plot are the same, viz., the striking likeness between the impostor and the dead prince, and the complete success which, for a time, attended the fraud. In both narrations, too, we can perceive, behind the main personages ostensibly brought forward, the outline of a profound device of the magi to win back from the Persian conquerors, and to secure to a Mede, the empire of the East.

[40] Herodotus says it was resolved that the king could only marry into the family of one of the conspirators; but Darius married two daughters and one grand-daughter of Cyrus. It is more consonant with eastern manners to suppose that it was arranged that the king should give his own daughters in marriage to members of these six houses. It would have been scarcely possible to claim the monopoly of the royal seraglio, whether its tenants were wives or concubines, and in all probability the king's choice was only limited (nor that very rigidly) to the family of Cyrus, and the numerous and privileged race of the Achaemenids.

[41] Besides the regular subsidies, we gather from Herodotus, l. c. 92, that the general population was obliged to find subsistence for the king and his armies. Babylon raised a supply for four months, the resources of that satrapy being adequate to a third part of Asia.

[42] That comparatively small and frontier part of India known to Darius.

[43] Forming a revenue of more than 100,000l. sterling.--Heeren's Persians, chap. ii.

[44] Such are the expressions of Herodotus. His testimony is corroborated by the anecdotes in his own history, and, indeed, by all other ancient authorities.

[45] Dinon. (Apud Athen., lib. xiii.) observes, that the Persian queen tolerated the multitude of concubines common to the royal seraglio, because they worshipped her, like a divinity.

[46] See, in addition to more familiar authorities, the curious remarks and anecdotes relative to the luxury of the Persian kings, in the citations from Dinon, Heraclides, Agathocles, and Chares of Mitylene, scattered throughout Athenaeus, lib. xii., xiii., xiv.; but especially lib. xii.

[47] Strabo, lib. xv, Herod., lib. i., c. cxxxi., etc.

[48] Among innumerable instances of the disdain of human life contracted after their conquest by those very Persians who, in their mountain obscurity, would neither permit their sovereign to put any one to death for a single offence, nor the master of a household to exercise undue severity to a member of his family (Herod., lib. i., c. cxxxvii.), is one recorded by Herodotus, and in the main corroborated by Justin. Darius is at the siege of Babylon; Zopyrus, one of the seven conspirators against the magian, maims himself and enters Babylon as a deserter, having previously concerted with Darius that a thousand men, whose loss he could best spare, should be sent one day to the gate of Semiramis, and two thousand, another day, to the gates of Ninus, and four thousand, a third day, to the Chaldaean gates. All these detachments Zopyrus, at the head of the Babylonians, deliberately butchered. The confidence of the Babylonians thus obtained, Zopyrus was enabled to betray the city to the king. This cold-blooded and treacherous immolation of seven thousand subjects was considered by the humane Darius and the Persians generally a proof of the most illustrious virtue in Zopyrus, who received for it the reward of the satrapy of Babylon. The narrative is so circumstantial as to bear internal evidence of its general truth. In fact, a Persian would care no more for the lives of seven thousand Medes than a Spartan would care for the lives of suspected Helots.

[49] Herodot., lib. i., c. cxxxiv. The Pasargadae, whom the ancient writers evidently and often confound with the whole Persian population, retained the old education and severe discipline for their youth, long after the old virtues had died away. (See Strabo, xv., Herod., lib. i., and the rhetorical romance of Xenophon.) But laws and customs, from which the animating spirit of national opinion and sentiment has passed, are but the cenotaphs of dead forms embalmed in vain.

[50] Ctesias, 20.

[51] Herod., lib. vii., c. xi.

[52] Juvenal, Richardson, etc. The preparations at Mount Athos commenced three years before Xerxes arrived at Sardis. (Compare Herod., l. vii. 21, with 33, 37.)

[53] Differently computed; according to Montfaucon, the sum total may be estimated at thirty-two millions of Louis d'ors.

[54] It must be confessed that the tears of Xerxes were a little misplaced. He wept that men could not live a hundred years, at the very moment when he meditated destroying a tolerable portion of them as soon as he possibly could.--Senec. de Brev. Vit., c. 17.

[55] Common also to the ancient Germans.

[56] For this reason--whoever died, whether by disease or battle, had his place immediately supplied. Thus their number was invariably the same.

[57] Diod. Sic.

[58] See note [48].

[59] Her., lib. vii., c. 138.

[60] Mueller on the Greek Congress.

[61] Mueller on the Greek Congress.

[62] Anaxandrides, king of Sparta, and father of Cleomenes and Leonidas, had married his niece: she was barren. The Ephors persuaded him to take another wife; he did so, and by the second wife. Cleomenes was born. Almost at the same time, the first wife, hitherto barren, proved with child. And as she continued the conjugal connexion, in process of time three sons were born; of these Leonidas was the second. But Cleomenes, though the offspring of the second wife, came into the world before the children by the first wife and therefore had the prior right to the throne.

[63] It is impossible by any calculations to render this amount more credible to modern skepticism. It is extremely likely that Herodotus is mistaken in his calculation; but who shall correct him?

[64] The Cissii, or Cissians, inhabited the then fertile province of Susiana, in which was situated the capital of Susa. They resembled the Persians in dress and manners.

[65] So Herodotus (lib. vii., c. 218); but, as it was summer, the noise was probably made rather by the boughs that obstructed the path of the barbarians, than by leaves on the ground.

[66] Diod. Sic., xi., viii.

[67] Justin, ii., ix.

[68] Another Spartan, who had been sent into Thessaly, and was therefore absent from the slaughter of Thermopylae, destroyed himself.

[69] The cross was the usual punishment in Persia for offences against the king's majesty or rights. Perhaps, therefore, Xerxes, by the outrage, only desired to signify that he considered the Spartan as a rebel.

[70] "Thus fought the Greeks at Thermopylae," are the simple expressions of Herodotus, lib. vii., c. 234.

[71] Thus the command of the Athenian forces was at one time likely to fall upon Epicydes, a man whose superior eloquence had gained an ascendancy with the people, which was neither due to his integrity nor to his military skill. Themistocles is said to have bribed him to forego his pretensions. Themistocles could be as severe as crafty when occasion demanded: he put to death an interpreter who accompanied the Persian envoys, probably to the congress at the Isthmus [Plutarch implies that these envoys came to Athens, but Xerxes sent none to that city.], for debasing the language of free Greeks to express the demands of the barbarian enemy.

[72] Plutarch rejects this story, very circumstantially told by Herodotus, without adducing a single satisfactory argument for the rejection. The skepticism of Plutarch is more frivolous even than his credulity.

[73] Demost., Philip. 3. See also Aeschines contra Ctesiphon.

[74] I have said that it might be doubted whether the death of Leonidas was as serviceable to Greece as his life might have been; its immediate consequences were certainly discouraging. If his valour was an example, his defeat was a warning.

[75] There were [three hundred, for the sake of round numbers--but one of the three hundred--perhaps two--survived the general massacre.] three hundred Spartans and four hundred Thespians; supposing that (as it has been asserted) the eighty warriors of Mycenae also remained with Leonidas, and that one hundred, or a fourth of the Thebans fell ere their submission was received, this makes a total of eight hundred and eighty. If we take now what at Plataea was the actual ratio of the helots as compared with the Spartans, i. e, seven to one, we shall add two thousand one hundred helots, which make two thousand nine hundred and ninety; to which must be added such of the Greeks as fell in the attacks prior to the slaughter of Thermopylae; so that, in order to make out the total of the slain given by Herodotus, more than eleven hundred must have perished before the last action, in which Leonidas fell.

[76] Plut. in vit. Them.

[77] Ibid.

[78] It is differently stated; by Aeschylus and Nepos at three hundred, by Thucydides at four hundred.

[79] Plut. in vit. Them.

[80] Here we see additional reason for admiring the sagacity of Themistocles.

[81] Her., lib. viii., c. 74.

[82] The tutor of his children, Sicinnus, who had experience of the Eastern manners, and spoke the Persian language.

[83] The number of the Persian galleys, at the lowest computation, was a thousand [Nepos, Herodotus, and Isocrates compute the total at about twelve hundred; the estimate of one thousand is taken from a dubious and disputed passage in Aeschylus, which may be so construed as to signify one thousand, including two hundred and seven vessels, or besides two hundred and seven vessels; viz., twelve hundred and seven in all, which is the precise number given by Herodotus. Ctesias says there were more than one thousand.]; that of the Greeks, as we have seen, three hundred and eighty. But the Persians were infinitely more numerously manned, having on board of each vessel thirty men-at-arms, in addition to the usual number of two hundred. Plutarch seems to state the whole number in each Athenian vessel to be fourteen heavy armed and four bowmen. But this would make the whole Athenian force only three thousand two hundred and forty men, including the bowmen, who were probably not Athenian citizens. It must therefore be supposed, with Mr. Thirlwall, that the eighteen men thus specified were an addition to the ordinary company.

[84] Aeschylus. Persae. 397.

[85] The Persian admiral at Salamis is asserted by Ctesias to have been Onaphas, father-in-law to Xerxes. According to Herodotus, it was Ariabignes, the king's brother, who seems the same as Artabazanes, with whom he had disputed the throne.--Comp. Herod., lib. vii., c. 2, and lib. viii., c. 89.

[86] Plut. in vit. Them.

[87] Plut. in vit. Them. The Ariamenes of Plutarch is the Ariabignes of Herodotus.

[88] Mr. Mitford, neglecting to observe this error of Xerxes, especially noted by Herodotus, merely observes--"According to Herodotus, though in this instance we may have difficulty to give him entire credit, Xerxes, from the shore where he sat, saw, admired, and applauded the exploit." From this passage one would suppose that Xerxes knew it was a friend who had been attacked, and then, indeed, we could not have credited the account; but if he and those about him supposed it, as Herodotus states, a foe, what is there incredible? This is one instance in ten thousand more important ones, of Mr. Mitford's habit of arguing upon one sentence by omitting those that follow and precede it.

[89] Diod., lib. xi., c. 5. Herod., lib. viii., c. 110. Nepos, et Plut., in vit. Them.

[90] Plut. in vit. Them.

[91] Ibid. These anecdotes have the stamp of authenticity.

[92] Herod., lib. viii., c. 125. See Wesseling's Comment on Timodemus. Plutarch tells the same anecdote, but makes the baffled rebuker of Themistocles a citizen of Seriphus, an island in which, according to Aelian, the frogs never croaked; the men seem to have made up for the silence of the frogs!

[93] See Fast. Hell., vol. ii., page 26.

[94] Plut. in vit. Arist.

[95] Ibid.

[96] The custom of lapidation was common to the earlier ages; it had a kind of sanction, too, in particular offences; and no crime could be considered by a brave and inflamed people equal to that of advice against their honour and their liberties.

[97] See Herod., lib. ix., c. 10. Also Mr. Clinton on the Kings of Sparta. Fast. Hell., vol. ii., p. 187.

[98] See Herod., lib. vi., c. 58. After the burial of a Spartan king, ten days were devoted to mourning; nor was any public business transacted in that interval.

[99] "According to Aristides' decree," says Plutarch, "the Athenian envoys were Aristides, Xanthippus, Myronides, and Cimon."

[100] Herodotus speaks of the devastation and ruin as complete. But how many ages did the monuments of Pisistratus survive the ravage of

the Persian sword!

[101] Plut. in vit. Arist.

[102] This, among a thousand anecdotes, proves how salutary and inevitable was the popular distrust of the aristocracy. When we read of the process of bribing the principal men, and of the conspiracy entered into by others, we must treat with contempt those accusations of the jealousy of the Grecian people towards their superiors which form the staple declamations of commonplace historians.

[103] Gargaphia is one mile and a half from the town of Plataea. Gell's Itin. 112.

[104] Plut. in vit. Arist.

[105] A strange fall from the ancient splendour of Mycenae, to furnish only four hundred men, conjointly with Tiryns, to the cause of Greece!

[106] Her., lib. ix., c. 45.

[107] Plutarch in vit. Arist.

[108] This account, by Herodotus, of the contrast between the Spartan and the Athenian leaders, which is amply supported elsewhere, is, as I have before hinted, a proof of the little effect upon Spartan emulation produced by the martyrdom of Leonidas. Undoubtedly the Spartans were more terrified by the slaughter of Thermopylae than fired by the desire of revenge.

[109] "Here seem to be several islands, formed by a sluggish stream in a flat meadow. (Oeroe?) must have been of that description.--"Gell's Itin, 109.

[110] Herod., lib. ix., c. 54.

[111] Plut. in vit. Arist.

[112] Sir W. Gell's Itin. of Greece.

[113] Herod. lib. ix., c. 62.

[114] The Tegeans had already seized the tent of Mardonius, possessing themselves especially of a curious brazen manger, from which the Persian's horse was fed, and afterward dedicated to the Alean Minerva.

[115] I adopt the reading of Valcknaer, "tous hippeas." The Spartan knights, in number three hundred, had nothing to do with the cavalry, but fought on foot or on horseback, as required. (Dionys. Hal., xi., 13.) They formed the royal bodyguard.

[116] Mr. Mitford attributes his absence from the scene to some jealousy of the honours he received at Sparta, and the vain glory with which he bore them. But the vague observations in the authors he refers to by no means bear out this conjecture, nor does it seem probable that the jealousy was either general or keen enough to effect so severe a loss to the public cause. Menaced with grave and imminent

peril, it was not while the Athenians were still in the camp that they would have conceived all the petty envies of the forum. The jealousies Themistocles excited were of much later date. It is probable that at this period he was intrusted with the very important charge of watching over and keeping together that considerable but scattered part of the Athenian population which was not engaged either at Mycale or Plataea.

[117] Thucyd., lib. i., c. 89.

[118] Ibid., lib. i., c. 90.

[119] Diod. Sic., lib. xi.; Thucyd., lib. i., c. 90.

[120] Ap. Plut. in vit. Them.

[121] Diodorus (lib. xi.) tells us that the Spartan ambassadors, indulging in threatening and violent language at perceiving the walls so far advanced, were arrested by the Athenians, who declared they would only release them on receiving back safe and uninjured their own ambassadors.

[122] Thucyd., lib. i., c. 91.

[123] Ibid., lib. i., c. 92.

[124] Schol. ad Thucyd., lib. i., c. 93. See Clinton, *Fasti Hell.*, vol. i., Introduction, p. 13 and 14. Mr. Thirlwall, vol. ii., p. 401, disputes the date for the archonship of Themistocles given by Mr. Clinton and confirmed by the scholiast on Thucydides. He adopts (page 366) the date which M. Boeckh founds upon Philochorus, viz., B. C. 493. But the Themistocles who was archon in that year is evidently another person from the Themistocles of Salamis; for in 493 that hero was about twenty-one, an age at which the bastard of Neocles might be driving courtesans in a chariot (as is recorded in Athenaeus), but was certainly not archon of Athens. As for M. Boeckh's proposed emendation, quoted so respectfully by Mr. Thirlwall, by which we are to read Hybrilidon for Kebridos, it is an assumption so purely fanciful as to require no argument for refusing it belief. Mr. Clinton's date for the archonship of the great Themistocles is the one most supported by internal evidence--1st, by the blanks of the years 481-482 in the list of archons; 2dly, by the age, the position, and repute of Themistocles in B. C. 481, two years after the ostracism of his rival Aristides. If it were reduced to a mere contest of probabilities between Mr. Clinton on one side and Mr. Boeckh and Mr. Thirlwall on the other, which is the more likely, that Themistocles should have been chief archon of Athens at twenty-one or at thirty-three--before the battle of Marathon or after his triumph over Aristides? In fact, a schoolboy knows that at twenty-one (and Themistocles was certainly not older in 493) no Athenian could have been archon. In all probability Kebridos is the right reading in Philochorus, and furnishes us with the name of the archon in B. C. 487 or 486, which years have hitherto been chronological blanks, so far as the Athenian archons are concerned.

[125] Pausan., lib. i., c. 1.

[126] Diod., lib. xi.

[127] Diod., lib. xi.

[128] Diod., lib. xi. The reader will perceive that I do not agree with Mr. Thirlwall and some other scholars, for whose general opinion I have the highest respect, in rejecting altogether, and with contempt, the account of Diodorus as to the precautions of Themistocles. It seems to me highly probable that the main features of the story are presented to us faithfully; 1st, that it was not deemed expedient to detail to the popular assembly all the objects and motives of the proposed construction of the new port; and, 2dly, that Themistocles did not neglect to send ambassadors to Sparta, though certainly not with the intention of dealing more frankly with the Spartans than he had done with the Athenians.

[129] Thucyd., lib. i.

[130] Aristot. Pol., lib. ii. Aristotle deems the speculations of the philosophical architect worthy of a severe and searching criticism.

[131] Of all the temples, those of Minerva and Jupiter were the most remarkable in the time of Pausanias. There were then two market-places. See Pausanias, lib. i., c. i.

[132] Yet at this time the Amphictyonic Council was so feeble that, had the Spartans succeeded, they would have made but a hollow acquisition of authority; unless, indeed, with the project of gaining a majority of votes, they united another for reforming or reinvigorating the institution.

[133] Thucyd., lib. i., c. 96.

[134] Heeren, Pol. Hist. of Greece.

[135] Corn. Nep. in vit. Paus.

[136] Thucyd., lib. i., c. 129.

[137] Plut. in vit. Arist.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Thucyd., lib. i.

[140] Plut. in vit. Cimon. Before this period, Cimon, though rising into celebrity, could scarcely have been an adequate rival to Themistocles.

[141] Corn. Nep. in vit. Cim.

[142] According to Diodorus, Cimon early in life made a very wealthy marriage; Themistocles recommended him to a rich father-in-law, in a witticism, which, with a slight variation, Plutarch has also recorded, though he does not give its application to Cimon.

[143] Corn. Nep. in vit. Cim.

[144] Thucyd., lib. i.

[145] Ibid., lib. i. Plut. in vit. Cim. Diod. Sic., lib. xi.

[146] See Clinton, Fast. Hell., vol. ii., p. 34, in comment upon Bentley.

[147] Athenaeus, lib. xii.

[148] Plut. in vit. Them.

[149] Plut. in vit. Aristid.

[150] About twenty-three English acres. This was by no means a despicable estate in the confined soil of Attica.

[151] Aristot. apud Plat. vit. Cim.

[152] Produced equally by the anti-popular party on popular pretexts. It was under the sanction of Mr. Pitt that the prostitution of charity to the able-bodied was effected in England.

[153] Plut. in vit. Cim.

[154] His father's brother, Cleomenes, died raving mad, as we have already seen. There was therefore insanity in the family.

[155] Plut. in vit. Cim. Pausanias, lib. iii., c. 17.

[156] Pausanias, lib. iii., c. 17.

[157] Phigalea, according to Pausanias.

[158] Plut. in vit. Cim.

[159] Thucyd., lib. i.

[160] Plato, leg. vi.

[161] Nep. in vit. Paus.

[162] Pausanias observes that his renowned namesake was the only suppliant taking refuge at the sanctuary of Minerva Chalcioecus who did not obtain the divine protection, and this because he could never purify himself of the murder of Cleonice.

[163] Thucyd., lib. i., 136.

[164] Plut. in vit. Them.

[165] Thucyd., lib. i., 137.

[166] Mr. Mitford, while doubting the fact, attempts, with his usual disingenuousness, to raise upon the very fact that he doubts, reproaches against the horrors of democratical despotism. A strange practice for an historian to allow the premises to be false, and then to argue upon them as true!

[167] The brief letter to Artaxerxes, given by Thucydides (lib i., 137), is as evidently the composition of Thucydides himself as is the celebrated oration which he puts into the mouth of Pericles. Each has

the hard, rigid, and grasping style so peculiar to the historian, and to which no other Greek writer bears the slightest resemblance. But the matter may be more genuine than the diction.

[168] At the time of his arrival in Asia, Xerxes seems to have been still living. But he appeared at Susa during the short interval between the death of Xerxes and the formal accession of his son, when, by a sanguinary revolution, yet to be narrated, Artabanus was raised to the head of the Persian empire: ere the year expired Artaxerxes was on the throne.

[169] I relate this latter account of the death of Themistocles, not only because Thucydides (though preferring the former) does not disdain to cite it, but also because it is evident, from the speech of Nicias, in the Knights of Aristophanes, i. 83, 84, that in the time of Pericles it was popularly believed by the Athenians that Themistocles died by poison; and from motives that rendered allusion to his death a popular claptrap. It is also clear that the death of Themistocles appears to have reconciled him at once to the Athenians. The previous suspicions of his fidelity to Greece do not seem to have been kept alive even by the virulence of party; and it is natural to suppose that it must have been some act of his own, real or imagined, which tended to disprove the plausible accusations against him, and revive the general enthusiasm in his favour. What could that act have been but the last of his life, which, in the lines of Aristophanes referred to above, is cited as the ideal of a glorious death! But if he died by poison, the draught was not bullock's blood--the deadly nature of which was one of the vulgar fables of the ancients. In some parts of the continent it is, in this day, even used as medicine.

[170] Plut. in vit. Them.

[171] Plut. in vit. Them.

[172] Thucyd., lib. i.

[173] Diod., lib. xi.

[174] Plut. in vit. Cim.

[175] Diod. (lib. xi.) reckons the number of prisoners at twenty thousand! These exaggerations sink glory into burlesque.

[176] The Cyaneae. Plin. vi., c. 12. Herod. iv., c. 85, etc. etc.

[177] Thucyd., lib., 99.

[178] Plut. in vit. Cim.

[179] For the siege of Thasos lasted three years; in the second year we find Cimon marching to the relief of the Spartans; in fact, the siege of Thasos was not of sufficient importance to justify Cimon in a very prolonged absence from Athens.

[180] Plut. in vit. Cim.

[181] Plut. in vit. Cim.

[182] Those historians who presume upon the slovenly sentences of

Plutarch, that Pericles made "an instrument" of Ephialtes in assaults on the Areopagus, seem strangely to mistake both the character of Pericles, which was dictatorial, not crafty, and the position of Ephialtes, who at that time was the leader of his party, and far more influential than Pericles himself. Plato (ap. Plut. in vit. Peric.) rightly considers Ephialtes the true overthrower of the Areopagus; and although Pericles assisted him (Aristot., I. ii., c. 9), it was against Ephialtes as the chief, not "the instrument," that the wrath of the aristocracy was directed.

[183] See Demosth. adv. Aristocr., p. 642. ed. Reisk. Herman ap. Heidelb. Jahrb., 1830, No. 44. Forckhammer de Areopago, etc. against Boeckh. I cannot agree with those who attach so much importance to Aeschylus, in the tragedy of "The Furies," as an authority in favour of the opinion that the innovations of Ephialtes deprived the Areopagus of jurisdiction in cases of homicide. It is true that the play turns upon the origin of the tribunal--it is true that it celebrates its immemorial right of adjudication of murder, and that Minerva declares this court of judges shall remain for ever. But would this prophecy be risked at the very time when this court was about to be abolished? In the same speech of Minerva, far more direct allusion is made to the police of the court in the fear and reverence due to it; and strong exhortations follow, not to venerate anarchy or tyranny, or banish "all fear from the city," which apply much more forcibly to the council than to the court of the Areopagus.

[184] That the Areopagus did, prior to the decree of Ephialtes, possess a power over the finances, appears from a passage in Aristotle (ap. Plut. in vit. Them.), in which it is said that, in the expedition to Salamis, the Areopagus awarded to each man eight drachmae.

[185] Plutarch attributes his ostracism to the resentment of the Athenians on his return from Ithome; but this is erroneous. He was not ostracised till two years after his return.

[186] Mikaeas epilabomenoi prophaseos.--Plut. in vit. Cim. 17.

[187] Neither Aristotle (Polit., lib. v., c. 10), nor Justin, nor Ctesias nor Moderns speak of the assassin as kinsman to Xerxes. In Plutarch (Vit. Them.) he is Artabanus the Chiliarch.

[188] Ctesias, 30; Diod., 11; Justin, lib. iii., c. 1. According to Aristotle, Artabanus, as captain of the king's guard, received an order to make away with Darius, neglected the command, and murdered Xerxes from fears for his own safety.

[189] Thucyd., lib. i., 107. The three towns of Doris were, according to Thucydides, Baeum, Cytenium, and Erineus. The scholiast on Pindar (Pyth. i., 121) speaks of six towns.

[190] Thucyd., lib. i.

[191] Thucydides, in mentioning these operations of the Athenians, and the consequent fears of the Spartans, proves to what a length hostilities had gone, though war was not openly declared.

[192] Diod. Sic.. lib. xi.

[193] Thucyd., lib. i.

[194] Diod., lib. xi.

[195] Certain German historians, Mueller among others, have built enormous conclusions upon the smallest data, when they suppose Cimon was implicated in this conspiracy. Meirs (*Historia Juris de bonis Damnatis*, p. 4, note 11) is singularly unsuccessful in connecting the supposed fine of fifty talents incurred by Cimon with the civil commotions of this period. In fact, that Cimon was ever fined at all is very improbable; the supposition rests upon most equivocal ground: if adopted, it is more likely, perhaps, that the fine was inflicted after his return from Thasos, when he was accused of neglecting the honour of the Athenian arms, and being seduced by Macedonian gold (a charge precisely of a nature for which a fine would have been incurred). But the whole tale of this imaginary fine, founded upon a sentence in Demosthenes, who, like many orators, was by no means minutely accurate in historical facts, is possibly nothing more than a confused repetition of the old story of the fine of fifty talents (the same amount) imposed upon Miltiades, and really paid by Cimon. This is doubly, and, indeed, indisputably clear, if we accept Becker's reading of Parion for patrion in the sentence of Demosthenes referred to.

[196] If we can attach any credit to the Oration on Peace ascribed to Andocides, Cimon was residing on his patrimonial estates in the Chersonese at the time of his recall. As Athens retained its right to the sovereignty of this colony, and as it was a most important position as respected the recent Athenian conquests under Cimon himself, the assertion, if true, will show that Cimon's ostracism was attended with no undue persecution. Had the government seriously suspected him of any guilty connivance with the oligarchic conspirators, it could scarcely have permitted him to remain in a colony, the localities of which were peculiarly favourable to any treasonable designs he might have formed.

[197] In the recall of Cimon, Plutarch tells us, some historians asserted that it was arranged between the two parties that the administration of the state should be divided; that Cimon should be invested with the foreign command of Cyprus, and Pericles remain the head of the domestic government. But it was not until the sixth year after his recall (viz., in the archonship of Euthydemus, see Diodorus xii.) that Cimon went to Cyprus; and before that event Pericles himself was absent on foreign expeditions.

[198] Plutarch, by a confusion of dates, blends this short armistice with the five years' truce some time afterward concluded. Mitford and others have followed him in his error. That the recall of Cimon was followed by no peace, not only with the Spartans, but the Peloponnesians generally, is evident from the incursions of Tolmides presently to be related.

[199] Diod lib. xi.

[200] See Mueller's Dorians, and the authorities he quotes. Vol. i., b. i.

[201] For so I interpret Diodorus.

[202] Diod. Sic., lib. xi.

[203] There was a democratic party in Thessaly always favourable to Athens. See Thucyd., iv., c. 88.

[204] Now Lepanto.

[205] Paus., lib. ii., c. 25.

[206] Plut. in vit. Peric.

[207] Thucyd., lib. i., 112.

[208] Diod., lib. xi. Plut. in vit. Cim. Heeren, Manual of Ancient History; but Mr. Mitford and Mr. Thirlwall properly reject this spurious treaty.

[209] Plut. in Cim.

[210] The Clouds.

[211] Isoc. Areop., 38.

[212] Idomen. ap. Athen., lib. xii.

[213] Thucyd., lib. ii., 16; Isoc. Areopag., e. xx., p. 234.

[214] If we believe with Plutarch that wives accompanied their husbands to the house of Aspasia (and it was certainly a popular charge against Pericles that Aspasia served to corrupt the Athenian matrons), they could not have been so jealously confined as writers, judging from passages in the Greek writers that describe not what women were, but what women ought to be, desire us to imagine. And it may be also observed, that the popular anecdotes represent Elpinice as a female intrigante, busying herself in politics, and mediating between Cimon and Pericles; anecdotes, whether or not they be strictly faithful, that at least tend to illustrate the state of society.

[215] As I propose, in a subsequent part of this work, to enter at considerable length into the social life and habits of the Athenians, I shall have full opportunity for a more detailed account of these singular heroines of Alciphron and the later comedians.

[216] It was about five years after the death of Cimon that Pericles obtained that supreme power which resembled a tyranny, but was only the expression and concentration of the democratic will.

[217] Theophrast. ap. Plut. in vit. Per.

[218] Justin, lib. iii., c. 6.

[219] For the transfer itself there were excuses yet more plausible than that assigned by Justin. First, in the year following the breach between the Spartans and Athenians (B. C. 460), probably the same year in which the transfer was effected, the Athenians were again at war with the great king in Egypt; and there was therefore a show of justice in the argument noticed by Boeckh (though in the source whence he derives it the argument applies to the earlier time of Aristides), that the transfer provided a place of greater security against the barbarians. Secondly, Delos itself was already and had long been

under Athenian influence. Pisistratus had made a purification of the island [Herod., lib. i., c. 64], Delian soothsayers had predicted to Athens the sovereignty of the seas [Semius Delius, ap. Athen., viii.], and the Athenians seem to have arrogated a right of interference with the temple. The transfer was probably, therefore, in appearance, little more than a transfer from a place under the power of Athens to Athens itself. Thirdly, it seems that when the question was first agitated, during the life of Aristides, it was at the desire of one of the allies themselves (the Samians). [Plut. in vit. Aristid. Boeckh (vol. i., 135, translation) has no warrant for supposing that Pericles influenced the Samians in the expression of this wish, because Plutarch refers the story to the time of Aristides, during whose life Pericles possessed no influence in public affairs.]

[220] The assertion of Diodorus (lib. xii., 38), that to Pericles was confided the superintendence and management of the treasure, is corroborated by the anecdotes in Plutarch and elsewhere, which represent Pericles as the principal administrator of the funds.

[221] The political nature and bias of the Heliæa is apparent in the very oath, preserved in Demost. con. Tim., p. 746, ed. Reiske. In this the heliast is sworn never to vote for the establishment of tyranny or oligarchy in Athens, and never to listen to any proposition tending to destroy the democratic constitution. That is, a man entered upon a judicial tribunal by taking a political oath!

[222] These courts have been likened to modern juries; but they were very little bound by the forms and precedents which shackled the latter. What a jury, even nowadays, a jury of only twelve persons, would be if left entirely to impulse and party feeling, any lawyer will readily conceive. How much more capricious, uncertain, and prejudiced a jury of five hundred, and, in some instances, of one thousand or fifteen hundred! [By the junction of two or more divisions, as in cases of Eisangelia. Poll. viii., 53 and 123; also Tittman.]

[223] "Designed by our ancestors," says Aristotle (Pol., lib. viii, c. 3) not, as many now consider it, merely for delight, but for discipline that so the mind might be taught not only how honourably to pursue business, but how creditably to enjoy leisure; for such enjoyment is, after all, the end of business and the boundary of active life.

[224] See Aristot. (Pol., lib. viii., c. 6.)

[225] An anecdote in Gellius, lib. xv., c. 17, refers the date of the disuse of this instrument to the age of Pericles and during the boyhood of Alcibiades.

[226] Drawing was subsequently studied as a branch of education essential to many of the common occupations of life.

[227] Suid.

[228] Hecataeus was also of Miletus.

[229] Pausan., ii., c. 3: Cic. de Orat., ii., c. 53; Aulus Gellius, xv., c. 23.

[230] Fast. Hell., vol. i.

[231] A brilliant writer in the Edinburgh Review (Mr. Macauley) would account for the use of dialogue in Herodotus by the childish simplicity common to an early and artless age--as the boor always unconsciously resorts to the dramatic form of narration, and relates his story by a series of "says he's" and "says I's." But does not Mr. Macauley, in common with many others, insist far too much on the artlessness of the age and the unstudied simplicity of the writer? Though history itself was young, art was already at its zenith. It was the age of Sophocles, Phidias, and Pericles. It was from the Athenians, in their most polished period, that Herodotus received the most rapturous applause. Do not all accounts of Herodotus, as a writer, assure us that he spent the greater part of a long life in composing, polishing, and perfecting his history; and is it not more in conformity with the characteristic spirit of the times, and the masterly effects which Herodotus produces, to conclude, that what we suppose to be artlessness was, in reality, the premeditated elaboration of art?

[232] Esther iii., 12; viii., 9: Ezra vi., 1.

[233] Herod., vii., 100.

[234] About twenty-nine years younger.--Fast. Hell., vol. ii., p. 7.

[235] Cic. Acad. Quaest., 4, Abbe de Canaye, Mem. de l'Acad. d'I* *crip., tom. x. etc. (*illegible letters)

[236] Diog. Laert., cap. 6._ Cic. Acad. Quaest. 4, etc.

[237] Arist. Metap. Diog. Laert. Cic. Quaest. 4. etc.

[238] It must ever remain a disputable matter how far the Ionian Pythagoras was influenced by affection for Dorian policy and customs, and how far he designed to create a state upon the old Dorian model. On the one hand, it is certain that he paid especial attention to the rites and institutions most connected with the Dorian deity, Apollo--that, according to his followers, it was from that god that he derived his birth, a fiction that might be interpreted into a Dorian origin; he selected Croton as his residence, because it was under the protection of "his household god;" his doctrines are said to have been delivered in the Dorian dialect; and much of his educational discipline, much of his political system, bear an evident affinity to the old Cretan and Spartan institutions. But, on the other hand, it is probable, that Pythagoras favoured the god of Delphi, partly from the close connexion which many of his symbols bore to the metaphysical speculations the philosopher had learned to cultivate in the schools of oriental mysticism, and partly from the fact that Apollo was the patron of the medical art, in which Pythagoras was an eminent professor. And in studying the institutions of Crete and Sparta, he might rather have designed to strengthen by examples the system he had already adopted, than have taken from those Dorian cities the primitive and guiding notions of the constitution he afterward established. And in this Pythagoras might have resembled most reformers, not only of his own, but of all ages, who desire to go back to the earliest principles of the past as the sources of experience to the future. In the Dorian institutions was preserved the original character of the Hellenic nation; and Pythagoras, perhaps, valued or

consulted them less because they were Dorian than because they were ancient. It seems, however, pretty clear, that in the character of his laws he sought to conform to the spirit and mode of legislation already familiar in Italy, since Charondas and Zaleucus, who flourished before him, are ranked by Diodorus and others among his disciples.

[239] Livy dates it in the reign of Servius Tullus.

[240] Strabo.

[241] Iamblichus, c. viii., ix. See also Plato de Repub., lib. x.

[242] That the Achaean governments were democracies appears sufficiently evident; nor is this at variance with the remark of Xenophon, that timocracies were "according to the laws of the Achaeans;" since timocracies were but modified democracies.

[243] The Pythagoreans assembled at the house of Milo, the wrestler, who was an eminent general, and the most illustrious of the disciples were stoned to death, the house being fired. Lapidation was essentially the capital punishment of mobs--the mode of inflicting death that invariably stamps the offender as an enemy to the populace.

[244] Arist. Metaph., i., 3.

[245] Diog. Laert., viii., 28.

[246] Plut. in vit. Them. The Sophists were not, therefore, as is commonly asserted, the first who brought philosophy to bear upon politics.

[247] See, for evidence of the great gifts and real philosophy of Anaxagoras, Brucker de Sect. Ion., xix.

[248] Arist. Eth. Eu., i., 5.

[249] Archelaus began to teach during the interval between the first and second visit of Anaxagoras. See Fast. Hell., vol. ii., B. C. 450.

[250] See the evidence of this in the Clouds of Aristophanes.

[251] Plut. in vit. Per.

[252] See Thucyd., lib. v., c. 18, in which the articles of peace state that the temple and fane of Delphi should be independent, and that the citizens should settle their own taxes, receive their own revenues, and manage their own affairs as a sovereign nation (autoteleis kai autodikois [consult on these words Arnold's Thucydides, vol. ii., p. 256, note 4]), according to the ancient laws of their country.

[253] Mueller's Dorians, vol. ii., p. 422. Athen., iv.

[254] A short change of administration, perhaps, accompanied the defeat of Pericles in the debate on the Boeotian expedition. He was evidently in power, since he had managed the public funds during the opposition of Thucydides; but when beaten, as we should say, "on the Boeotian question," the victorious party probably came into office.

[255] An ambush, according to Diodorus, lib. xii.

[256] Twenty talents, according to the scholiast of Aristophanes. Suidas states the amount variously at fifteen and fifty.

[257] Who fled into Macedonia.--Theopomp. ap. Strab. The number of Athenian colonists was one thousand, according to Diodorus--two thousand, according to Theopompus.

[258] Aristoph. Nub., 213.

[259] Thucyd., i., 111.

[260] 1bid., i., 115.

[261] As is evident, among other proofs, from the story before narrated, of his passing his accounts to the Athenians with the item of ten talents employed as secret service money.

[262] The Propylaea alone (not then built) cost two thousand and twelve talents (Harpocrat. in propylaia tauta), and some temples cost a thousand talents each. [Plut. in vit. Per.] If the speech of Pericles referred to such works as these, the offer to transfer the account to his own charge was indeed but a figure of eloquence. But, possibly, the accusation to which this offer was intended as a reply was applicable only to some individual edifice or some of the minor works, the cost of which his fortune might have defrayed. We can scarcely indeed suppose, that if the affected generosity were but a bombastic flourish, it could have excited any feeling but laughter among an audience so acute.

[263] The testimony of Thucydides (lib. ii., c. 5) alone suffices to destroy all the ridiculous imputations against the honesty of Pericles which arose from the malice of contemporaries, and are yet perpetuated only by such writers as cannot weigh authorities. Thucydides does not only call him incorrupt, but "clearly or notoriously honest." [Chraematon te diaphanos adorotatos.] Plutarch and Isocrates serve to corroborate this testimony.

[264] Plut. in vit. Per.

[265] Thucyd., lib. ii., c. 65.

[266] "The model of this regulation, by which Athens obtained the most extensive influence, and an almost absolute dominion over the allies, was possibly found in other Grecian states which had subject confederates, such as Thebes, Elis, and Argos. But on account of the remoteness of many countries, it is impossible that every trifle could have been brought before the court at Athens; we must therefore suppose that each subject state had an inferior jurisdiction of its own, and that the supreme jurisdiction alone belonged to Athens. Can it, indeed, be supposed that persons would have travelled from Rhodes or Byzantium, for the sake of a lawsuit of fifty or a hundred drachmas? In private suits a sum of money was probably fixed, above which the inferior court of the allies had no jurisdiction, while cases relating to higher sums were referred to Athens. There can be no doubt that public and penal causes were to a great extent decided in Athens, and the few definite statements which are extant refer to

lawsuits of this nature."--Boeckh, *Pol. Econ. of Athens*, vol. ii., p. 142, 143, translation.

[267] In calculating the amount of the treasure when transferred to Athens, Boeckh (*Pol. Econ. of Athens*, vol. i., p. 193, translation) is greatly misled by an error of dates. He assumes that the fund had only existed ten years when brought to Athens: whereas it had existed about seventeen, viz., from B. C. 477 to B. C. 461, or rather B. C. 460. And this would give about the amount affirmed by Diodorus, xii., p. 38 (viz., nearly 8000 talents), though he afterward raises it to 10,000. But a large portion of it must have been consumed in war before the transfer. Still Boeckh rates the total of the sum transferred far too low, when he says it cannot have exceeded 1800 talents. It more probably doubled that sum.

[268] Such as Euboea, see p. 212.

[269] *Vesp. Aristoph.* 795.

[270] Knight's *Prolegomena to Homer*; see also Boeckh (translation), vol. i., p. 25.

[271] *Viz.*, B. C. 424; *Ol.* 89.

[272] *Thucyd.*, iv., 57.

[273] See Chandler's *Inscript.*

[274] In the time of Alcibiades the tribute was raised to one thousand three hundred talents, and even this must have been most unequally assessed, if it were really the pecuniary hardship the allies insisted upon and complained of. But the resistance made to imposts upon matters of feeling or principle in our own country, as, at this day, in the case of church-rates, may show the real nature of the grievance. It was not the amount paid, but partly the degradation of paying it, and partly, perhaps, resentment in many places at some unfair assessment. Discontent exaggerates every burden, and a feather is as heavy as a mountain when laid on unwilling shoulders. When the new arrangement was made by Alcibiades or the later demagogues, Andocides asserts that some of the allies left their native countries and emigrated to Thurii. But how many Englishmen have emigrated to America from objections to a peculiar law or a peculiar impost, which state policy still vindicates, or state necessity still maintains! The Irish Catholic peasant, in reality, would not, perhaps, be much better off, in a pecuniary point of view, if the tithes were transferred to the rental of the landlord, yet Irish Catholics have emigrated in hundreds from the oppression, real or imaginary, of Protestant tithe-owners. Whether in ancient times or modern, it is not the amount of taxation that makes the grievance. People will pay a pound for what they like, and grudge a farthing for what they hate. I have myself known men quit England because of the stamp duty on newspapers!

[275] *Thucyd.*, lib. i., c. 75; Bloomfield's translation.

[276] A sentiment thus implied by the Athenian ambassadors: "We are not the first who began the custom which has ever been an established one, that the weaker should be kept under by the stronger." The Athenians had, however, an excuse more powerful than that of the

ancient Rob Roys. It was the general opinion of the time that the revolt of dependant allies might be fairly punished by one that could punish them--(so the Corinthians take care to observe). And it does not appear that the Athenian empire at this period was more harsh than that of other states to their dependants. The Athenian ambassadors (Thucyd., i., 78) not only quote the far more galling oppressions the Ionians and the isles had undergone from the Mede, but hint that the Spartans had been found much harder masters than the Athenians.

[277] Only twelve drachma each yearly: the total, therefore, is calculated by the inestimable learning of Boeckh not to have exceeded twenty-one talents.

[278] Total estimated at thirty-three talents.

[279] The state itself contributed largely to the plays, and the lessee of the theatre was also bound to provide for several expenses, in consideration of which he received the entrance money.

[280] On the authority of Pseud. Arist. Oecon., 2-4.

[281] In the expedition against Sicily the state supplied the vessel and paid the crew. The trierarchs equipped the ship and gave voluntary contributions besides.--Thucyd., vi., 31.

[282] Liturgies, with most of the Athenian laws that seemed to harass the rich personally, enhanced their station and authority politically. It is clear that wherever wealth is made most obviously available to the state, there it will be most universally respected. Thus is it ever in commercial countries. In Carthage of old, where, according to Aristotle, wealth was considered virtue, and in England at this day, where wealth, if not virtue, is certainly respectability,

[283] And so well aware of the uncertain and artificial tenure of the Athenian power were the Greek statesmen, that we find it among the arguments with which the Corinthian some time after supported the Peloponnesian war, "that the Athenians, if they lost one sea-fight, would be utterly subdued;"--nor, even without such a mischance, could the flames of a war be kindled, but what the obvious expedient [Thucyd., lib. i., c. 121. As the Corinthians indeed suggested, Thucyd., lib. i., c. 122] of the enemy would be to excite the Athenian allies to revolt, and the stoppage or diminution of the tribute would be the necessary consequence.

[284] If the courts of law among the allies were not removed to Athens till after the truce with Peloponnesus, and indeed till after the ostracism of Thucydides, the rival of Pericles, the value of the judicial fees did not, of course, make one of the considerations for peace; but there would then have been the mightier consideration of the design of that transfer which peace only could effect.

[285] Plut. in vit. Per.

[286] "As a vain woman decked out with jewels," was the sarcastic reproach of the allies.--Plut. in vit. Per.

[287] The Propylaea was built under the direction of Mnesicles. It was begun 437 B. C., in the archonship of Euthymenes, three years after the Samian war, and completed in five years. Harpocrat. in

propylaia tauta.

[288] Plut. in vit. Per.

[289] See Arnold's Thucydides, ii., 13, note 12.

[290] "Their bodies, too, they employ for the state as if they were any one's else but their own; but with minds completely their own, they are ever ready to render it service."--Thucyd., i., 70, Bloomfield's translation.

[291] With us, Juries as well as judges are paid, and, in ordinary cases, at as low a rate as the Athenian dicasts (the different value of money being considered), viz., common jurymen one shilling for each trial, and, in the sheriffs' court, fourpence. What was so pernicious in Athens is perfectly harmless in England; it was the large member of the dicasts which made the mischief, and not the system of payment itself, as unreflecting writers have so often asserted.

[292] See Book IV., Chapter V. VII. of this volume.

[293] At first the payment of the dicasts was one obolus.--(Aristoph. Nubes, 861.) Afterward, under Cleon, it seems to have been increased to three; it is doubtful whether it was in the interval ever two obols. Constant mistakes are made between the pay, and even the constitution, of the ecclesiasts and the dicasts. But the reader must carefully remember that the former were the popular legislators, the latter, the popular judges or jurors--their functions were a mixture of both.

[294] *Misthos ekklaesiastikos*--the pay of the ecclesiasts, or popular assembly.

[295] We know not how far the paying of the ecclesiasts was the work of Pericles: if it were, it must have been at, or after, the time we now enter upon, as, according to Aristophanes (*Eccles.*, 302), the people were not paid during the power of Myronides, who flourished, and must have fallen with Thucydides, the defeated rival of Pericles.

[296] The Athenians could extend their munificence even to foreigners, as their splendid gift, said to have been conferred on Herodotus, and the sum of ten thousand drachmas, which Isocrates declares them to have bestowed on Pindar. [*Isoc. de Antidosi.*]

[297] The pay of the dicast and the ecclesiast was, as we have just seen, first one, then three obols; and the money paid to the infirm was never less than one, nor more than two obols a day. The common sailors, in time of peace, received four obols a day. Neither an ecclesiast nor a dicast was, therefore, paid so much as a common sailor.

[298] Such as the Panathenaea and Hieromeniae.

[299] From *klaeroi*, lots. The estates and settlements of a *cleruchia* were divided among a certain number of citizens by lot.

[300] The state only provided the settlers with arms, and defrayed the expenses of their journey. See Boeckh, *Pol. Econ. of Athens*, vol. ii., p. 170 (translation).

[301] Andoc. Orat. de Pace.

[302] These institutions differed, therefore, from colonies principally in this: the mother country retained a firm hold over the cleruchi--could recall them or reclaim their possessions, as a penalty of revolt: the cleruchi retained all the rights, and were subject to most of the conditions, of citizens. [Except, for instance, the liturgies.] Lands were given without the necessity of quitting Athens--departure thence was voluntary, although it was the ordinary choice. But whether the cleruchi remained at home or repaired to their settlement, they were equally attached to Athenian interests. From their small number, and the enforced and unpopular nature of their tenure, their property, unlike that of ordinary colonists, depended on the power and safety of the parent state: they were not so much transplanted shoots as extended branches of one tree, taking their very life from the same stem. In modern times, Ireland suggests a parallel to the old cleruchia--in the gift of lands to English adventurers--in the long and intimate connexion which subsisted between the manners, habits, and political feeling of the English settlers and the parent state--in the separation between the settlers and the natives; and in the temporary power and subsequent feebleness which resulted to the home government from the adoption of a system which garrisoned the land, but exasperated the inhabitants.

[303] Nor were even these composed solely of Athenians, but of mixed and various races. The colony to Amphipolis (B. C. 465) is the first recorded colony of the Athenians after the great Ionic migrations.

[304] In the year in which the colony of Thurium or Thurii was founded, the age of Lysias was fifteen, that of Herodotus forty-one.

[305] Plut. in vit. Per. Schol. Aristoph. Av., 521.

[306] Viz., Callias, Lysippus, and Cratinus. See Athenaeus, lib. viii., p. 344. The worthy man seems to have had the amiable infirmities of a bon vivant.

[307] Plut. in vit. Them.

[308] Historians, following the received text in Plutarch, have retailed the incredible story that the rejected claimants were sold for slaves; but when we consider the extraordinary agitation it must have caused to carry such a sentence against so many persons, amounting to a fourth part of the free population--when we remember the numerous connexions, extending throughout at least four times their own number, which five thousand persons living long undisturbed and unsuspected as free citizens must have formed, it is impossible to conceive that such rigour could even have been attempted without creating revolution, sedition, or formidable resistance. Yet this measure, most important if attended with such results--most miraculous if not--is passed over in total silence by Thucydides and by every other competent authority. A luminous emendation by Mr. Clinton (Fast. Hell., vol. ii., second edition, p. 52 and 390, note p) restores the proper meaning. Instead of heprataesan, he proposes apaelathaesan--the authorities from Lysias quoted by Mr. Clinton (p. 390) seem to decide the matter. "These five thousand disfranchised citizens, in B. C. 544, partly supplied the colony to Thurium in the following year, and partly contributed to augment the number of the

Metoecei."

[309] Fourteen thousand two hundred and forty, according to Philochorus. By the term "free citizens" is to be understood those male Athenians above twenty--that is, those entitled to vote in the public assembly. According to Mr. Clinton's computation, the women and children being added, the fourteen thousand two hundred and forty will amount to about fifty-eight thousand six hundred and forty, as the total of the free population.

[310] Thucyd., i., c. 40.

[311] See the speech of the Corinthians.--Thucyd., lib. i., 70.

[312] Who was this Thucydides? The rival of Pericles had been exiled less than ten years before [in fact, about four years ago; viz., B. C. 444]; and it is difficult to suppose that he could have been recalled before the expiration of his sentence, and appointed to command, at the very period when the power and influence of Pericles were at their height. Thucydides, the historian, was about thirty-one, an age at which so high a command would scarcely, at that period, have been bestowed upon any citizen, even in Athens, where men mixed in public affairs earlier than in other Hellenic states [Thucydides himself (lib. v., 43) speaks of Alcibiades as a mere youth (at least one who would have been so considered in any other state), at a time when he could not have been much less, and was probably rather more than thirty]; besides, had Thucydides been present, would he have given us no more ample details of an event so important? There were several who bore this name. The scholiast on Aristophanes (*Acharn.*, v., 703) says there were four, whom he distinguishes thus--1st, the historian; 2d, the Gargettian; 3d, the Thessalian; 4th, the son of Melesias. The scholiast on the *Vespae* (v., 991) enumerates the same, and calls them all Athenians. The son of Melesias is usually supposed the opponent of Pericles--he is so called by Androtion. Theopompus, however, says that it was the son of Pantanus. Marcellinus (in *vit. Thucyd.*, p. xi.) speaks of many of the name, and also selects four for special notice. 1st, the historian; 2d, the son of Melesias; 3d, a Pharsalian; 4th, a poet of the ward of Acherdus, mentioned by Androtion, and called the son of Ariston. Two of this name, the historian and the son of Melesias, are well known to us; but, for the reasons I have mentioned, it is more probable that one of the others was general in the Samian war. A third Thucydides (the Thessalian or Pharsalian) is mentioned by the historian himself (viii., 92). I take the Gargettian (perhaps the son of Pantanus named by Theopompus) to have been the commander in the expedition.

[313] Plut. in *vit. Per.*

[314] Alexis ap. Ath., lib. xiii.

[315] At this period the Athenians made war with a forbearance not common in later ages. When Timotheus besieged Samos, he maintained his armament solely on the hostile country, while a siege of nine months cost Athens so considerable a sum.

[316] Plut. in *vit. Per.*

The contribution levied on the Samians was two hundred talents, proportioned, according to Diodorus, to the full cost of the

expedition. But as Boeckh (*Pol. Econ. of Athens*, vol. i., p. 386, trans.) well observes, "This was a very lenient reckoning; a nine months' siege by land and sea, in which one hundred and ninety-nine triremes [Boeckh states the number of triremes at one hundred and ninety-nine, but, in fact, there were two hundred and fifteen vessels employed, since we ought not to omit the sixteen stationed on the Carian coast, or despatched to Lesbos and Chios for supplies] were employed, or, at any rate, a large part of this number, for a considerable time, must evidently have caused a greater expense, and the statement, therefore, of Isocrates and Nepos, that twelve hundred talents were expended on it, appears to be by no means exaggerated."

[317] It was on Byzantium that they depended for the corn they imported from the shores of the Euxine.

[318] The practice of funeral orations was probably of very ancient origin among the Greeks: but the law which ordained them at Athens is referred by the scholiast on Thucydides (lib. ii., 35) to Solon; while Diodorus, on the other hand, informs us it was not passed till after the battle of Plataea. It appears most probable that it was a usage of the heroic times, which became obsolete while the little feuds among the Greek states remained trivial and unimportant; but, after the Persian invasion, it was solemnly revived, from the magnitude of the wars which Greece had undergone, and the dignity and holiness of the cause in which the defenders of their country had fallen.

[319] Ouk an muraisi graus eous aegeitheo.

This seems the only natural interpretation of the line, in which, from not having the context, we lose whatever wit the sentence may have possessed--and witty we must suppose it was, since Plutarch evidently thinks it a capital joke. In corroboration of this interpretation of an allusion which has a little perplexed the commentators, we may observe, that ten years before, Pericles had judged a sarcasm upon the age of Elpinice the best way to silence her importunities. The anecdote is twice told by Plutarch, in *vit. Cim.*, c. 14, and in *vit. Per.*, c. 10.

[320] Aristot., *Poet.* iv.

[321] "As he was removed from Cos in infancy, the name of his adopted country prevailed over that of the country of his birth, and Epicharmus is called of Syracuse, though born at Cos, as Apollonius is called the Rhodian, though born at Alexandria."--*Fast. Hell.*, vol. ii., introduction.

[322] Moliere.

[323] Laertius, viii. For it is evident that Epicharmus the philosopher was no other than Epicharmus the philosophical poet--the delight of Plato, who was himself half a Pythagorean.--See Bentley, *Diss. Phal.*, p. 201; Laertius, viii., 78; Fynes Clinton, *Fast. Hell.*, vol. ii., introduction, p. 36 (note g).

[324] A few of his plays were apparently not mythological, but they were only exceptions from the general rule, and might have been written after the less refining comedies of Magnes at Athens.

[325] A love of false antithesis.

[326] In Syracuse, however, the republic existed when Epicharmus first exhibited his comedies. His genius was therefore formed by a republic, though afterward fostered by a tyranny.

[327] For Crates acted in the plays of Cratinus before he turned author. (See above.) Now the first play of Crates dates two years before the first recorded play (the Archilochi) of Cratinus; consequently Cratinus must have been celebrated long previous to the exhibition of the Archilochi--indeed, his earlier plays appear, according to Aristophanes, to have been the most successful, until the old gentleman, by a last vigorous effort, beat the favourite play of Aristophanes himself.

[328] That the magistrature did not at first authorize comedy seems a proof that it was not at the commencement considered, like tragedy, of a religious character. And, indeed, though modern critics constantly urge upon us its connexion with religion, I doubt whether at any time the populace thought more of its holier attributes and associations than the Neapolitans of to-day are impressed with the sanctity of the carnival when they are throwing sugarplums at each other.

[329] In the interval, however, the poets seem to have sought to elude the law, since the names of two plays (the Satyroi and the Kuleophoroi) are recorded during this period--plays which probably approached comedy without answering to its legal definition. It might be that the difficulty rigidly to enforce the law against the spirit of the times and the inclination of the people was one of the causes that led to the repeal of the prohibition.

[330] Since that siege lasted nine months of the year in which the decree was made.

[331] Aristophanes thus vigorously describes the applauses that attended the earlier productions of Cratinus. I quote from the masterly translation of Mr. Mitchell.

"Who Cratinus may forget, or the storm of whim and wit,
Which shook theatres under his guiding;
When Panegyric's song poured her flood of praise along,
Who but he on the top wave was riding?"

* * * * *

"His step was as the tread of a flood that leaves its bed,
And his march it was rude desolation," etc.
Mitchell's Aristoph., The Knights, p. 204.

The man who wrote thus must have felt betimes--when, as a boy, he first heard the roar of the audience--what it is to rule the humours of eighteen thousand spectators!

[332] De l'esprit, passim.

[333] De Poet., c. 26.

[334] The oracle that awarded to Socrates the superlative degree of wisdom, gave to Sophocles the positive, and to Euripides the comparative degree,

Sophos Sophoclaes; sophoteros d'Euripoeaes;
'Andron de panton Sokrataes sophotatos.

Sophocles is wise--Euripides wiser--but wisest of all men is Socrates.

[335] The Oresteia.

[336] For out of seventy plays by Aeschylus only thirteen were successful; he had exhibited fifteen years before he obtained his first prize; and the very law passed in honour of his memory, that a chorus should be permitted to any poet who chose to re-exhibit his dramas, seems to indicate that a little encouragement of such exhibition was requisite. This is still more evident if we believe, with Quintilian, that the poets who exhibited were permitted to correct and polish up the dramas, to meet the modern taste, and play the Cibber to the Athenian Shakspeare.

[337] Athenaeus, lib. xiii., p. 603, 604.

[338] He is reported, indeed, to have said that he rejoiced in the old age which delivered him from a severe and importunate taskmaster.--Athen., lib. 12, p. 510. But the poet, nevertheless, appears to have retained his amorous propensities, at least, to the last.--See Athenaeus, lib. 13, p. 523.

[339] He does indeed charge Sophocles with avarice, but he atones for it very handsomely in the "Frogs."

[340] M. Schlegel is pleased to indulge in one of his most declamatory rhapsodies upon the life, "so dear to the gods," of this "pious and holy poet." But Sophocles, in private life, was a profligate, and in public life a shuffler and a trimmer, if not absolutely a renegade. It was, perhaps, the very laxity of his principles which made him thought so agreeable a fellow. At least, such is no uncommon cause of personal popularity nowadays. People lose much of their anger and envy of genius when it throws them down a bundle or two of human foibles by which they can climb up to its level.

[341] It is said, indeed, that the appointment was the reward of a successful tragedy; it was more likely due to his birth, fortune, and personal popularity.

[342] It seems, however, that Pericles thought very meanly of his warlike capacities.--See Athenaeus, lib. 13, p. 604.

[343] Oedip. Tyr., 1429, etc.

[344] When Sophocles (Athenaeus, i., p. 22) said that Aeschylus composed befittingly, but without knowing it, his saying evinced the study his compositions had cost himself.

[345] "The chorus should be considered as one of the persons in the drama, should be a part of the whole, and a sharer in the action, not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles."--Aristot. de Poet., Twining's translation. But even in Sophocles, at least in such of his plays as are left to us, the chorus rarely, if ever, is a sharer in the outward and positive action of the piece; it rather carries on and expresses

the progress of the emotions that spring out of the action.

[346] --akno toi pros s' aposkopois' anax.--Oedip. Tyr., 711.

This line shows how much of emotion the actor could express in spite of the mask.

[347] "Of all discoveries, the best is that which arises from the action itself, and in which a striking effect is produced by probable incidents. Such is that in the Oedipus of Sophocles."--Aristot. de Poet., Twining's translation.

[348] But the spot consecrated to those deities which men "tremble to name," presents all the features of outward loveliness that contrast and refine, as it were, the metaphysical terror of the associations. And the beautiful description of Coloneus itself, which is the passage that Sophocles is said to have read to his judges, before whom he was accused of dotage, seems to paint a home more fit for the graces than the furies. The chorus inform the stranger that he has come to "the white Coloneus;"

"Where ever and aye, through the greenest vale
Gush the wailing notes of the nightingale
From her home where the dark-hued ivy weaves
With the grove of the god a night of leaves;
And the vines blossom out from the lonely glade,
And the suns of the summer are dim in the shade,
And the storms of the winter have never a breeze,
That can shiver a leaf from the charmed trees;
For there, oh ever there,
With that fair mountain throng,
Who his sweet nurses were, [the nymphs of Nisa]
Wild Bacchus holds his court, the conscious woods among!
Daintily, ever there,
Crown of the mighty goddesses of old,
Clustering Narcissus with his glorious hues
Springs from his bath of heaven's delicious dews,
And the gay crocus sheds his rays of gold.
And wandering there for ever
The fountains are at play,
And Cephissus feeds his river
From their sweet urns, day by day.
The river knows no dearth;
Adown the vale the lapsing waters glide,
And the pure rain of that pellucid tide
Calls the rife beauty from the heart of earth.
While by the banks the muses' choral train
Are duly heard--and there, Love checks her golden rein."

[349] Geronta dorthoun, phlauron, os neos pesae.
Oedip. Col., 396.

Thus, though his daughter had only grown up from childhood to early womanhood, Oedipus has passed from youth to age since the date of the Oedipus Tyrannus.

[350] See his self-justification, 960-1000.

[351] As each poet had but three actors allowed him, the song of the

chorus probably gave time for the representative of Theseus to change his dress, and reappear as Polynices.

[352] The imagery in the last two lines has been amplified from the original in order to bring before the reader what the representation would have brought before the spectator.

[353] Mercury.

[354] Proserpine.

[355] Autonamos.--Antig., 821.

[356] Ou toi synechthein, alla symphilein ephun.
Antig., 523.

[357] Ceres.

[358] Hyper dilophon petras--viz., Parnassus. The Bacchanalian light on the double crest of Parnassus, which announced the god, is a favourite allusion with the Greek poets.

[359] His mother, Semele.

[360] Aristotle finds fault with the incident of the son attempting to strike his father, as being shocking, yet not tragic--that is, the violent action is episodic, since it is not carried into effect; yet, if we might connect the plot of the "Antigone" with the former plays of either "Oedipus," there is something of retribution in the attempted parricide when we remember the hypocritical and cruel severity of Creon to the involuntary parricide of Oedipus. The whole description of the son in that living tomb, glaring on his father with his drawn sword, the dead form of his betrothed, with the subsequent picture of the lovers joined in death, constitutes one of the most masterly combinations of pathos and terror in ancient or modern poetry.

[361] This is not the only passage in which Sophocles expresses feminine woe by silence. In the Trachiniae, Deianira vanishes in the same dumb abruptness when she hears from her son the effect of the centaur's gift upon her husband.

[362] According to that most profound maxim of Aristotle, that in tragedy a very bad man should never be selected as the object of chastisement, since his fate is not calculated to excite our sympathies.

[363] Electra, I. 250-300.

[364] When (line 614) Clytemnestra reproaches Electra for using insulting epithets to a mother--and "Electra, too, at such a time of life"--I am surprised that some of the critics should deem it doubtful whether Clytemnestra meant to allude to her being too young or too mature for such unfilial vehemence. Not only does the age of Orestes, so much the junior to Electra, prove the latter signification to be the indisputable one, but the very words of Electra herself to her younger sister, Chrysothemis, when she tells her that she is "growing old, unwedded."

Estos'onde tou chronou
alektra gaearskousan anumegaia te.

Brunck has a judicious note on Electra's age, line 614.

[365] Macbeth, act i., scene 5.

[366] See Note [376].

[367] Sophocles skilfully avoids treading the ground consecrated to Aeschylus. He does not bring the murder before us with the struggles and resolve of Orestes.

[368] This is very characteristic of Sophocles; he is especially fond of employing what may be called "a crisis in life" as a source of immediate interest to the audience. So in the "Oedipus at Coloneus," Oedipus no sooner finds he is in the grove of the Furies than he knows his hour is approaching; so, also, in the "Ajax," the Nuncius announces from the soothsayer, that if Ajax can survive the one day which makes the crisis of his life, the anger of the goddess will cease. This characteristic of the peculiar style of Sophocles might be considered as one of the proofs (were any wanting) of the authenticity of the "Trachiniae."

[369] M. Schlegel rather wantonly accuses Deianira of "levity"--all her motives, on the contrary, are pure and high, though tender and affectionate.

[370] Observe the violation of the unity which Sophocles, the most artistical of all the Greek tragedians, does not hesitate to commit whenever he thinks it necessary. Hyllus, at the beginning of the play, went to Ceneum; he has been already there and back--viz., a distance from Mount Oeta to a promontory in Euboea, during the time about seven hundred and thirty lines have taken up in recital! Nor is this all: just before the last chorus--only about one hundred lines back--Lichas set out to Ceneum; and yet sufficient time is supposed to have elapsed for him to have arrived there--been present at a sacrifice--been killed by Hercules--and after all this, for Hyllus, who tells the tale, to have performed the journey back to Trachin.

[371] Even Ulysses, the successful rival of Ajax, exhibits a reluctance to face the madman which is not without humour.

[372] Potter says, in common with some other authorities, that "we may be assured that the political enmity of the Athenians to the Spartans and Argives was the cause of this odious representation of Menelaus and Agamemnon." But the Athenians had, at that time, no political enmity with the Argives, who were notoriously jealous of the Spartans; and as for the Spartans, Agamemnon and Menelaus were not their heroes and countrymen. On the contrary, it was the thrones of Menelaus and Agamemnon which the Spartans overthrew. The royal brothers were probably sacrificed by the poet, not the patriot. The dramatic effects required that they should be made the foils to the manly fervour of Teucer and the calm magnanimity of Ulysses.

[373] That the catastrophe should be unhappy!
Aristot., Poet., xiii.

In the same chapter Aristotle properly places in the second rank of

fable those tragedies which attempt the trite and puerile moral of punishing the bad and rewarding the good.

[374] When Aristophanes (in the character of Aeschylus) ridicules Euripides for the vulgarity of deriving pathos from the rags, etc., of his heroes, he ought not to have omitted all censure of the rags and sores of the favourite hero of Sophocles. And if the Telephus of the first is represented as a beggar, so also is the Oedipus at Coloneus of the latter. Euripides has great faults, but he has been unfairly treated both by ancient and modern hypercriticism.

[375] The single effects, not the plots.

[376] "Polus, celebrated," says Gellius, "throughout all Greece, a scientific actor of the noblest tragedies." Gellius relates of him an anecdote, that when acting the Electra of Sophocles, in that scene where she is represented with the urn supposed to contain her brother's remains, he brought on the stage the urn and the relics of his own son, so that his lamentations were those of real emotion. Poles acted the hero in the plays of Oedipus Tyrannus and Oedipus at Coloneus.--Arrian. ap. Stob., xcvi., 28. The actors were no less important personages on the ancient than they are on the modern stage. Aristotle laments that good poets were betrayed into episodes, or unnecessarily prolonging and adorning parts not wanted in the plot, so as to suit the rival performers.--Arist. de Poet., ix. Precisely what is complained of in the present day. The Attic performers were the best in Greece--all the other states were anxious to engage them, but they were liable to severe penalties if they were absent at the time of the Athenian festivals. (Plut. in Alex.) They were very highly remunerated. Polus could earn no less than a talent in two days (Plut. in Rhet. vit.), a much larger sum (considering the relative values of money) than any English actor could now obtain for a proportionate period of service. Though in the time of Aristotle actors as a body were not highly respectable, there was nothing highly derogatory in the profession itself. The high birth of Sophocles and Aeschylus did not prevent their performing in their own plays. Actors often took a prominent part in public affairs; and Aristodemus, the player, was sent ambassador to King Philip. So great, indeed, was the importance attached to this actor, that the state took on itself to send ambassadors in his behalf to all the cities in which he had engagements.--Aeschin. de Fals. Legat., p. 30-203, ed. Reiske.

[377] The Minerva Promachus. Hae megalae Athaena.

[378] Zosimus, v., p. 294.

[379] Oedip. Colon., 671, etc.

[380] Oedip. Colon., 691.

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