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PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY

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PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY

BY

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PREFACE

Even since the following sheets were printed, the researches into prehistoric Greek life, and its relation both to the East, to the Homeric poems, and to the Greece we know in the 7th century B.C., have progressed, and we are beginning to see some light through the mist. I can refer the reader to two books, of which one has just been published in English. The other, the second edition of Busolt's *History of Greece*, though still in the press, will be accessible to those that read German in a few weeks. I prefer to cite the former—Schuchardt's account of *Schliemann's Excavations*—in its English form, as it is there enriched with an Introduction, and apparently a revision of the text, by Mr. Walter Leaf. This is the first systematic attempt to bring into a short compass, with the illustrations, and with some regard to chronology, the great body of facts discovered and hastily consigned to many large volumes by the gifted discoverer. There is, moreover, a separate chapter (vi.) which gathers these facts under a theory, not to speak of the acute and cautious criticism of Mr. Leaf, which will be found in the Introduction to the volume. The Introduction to Busolt's *History*, of which (by the author's courtesy) I have seen some 130 pages, contains a complete critical discussion of the same evidence.

Here is the general result in Busolt's own exposition (*G. G.* 2nd ed. pp. 113 sq.): 'The Homeric culture is younger than the Mykenæan, it is also simpler and in better proportion. The former had come to use iron for arms and tools, the latter is strictly in the age of bronze^[vi:1]. If the culture of the Epics does show a lower stage of technical development, we perceive also a decline of oriental influences. In many respects, in matters of interment, dress and armour, the epic age contrasts with the Mykenæan, but in many points we find transitions and threads which unite the two civilizations. The Homeric palace shows remarkable agreements with those of Mykenæ and Tiryns. The Homeric heroes fight with sword, spear, and bow, like the Mykenæan. Splendid vases, too, and furniture, such as occur within the range of the Mykenæan culture, agree even in details with the descriptions of the Epos. The Epos, too, knows Mykenæ "rich in gold," and the "wealthy" Odeomenos. In general the homes of the Mykenæan culture are prominent in the Iliad. The splendour of the Mykenæan epoch was therefore still fresh in the memory of the Æolians and Ionians when the Epos arose.

'If the life thus pictured in the Epos thus shows many kindred features to that of Mykenæ, the Doric life of the Peloponnesus stands in harsh contrast. Not in strong fortresses, but in open camps, do we find the Dorian conquerors. The nobles do not fight on chariots in the van, but serried infantry decides the combat^[vii:1].

'It was about from 1550 to 1150, that Mykenæan culture prevailed, and was then replaced, as the legends asserted, by the Dorian invaders.'

Let us note that the earlier and ruder civilisation of Troy may be contrasted with that of Mycenæ,

though both of them show successive stages—the later stage of the (second) city of Troy approaching to the intermediate stage of Tiryns, and indeed, forming an unbroken chain with this, Mycenæ, and even the later and more finished relics of prehistoric art found at Menidi and at Vaphio (Amyclæ). The whole series is homogeneous. The long-misunderstood palace of Troy is of the same kind in plan and arrangement as that of Tiryns and that of Mycenæ; the gold ornaments of Mycenæ are akin to those of Amyclæ; we stand in the presence of an old and organised civilisation which was broken off or ceased in prehistoric days, and recommenced on a different basis, and upon a somewhat different model, among the historical Greeks. And yet the prehistoric dwellers at Tiryns and Mycenæ had certainly some features in common with the later race. Not to speak of details such as the designs in pottery, or in the architecture of the simpler historic temples, they were a mercantile and a maritime people, receiving the products of far lands, and sending their own abroad; above all, they show that combination of receptivity and originality in their handicrafts which gives a peculiar stamp to their successors. While the ruder Trojan remains are said to show no traces of Phœnician importation, the Mycenæan exhibit objects from Egypt, from northern Syria, and from Phœnicia; while on the other hand all the best authorities now recognise in much of the pottery, and of the other handicrafts, intelligent home production, which can even be traced in exports along a line of islands across the southern Ægean and as far as Egypt. This latter fact, and the closer trade-relations with Hittite Syria than with Egypt or Phœnicia, are brought out by Busolt in his new Introduction.

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In what relation do these facts, now reduced to some order, stand to the Homeric poems? According to Schuchardt they vindicate for our Homer an amount of historical value which will astonish the sceptics of our generation. In the first place, however, it is certain that Homer (using the name as a convenient abstraction) has preserved a true tradition of the great seats of culture in prehistoric days. He tells us rightly that Tiryns had gone by when Mycenæ took the lead, and that the civilisation of this great centre of power in Greece was kindred to that of Troy, an equally old and splendid centre, which however was destroyed by fire before it had attained to the perfection of the later stages of Mycenæan art. Homer also implies that seafaring connections existed between Asia Minor and Greece, and that early wars arose from reprisals for piratical raids, as Herodotus confirms.

Some advanced kinds of handicraft, such as the inlaying of metals, which have been brought to light in Mycenæan work, are specially prominent in the Homeric poems. It is hard to conceive the nucleus of the poems having originated elsewhere than in the country where Mycenæan grandeur was still fresh. The legend which brings the rude Dorians into Greece about 1100 B.C. (the date need not be so early) accounts for the disappearance of this splendour, and the migration of the Achæans with their poems to Asia Minor. So far Mr. Leaf agrees, as well as with the theory of Fick, that the earliest poems were composed, not in Ionic, but in the old dialect of Greece, which may be called Æolic, provided (he adds) we do not identify it with the late Æolic to which it has been reduced by Fick. It is added by Schuchardt that the great body of *Nostoi* seems irreconcilable with E. Curtius' theory that the lays were composed for the early Æolic settlers, who made Asia Minor their permanent home; so that the Trojan War may really have been a mercantile war of Mycenæ against the Trojan pirates, who were outside the zone of the Mycenæan trade-route, but may have seriously injured it. Mr. Leaf justly points out that the obscure islands along this route, Cos, and Carpathus, together with Rhodes, in which Mycenæan wares have been found, are counted by the Homeric *Catalogue* as Achæan allies of Mycenæ, while the (Carian) Cyclades, though much larger and perhaps more populated, are ignored.

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So far the case for the early date and historic basis of Homer seems considerably strengthened by recent research. Nevertheless, the marked contrasts between the Mycenæan Greeks and the society in Homer create a great difficulty. Some of these have been removed by the aid of (perhaps legitimate) ingenuity, but differences of dress, of burial customs, in the use of iron, &c., remain. The seafaring too of the Homeric Greeks does not seem to me at all what we may infer the Mycenæan seafaring to have been. Minos, or somebody else, must have suppressed piracy, and prehistoric trading cannot have been so exclusively in the hands of the Phœnicians. The Old Mycenæans were perfectly ignorant of the art of writing, a fact which seems to preclude any systematic dealing with the Phœnicians, though Busolt rather infers from it a want of personal intercourse with the Hittites, and a mere reception of Asiatic luxuries through rude and semi-hostile Sidonian adventurers. Busolt thinks we can follow down prehistoric art through its various steps to that which leads into the Homeric epoch, but as yet such a gradual transition seems to me not clearly shown; I cannot but feel a gulf between the two. Either therefore the original poets of the *Iliad* were separated by a considerable gap of time from the life they sought to describe—there may have been a period of decadence before the Dorians appeared—or the Ionic recension was far more trenchant than a mere matter of dialect, and by omission or alteration accommodated the already strange and foreign habits of a bygone age to their own day; or else the Alexandrian editors have destroyed traces of old customs far more than has hitherto been suspected [\[xi:1\]](#).

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It does not therefore appear to me that the antiquity of the Homer which we possess is materially established by these newer researches. That the earliest lays embodied in the *Iliad* were very old has never been doubted by any sane critic, and has always been maintained by me on independent grounds. But I now think it likely that the great man who brought dramatic unity into the *Iliad*, and who may have lived near 800 B.C., did far more than merely string together, and make intelligible, older poems. He made the old life of Mycenæ into the newer Ionic life of Asia Minor. I am sorry to disagree with Mr. Leaf when he calls that Ionic society 'democratic to the core.' Any one who will read what even Pausanias records of its traditions will see that it was

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aristocratic to the core, and quite as likely to love heroic legends as any other Greek society of that day.

I must not conclude this Preface without acknowledging the constant help of my younger colleagues in correcting and improving what I write. Of these I will here specify Mr. L. Purser and Mr. Bury.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,
February, 1892.

FOOTNOTES:

- [vi:1] 'In the whole range of the Mykenæan culture, there have only been found in the later graves of the lower city, and in the beehive tomb of Vaphio, remains of some finger-rings of iron, used for ornaments. Iron tools and weapons were unknown to the Mykenæans—in spite of Beloch's opinion to the contrary. In the Iliad bronze is mentioned 279 times, iron 23; in the Odyssey they are named 80 and 25 times respectively, but the use of the later metal was far more diffused than the conventional style of the Epos betrays. Iron weapons are indeed only mentioned in the Iliad IV, 123; VII, 141, 144; and XVIII, 34. Books IV and VII are undoubtedly of later origin. Still the use of iron for tools was known throughout the whole Homeric age, and was gradually increasing during the growth of the Epos.'
- [vii:1] Probably, Busolt adds in the sequel, the use of iron weapons by the Dorian invaders may have been one cause of their victory. But it seems to me mainly to have been the victory of infantry over cavalry, and thus a very early type of the decisive day at Orchomenus, when the Spanish infantry of the Grand Catalan Company destroyed Guy de la Roche and his Frankish knights, and seized the country as their spoil.
- [xi:1] This last clause is suggested by the fragment of the Iliad, published in my Memoir on the Petrie Papyri, which shows, in thirty-five lines, five unknown to modern texts. Cf. Plate III and p. 34 of that Memoir.

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PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY.

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CHAPTER I.

OUR EARLIER HISTORIANS OF GREECE.

§ 1. There are scientific problems and literary tasks which can be worked out once for all, or which, at least, admit of final solution, to the lasting fame of him that finds that solution, as well as to the permanent benefit of civilized man. There are others, more numerous and far more interesting, which are ever being solved, finally perhaps in the opinion of the discoverer, and even of his generation, but ever arising again, and offering fresh difficulties and fresh attractions to other minds and to newer generations of men.

Definite and indefinite problems.

I will cite the largest instances, as the most obvious illustration of this second class. The deep mysteries of Religion, the dark problems of Knowing and Being, which have occupied the theologian and the metaphysician for thousands of years, are still unsettled, and there is hardly an age of thinking men which does not attack these questions afresh, and offer new systems and new solutions for the acceptance of the human race. Nor can we say that in these cases new facts have been discovered, or new evidence adduced; it is rather that mankind feels there is more in the mystery than is contained in the once accepted explanation, and endeavours by some new manipulation of the old arguments to satisfy the eternal craving for that mental rest which will never be attained till we know things face to face.

Examples in theology and metaphysics.

[2]

But perhaps these are instances too lofty for my present purpose: I can show the same pertinacious tendency to re-solve literary problems of a far humbler kind. How striking is the fact that the task of translating certain great masterpieces of poetry seems never completed, and that in the face of scores of versions, each generation of scholars will attack afresh Homer's *Iliad*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, and Goethe's *Faust!* There are, I believe, forty English versions of *Faust*. How many there are of the *Iliad* and the *Divina Commedia*, I have not ascertained; but of the former there is a whole library, and of the latter we may predict with certainty that the latest version will not be the last. Not only does each generation find for itself a new ideal in translation,—the fine version of the *Iliad* by Pope is now regarded with scorn,—but each new aspirant is discontented with the earlier renderings of the passages he himself loves best; and so year after year we see the same attempt made, often with great but never with universally accepted success. For there are always more beauties in the old masterpiece than have been conveyed, and there are always weaknesses in the translation, which show after a little wear.

Examples in literature.

[3]

This eternal freshness in great masterpieces of poetry which ever tempts new translators, is also to be found in great historical subjects, especially in the history of those nations which have left a permanent mark on the world's progress. There is no prospect that men will remain satisfied with the extant histories, however brilliant, of England or of France, even for an account of the periods which have long since elapsed, and upon which no new evidence of any importance can be found. Such is likewise the case with the histories of Greece and Rome. No doubt there is frequently new material discovered; the excavator may in a month's digging find stuff for years of speculation. No doubt there is an oscillation in the appreciation even of well-sifted materials: a new theory may serve to rearrange old facts and present them in a new light.

The case of history generally.

But quite apart from all this, men will be found to re-handle these great histories merely for the sake of re-handling them. In the words of the very latest of these attempts: "Though we can add nothing to the existing records of Greek history, the estimate placed upon their value and the conclusions drawn from them are constantly changing; and for this reason the story which has been told so often will be told anew from time to time so long as it continues to have an interest for mankind,—that is, let us hope, so long as mankind continues to exist."^[4:1]

[4]

§ 2. Perhaps the history of Greece has more right than any other to excite this interest, since the effects of that country and its people are probably far greater, certainly more subtle and various, than those of any other upon our modern life. It is curious that this truth is becoming recognized universally by the very generation which has begun to agitate against the general teaching of Greek in our higher schools. Nobody now attributes any real leading to the Romans in art, in philosophy, in the sciences, nay, even in the science of politics. If their literature was in some respects great, every Roman knew and confessed that this greatness was due to the Greeks; if their practical treatment of law and politics was certainly admirable, the theory of the latter was derived from Hellenic speculation.

Special claims of Greek history.

And when the originality of our Roman teachers is reduced to its very modest proportions, there is no other ancient nation that can be named among our schoolmasters except the Hebrews. Here there has been great exaggeration, and it has not yet been sifted and corrected, as in the case of Rome. It is still a popular truism that while we owe all we have of intellectual and artistic refinement to the Greeks, in one great department of civilization, and that the highest, we owe them nothing, but are debtors to the Semite spirit,—to the clear revelation and the tenacious dogma conveyed to the world by the Jews. Like many such truisms, this statement contains some truth, but a great deal of falsehood. When we have surveyed the earlier centuries, we shall revert to this question, and show how far the prejudice in favour of the Semite has ousted the Greek from his rightful place. Even serious history is sometimes unjust, much more the hasty generalizations of theologians or mere literary critics. For the history of religion will be found to rest, like everything good which we possess, partly upon a Greek basis;

The claims of Rome and of the Jews.

Greek Influences In Our Religion.

[5]

but of course mainly on that portion of Greek history which has only recently risen into public notice among our scholars,—I mean the later and the spiritual development of the nation when the conquests of Alexander had brought the whole ancient world under its sway.

So the subject is still quite fresh, and even the evidence of books is as yet unexhausted, not to speak of the yearly increment we obtain from the keen labour of many excavators. The *Mittheilungen* of the German Institute at Athens, the *Bulletin de Correspondance hellénique*, the English *Hellenic Journal*, and even the daily papers at Athens, teem with accounts of new discoveries. A comparison of the newest guide to Greece, the *Guide-Joanne* (1891), with the older books of the kind will show the wonderful increase in our knowledge of pre-historic antiquities. These recent books and reviews are following in the wake of Dr. Schliemann, whose great researches have set us more new problems than we are likely to solve in the present century.

[6]

§ 3. What I purpose, therefore, to do in this Essay is to review the general lines followed by the great historians of Greece of the last three generations; to show the main points in which each of them excels, and where each of them still shows a deficiency. I shall then notice some current misconceptions, as well as some errors to be corrected by interesting additions to our evidence, even since the last of our larger histories has appeared; and in doing this shall specially touch on those more disputed and speculative questions which are on principle omitted in practical and non-controversial books. By this means we shall ascertain in a general way what may be expected from any fresh attempt in Greek history, and where there still seems room for discovery or for the better establishing of truths already discovered, but not yet accepted in the current teaching of our day. Whatever occasional digressions may occur will all be subordinate to this general plan, which is in fact an essay, not upon Greek history, but upon the problems of Greek history. We shall conclude with some reflections upon the artistic lessons of Greek life which are at last becoming accessible to the larger public.

Plan of this Essay.

§ 4. I need not go back to the period of Universal Histories, such as that of Bossuet or of Rollin, which were only adequate before special studies had accumulated vast materials from the records of each separate nation. In our own day there are not wanting universal histories,^[7:1] though even the acknowledged genius and the enormous experience of Ranke were insufficient for the task as it now presents itself.^[7:2] The first larger Greek histories known to me are those of Gillies and of Mitford^[7:3],—the former now totally forgotten; the latter only remembered because it stimulated a great successor to write his famous antidote.

Universal histories.

[7]

Yet the work of Gillies, first published in 1786, was continued by the author, thirty-five years later, down to the reign of Augustus, when the sixth edition, a stately book in eight volumes, was published. There is no lack of merit in the work; but the writer's standpoint will be apparent from the opening of his Dedication to the King: 'Sir, the history of Greece exposes the dangerous turbulence of democracy, and arraigns the despotism of tyrants. By describing the incurable evils inherent in every form of republican policy, it evinces the inestimable benefits resulting to liberty itself from the lawful domination of hereditary kings.' One might imagine Gillies a Hellenistic author dedicating his work to a Ptolemy or a Seleucus.

Gillies.

[8]

It is clear enough, though I know not the details of his life, that the horrors of the French Revolution had sunk deep into his soul. This is quite certain in the case of Mitford, a gentleman of fortune, whose education in Greek was early interrupted, but whose long residence at Nice brought him into contact with St. Croix and Villoison, two of the most famous Grecians of that day. After his return in 1777 from France, he found himself a man of leisure and importance, in the same Yeomanry corps with Gibbon, whose friendship he gained, and at whose suggestion he wrote his once popular history.^[8:1]

Effects of the French Revolution on the writers of the time.

Mitford:

Mitford wrote in a Tory spirit, and with a distinct feeling of the *political* significance of Greek history as an example to modern men. He had upon his side the authority of almost every great thinker produced in the days of Hellenic greatness. All these speculators, in their pictures of ideal, as well as their criticisms of the actual, States, regard thorough-going democracy as an evil, and its abuses as the main cause of the early decay of Hellenic greatness. They all point with respect and pride to the permanence and consistency of Spartan life as indicating the sort of government likely to produce the best and most enduring results. Mitford, therefore, not only deserves the credit of having taken up Greek history as a political study, but he undoubtedly represents the body of learned opinion among the Greeks themselves upon the subject. The literary classes, so far as we can judge from what is extant of their works, were not usually radical or democratic, and it was very natural, in a generation which had witnessed the awful results of a democratic upheaval in France, to appeal to this evidence as showing that the voice of history was against giving power to the masses, and taking it from the classes, of any society.

writes a Tory history of Greece;

[9]

What popularity Mitford attained can only now be inferred from the editions of his work demanded^[9:1], coupled with the all-important fact that he called forth two tremendous refutations,—the monumental works of Thirlwall and of Grote.

§ 5. It is very curious that these two famous histories should have been undertaken (like Gillies' and Mitford's) nearly at the same time, and both of them by way of correction for the strong anti-republican views of Mitford. It is also remarkable that each author explicitly declared himself so satisfied with the work of the other that he would not have entered upon the task, had he known of his rival's undertaking. This, however, seems hard to fit in with the dates, seeing that Thirlwall's book began to appear many years earlier than that of Grote^[10:1]. In any case the former represents a different kind of work, or I should rather say an earlier stage of work, and therefore comes logically as well as chronologically first.

he excites splendid refutations.

[10]

The Bishop of St. David's was a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge, a scholar trained in all the precision and refinement of the public schools, a man accustomed to teach the classics and to enforce accuracy of form and correctness of critical judgment. He had also what was then rather a novelty, and what separates him from his distinguished Oxford contemporaries—Gaisford and Clinton—a competent knowledge of German, as well as of other languages, and a consequent acquaintance with the recent studies of the Germans, who were then beginning to write about classics in German instead of using the Latin language.

Thirlwall:

John Stuart Mill, who, when a young man, belonged to a debating society along with Thirlwall, thought him the very best speaker he had ever heard. The qualities which attracted Mill were not passion or imaginative rhetoric, but clear, cold, reasoning powers, together with a full command of the language best suited to express accurately the speaker's argument.

his merits;

These are the qualities which made all Thirlwall's work enduring and universally respected. His episcopal charges were certainly the best delivered in his day, and his history, without ever exciting any enthusiasm, has so steadily maintained its high position, that of recent years it is perhaps rather rising than falling in popular esteem^[11:1].

[11]

But the absence of passion, since it checks enthusiasm in the reader, is a fatal want in any historian. The case before us is a remarkable instance. Both the learning and fairness of Thirlwall are conspicuous. It is difficult for any competent reader to avoid wondering at his caution in receiving doubtful evidence, and his acuteness in modestly suggesting solutions which have since been proved by further evidence. Of course the great body of our materials, the Greek classics, lay before him; the pioneers of modern German philology such as Wolf, Hermann, K. O. Müller, Welcker, were accessible to him. In ordering and criticising these materials he left nothing to be desired, and the student of to-day who is really intimate with Thirlwall's history may boast that he has a sound and accurate view of all the main questions in the political and social development of the Hellenic nation. But he will never have been carried away with enthusiasm; he will never remember with delight great passages of burning force or picturesque beauty such as those which adorn the histories of Gibbon or of Arnold. He has before him the type of a historian like Hallam, whose work would be the most instructive possible on its period, were it not the dullest of writing. It would be unfair to Thirlwall to say he is dull, but he is too cold and passionless for modern readers. To use the words of Bacon: *Lumen siccum et aridum ingenia madida offendit et torret.*

his coldness;

his fairness and accuracy;

but without enthusiasm.

[12]

The mention of these qualities in Thirlwall suggests to me that I ought not to omit some mention of the great work of a very similar student—this, too, stimulated by Mitford—I mean the *Fasti Hellenici*, 'a civil and literary chronology of the Greeks from the earliest times to the death of Augustus^[12:1].' It is not, properly speaking, a history, but the materials for the fullest possible history of Greece, with all its offshoots, such as the Hellenistic kingdoms of Hither Asia, arranged and tabulated with a patience and care to which I know no parallel. Any one who examines this work will wonder that it could have been accomplished within the fifteen years during which the several volumes appeared. It is astonishing how difficult the student finds it to detect a passage in the obscurest author that Clinton has not seen; and his ordinary habit is not to indicate, but to quote all the passages *verbatim*. The book is quite unsuited for a schoolboy, but to any serious enquirer into the history of Greece it is positively indispensable. The influence of Gaisford, then probably the greatest of Greek scholars, obtained for the book the adequate setting of the Clarendon Press. Clinton worked with a calmness and deliberation quite exceptional; and though he knew no German, had so completely mastered his subject that the Germans have since indeed translated, re-edited, and abridged him: they have never been able to supersede him. Even when he is wrong or obsolete, he can be corrected by the full materials he has laid before the reader. But the perfect coldness of his reasoning, the absence of all passion, the abnegation of all style, make the book unapproachable except to a specialist.

Clinton's Fasti.

His merits.

[13]

§ 6. For the same reason Thirlwall's great and solid book was ousted at once from public favour by the appearance of Grote's history. Two minds more unlike can hardly be imagined, admitting that they were both honest and hard workers, and that both knew German as well as Greek, Latin, and French. Instead of a cold, calm college don, loving cautious statement and accurate rendering as the highest of virtues; instead of a mild and orthodox Liberal both in religion and politics,—we have a business man, foreign to university life and its traditions, a sceptic in religion, a Positivist in philosophy, and above all an advanced Radical in

Contrast of Grote's life.

His theory Radicalism.

politics, invading the subject hitherto thought the preserve and apanage of the pedagogue or the pedant. Of course he occasionally missed the exact force of an optative, or the logic of a particle; he excited the fury of men like Shilleto, to whom accuracy in Greek prose was the one perfection, containing all the Law and the Prophets. What was far worse, he even mistook and misstated evidence which bore against his theories, and was quite capable of being unfair, not from dishonesty, but from prejudice.

[14]

He lived in the days when the world was recovering from its horror at the French Revolution, and the reaction against the monarchical restorations in central Europe was setting in. He was persuaded that the great social and political results of Greek history were because of, and not in spite of, the prevalence of democracy among its States, and because of the number and variety of these States. He would not accept the verdict of all the old Greek theorists who voted for the rule of the one or the enlightened few; and he wrote what may be called a great political pamphlet in twelve volumes in vindication of democratic principles. It was this idea which not only marshalled his facts, but lent its fire to his argument; and when combined with his Radicalism in religion and philosophy, produced a book so remarkable, that, however much it may be corrected and criticised, it will never be superseded. It is probably the greatest history among the many great histories produced in this century; and though very inferior in style to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, will rank next to it as a monument of English historical genius.

The influences of his time.

To be compared with Gibbon.

There are chapters of speculation, such as those on the Greek myths and their historical value, on the Homeric question, on Socrates and the Sophists, which mark an epoch in the history of their respective subjects, and have been ever since gradually moulding even the most obstinate opponents, who at first rejected his theories with scorn^[15:1]. There are chapters of narrative, such as that on the battle of Plataea, or the Athenian defeat at Syracuse, where he so saturates himself with the tragic grandeur of the events, and with the consummate art of his great Greek predecessors, that his somewhat clumsy and unpolished style takes their colour and rises to the full dignity of his great subject. But the greatest novelty among the many which adorn his immortal work is his admirable *apologia* for democracy,—for that form of government where legislation is the result of discussion; where the minority feels bound to acquiesce in the decision of the majority; and where the administrators of the law are the servants, not the masters, of the nation, appointed with defined powers to terminable magistracies, and liable to indictment for exceeding or abusing these powers. He occupied the whole body of the book in illustrating how the voluntary submission of the free citizen to control of this kind, the alternation in the same men of commanding and obeying, and the loyalty and patriotism thus engendered, were far higher social factors than the enforced or unreasoning submission of the masses to the dictates of a monarch or a close aristocracy.

His eloquence.

His panegyric on democracy.

[15]

[16]

§ 7. To the first great objection,—that of the Greek theorists,—that the greatness of democracies is but transient, and must rapidly degenerate into the fickle and violent rule of a mob, he might have answered, that these theorists themselves never contemplated human institutions as permanent, and even assumed that the ideal State of their dreams must be subject to exhaustion and decay. Still more might he have urged that not a long life, but a great life, was the real test of the excellence of the body politic, and that centuries of Spartan respectability had done nothing for the world in comparison with the brief bloom of Attic genius.

Objections: that democracies are short-lived;

Another and more serious objection to the position that Athens was a typical democracy, and that its high culture was the direct result of its political institutions, he seems to me to have practically ignored. The Athenian citizen, however poor, had indeed equal rights with every other citizen, could succeed to the same high offices, and appeal to the same laws. But the Athenian citizen, however poor, was a slaveholder, and the member of an imperial class, ruling with more or less absolutism over communities of subjects, treating as manifest inferiors even the many resident aliens, who promoted the mercantile wealth of his city. Hence, after all, he was one of a minority, controlling a vast majority of subjects and slaves with more or less despotic sway. Lord Redesdale^[17:1] tells us that this was the point which his brother Mitford thought of capital importance, and which prompted him to write his history. He met, all through revolutionary France, and among the democrats in England, perpetual assertions that Greek democracy was the ideal at which modern Europe should aim, and he felt that these enthusiasts had considered neither the size of modern States, nor the essential difference just stated between the Athenian and the modern democrat.

that the Athenian democrat was a slaveholder and a ruler over subjects.

[17]

And it is to me certain, that many of the virtues as well as the vices of the Athenian arose from his being an aristocrat in the strictest sense,—the member of a privileged and limited society ruling over inferiors, with the leisure obtainable by the poorest slaveholder, and the dignity always resulting from the consciousness of inherent superiority. And yet with all this, the type of perfection which the Greeks, as a people, ever held before them was not the polished democrat of Athens, but the blunt aristocrat of Sparta. This latter was admired and copied, so far as he could be copied, in like manner as the English aristocrat has been admired by all the nations of the world,—not because he lives under free institutions, but because he shows in him the traditions and the

The Athenian not the ideal of the Greeks.

breeding of a dominant race long accustomed to the dignity and the splendour of ancient wealth and importance.

As Grote could see no superiority whatever in aristocracy over democracy, so he ignored completely this, the aristocratic side of all the Hellenic democracies. [18]

§ 8. But, when he comes to treat of the despots, or tyrants, who overthrew governments and made themselves irresponsible rulers, he falls in with all the stock accusations of the aristocratic Greek writers,—Herodotus, Xenophon, Plutarch,—and represents these despots as an unmixed evil to their country^[18:1]. He treats them in a special chapter as a sort of epidemic at a certain epoch of Greek history, whereas the facts show that through the whole series of centuries, from the dawn of history to the conquest by Rome, despots were a constantly recurring phenomenon all over the Greek world. We find them mentioned by scores, and in every corner of Hellas and Asia Minor. Even Sparta ceased in time to form the almost solitary exception. This persistence of tyrants shows that either the people who tolerated them were politically fools, or that despotic government had really some good points, and recommended itself at least as an escape from greater evils^[18:2]. The political value of this phase of Greek life I shall treat more fully in the sequel.

Grote's treatment of the despots.

Their perpetual recurrence in the Greek world.

Advantages of despotism.

We hear, of course, of many violent and vicious despots in Greek history; and these are the cases always cited as proving the unsoundness of that form of government. But if a list could be procured of the numerous tyrants who governed wisely or moderately, and who improved the manners and the culture of their subjects, it would probably comprise an immense number of names. The good specimens passed by without notice; the criminal cases were paraded in the schools and upon the stage^[19:1]; and so a one-sided estimate has passed into history. This estimate was taken up with warmth, and paraded with great amplitude by the Radical historian. And yet the very history of Europe since he wrote has shown us strong reasons to doubt that every nation is best managed by a parliamentary system. But on this point Grote had no misgivings. The will of the majority was to him the inspired voice, and he trusted to better education and larger experience to correct the occasional errors from which not even the fullest debate will save an excited populace. [19]

Good despots not infrequent.

§ 9. These observations, though meant as strictures upon the sanguine enthusiasm of Grote's Radical views, are not to be understood as detracting from the charm of his work. It is this very enthusiasm which has led him to understand and to interpret political movements or accommodations completely misunderstood by many learned continental professors; for he was a practical politician, accustomed to parliamentary life,—above all to the conservative effects of tradition and practice, even in the face of the most innovating theories. He has, therefore, put the case of an educated democracy with more power and more persuasiveness than any other writer; and for this reason alone his book must occupy a prominent place even in the library of the mere practical politician. [20]

Grote a practical politician.

§ 10. Far more serious are the objections to his last volume, on the life and conquests of Alexander the Great. So unequal, indeed, is this episode, which to him was a mere appendix to the story of independent Greece, that a fabulous anecdote prevails of his publisher having persuaded him against his will to pursue his narrative beyond the battle of Chæronea^[20:1]. Here it is that the calmness and candour of Thirlwall stand out in marked contrast. The history of the great conqueror and of the recovered independence (such as it was) of Greece, are treated by the scholar-bishop with the same care and fairness which mark all the rest of his work. But Grote is distinctly unfair to Alexander; his love of democracy led him to hate the man who made it impossible and absurd for Greece, and he shows this bias in every page of his twelfth volume. [21]

His treatment of Alexander the Great.

Contrast of Thirlwall.

As regards the subsequent history, which embraces the all-important development of federal government throughout Greece, he does not condescend to treat it at all. His great work is therefore incomplete in plan, and stops before the proper conclusion of his subject. Of course he would have found it hard to panegyricize his favourite democracies when he came to the Hellenistic age. There the inherent weaknesses of a popular government in days of poverty and decay, in the face of rich and powerful monarchs, showed themselves but too manifestly.

Grote ignores the later federations,

But he will not confess this weak point; he even covers his retreat by the bold assertion in his preface that Greek history from the generation of Alexander has no interest in itself, or any influence on the world's history—a wonderful judgment! However great therefore and complete the work of Grote is on the earlier periods, this may be added as a warning,—the reader of Greek history should stop with the death of Philip of Macedon, and read the remainder in other books. It is indeed necessary for schoolmasters to limit the bounds of Greek literature in school studies, and so with common consent they have admitted nothing later than the golden age. But the vast interest and paramount importance of Greek ideas in the culture of the Roman world have tempted me to sketch the subject in my *Greek Life and Thought from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* and [22]

and despises their history.

Greek Life under Roman Sway. Any reader of these volumes will at least concede the vastness, the importance, and the deep interest of the period which Grote despised. But so intricate are the details, and so little arranged, that to write upon it is rather pioneer's work than anything else.

§ 11. Let us now, before passing to his successors, turn back to the very beginning of the subject, and say a word on his treatment of the elaborate mythical system which the Greeks prefixed to their historical annals. Here the Positivism of the man was sure to bear fruit and produce some remarkable results. He gives, accordingly, with all deliberation and fulness of detail, a complete recital of the stories about the gods and heroes, telling all their acts and adventures, and then proceeds to argue that they are to be regarded as quite distinct from, and unconnected with, any historical facts. He argues that as there is in the legends a large quantity of assertions plainly false and incredible, but intertwined indissolubly with plausible and credible statements, we have no right to pick out the latter and regard them as derived from actual facts. There is such a thing as plausible fiction; and we have no guarantee that the authors of incredible stories about gods and their miracles did not invent this plausible kind as well. Rejecting, therefore, all historical inferences from the Greek legends, he merely regards them as conclusive evidence of the state of mind of their inventors,—a picture of the Greek mind in what Comte called the 'theological stage.'

His treatment of the early legends.

Even when plausible, they may be fictions

[23]

It is remarkable how fully Thirlwall states this view of the Greek myths, and how clearly his cautious mind appreciates the indisputable weakness of all such legends in affording proper and trustworthy evidence. But when we come to persistent bodies of legend which assert that Oriental immigrants—Cadmus, Danaus, Pelops, &c.—brought civilization to yet barbarous Greece, Thirlwall, with all his doubts, with all his dislike to vague and shifting stories, cannot make up his mind to regard these agreeing myths as mere idle inventions. Moreover, he urged the point, which Grote omitted to consider, *that early art might so corroborate a story* as to make its origin in fact morally certain.

Thirlwall's view less extreme.

No doubt both historians were considerably under the influence of Niebuhr, whose rejection of the old Roman legends, which were often plausible fiction, produced a very great sensation in the literary world^[23:1]. Nor did they live to see the great discoveries in early art and prehistoric culture which have since been made by the archæologists. It seems to me, therefore, that as regards the *incunabula* of Greek history these great men came at the moment when little more than a negative attitude was possible. The mental history of the nation in its passage from easy faith to utter scepticism was expounded by Grote in a masterly way; but for the construction of the myths he would not admit any other than subjective causes. Here, then, was the point on which some further advance might fairly be expected.

Influence of Niebuhr on both historians.

[24]

§ 12. There was another matter also, connected with the life and habits of the time, which made the appreciation of the facts less keen and picturesque than it might have been. Neither Thirlwall nor Grote, though each of them possessed ample means and leisure, seems ever to have thought of visiting the country and seeking to comprehend the geographical aspects of their histories from personal experience. They both—Thirlwall especially—cite the earlier travellers who had explored and pictured the Hellenic peninsula; but in those days the traveller was regarded as a different kind of man from the historian, who wrote from books in his closet.

Neither of them visited Greece,

thought of visiting the country and seeking to comprehend the geographical aspects of their histories from personal experience. They both—Thirlwall especially—cite the earlier travellers who had explored and pictured the Hellenic peninsula; but in those days the traveller was regarded as a different kind of man from the historian, who wrote from books in his closet.

It is in the last two features—the interpretation of the legends, and the personal acquaintance with the country—that the more recent attempts excel the older masterpieces. Ernst Curtius spent several years in Greece, and published a complete and scholarly account of the Peloponnesus before he produced his history. Duruy gives life and colour to his narrative by references to his personal experiences in Greece. To visit and study the scenes of great events is now so easy and so habitual to scholars, that we may count it one of the necessary conditions for any future history which is to take a high place in the ever-increasing series of Hellenic studies^[25:1]. In his opening chapters Ernst Curtius breathes such freshness and reality into the once dry preamble of geographical description that we feel we have attained a fresh epoch, and are led to expect great things from an experience gained upon the spot, which can verify the classical descriptions by the local features which remain. It is of course idle to think that this kind of familiarity will compensate for imperfect study. The modern Greek antiquarians, living upon the spot, have not yet shown themselves equal to many who have never seen what they discuss. Nevertheless, this is certain, that new force, and directness, are attained by a personal acquaintance with the coasts, the mountains, the rivers of Greece, and that many a wrong inference from ancient texts may be avoided by knowing that the scene of the events precludes it.

which later historians generally regard as essential.

Ernst Curtius and Victor Duruy.

The value of autopsy in verifying old authors.

[25]

§ 13. Here is an example. It is commonly inferred from a passage in Plato's *Symposium*, which speaks of thirty thousand citizens being addressed by Agathon in his plays, that the theatre held that number of spectators. This is copied into book after book, though I have long ago called attention to the impossibility of maintaining such an

Example in the theatre of Athens.

Its real size.

No landscape for its

[26]

interpretation^[26:1]. I need not urge the absurdity of speaking from an **background**. open-air stage to thirty thousand people. The actual theatre is now recovered, and any one who has seen it and possesses reasonable common-sense will perceive that about fifteen thousand people was the utmost it could ever have contained^[26:2]. To expect a larger crowd to hear any performance of human voices would be ridiculous. What the passage, therefore, means is that the whole population of freemen in Athens were in the habit of enjoying the drama,—not, of course, all at the same moment. Other fancies, which have given rise to eloquent musings concerning the picturesque view of the sea and islands enjoyed by the Athenian as a natural background to his tragedy, can be disposed of in the same way by simply sitting even on the top row and making the experiment^[26:3],—not to speak of the false notion of attributing to the Athenian citizen a conscious love of picturesque scenery, or an attempt to combine two heterogeneous and incongruous æsthetic interests.

[27]

If the writer of Greek history is bound to have visited Greece, this cannot be expected of the reader. But for him too our generation has brought its benefits. In the fine illustrations now published of all the objects of interest in Greek museums, and of the finest scenery throughout the country, the general public can find some equivalent; and from this point of view the history of Duruy marks a fresh epoch, even as compared with that of Curtius. For I am not aware that there has hitherto been any accessible collection of all the interesting things in Nature and Art which the student of Greek history ought to have seen, at least in reproduction. There are, of course, splendid monographs on special buildings, such as the works of the Dilettanti Society, or on special discoveries, such as the original and richly adorned volumes of Dr. Schliemann on Mycenæ and Tiryns. But these are beyond the reach of moderate fortunes. The gallery of photographs begun by Mr. Stillman, and now in process of publication by the Hellenic Society, are both more varied and less expensive, and will make the treasures of Greece perfectly familiar to any student who chooses to acquire them.

Greek scenery and art now accessible to all.

FOOTNOTES:

- [4:1] Mr. Evelyn Abbott's *History of Greece*, preface.
- [7:1] More numerous, and much better, in France and Germany than they are in England.
- [7:2] The first volume of his work has recently been translated by Mr. Prothero, of King's College, Cambridge.
- [7:3] I have seen but not read Stanyan's *Grecian History* in 2 vols. (1739), and Gast's *History of Greece*, published in Dublin (1793). O. Goldsmith's Handbook is one of a number published about a hundred years ago, all of which are forgotten. Of these I have looked through at least six. They have now no value.
- [8:1] It is remarkable that he never mentions his contemporary, Gillies, so far as I know.
- [9:1] The new (second) edition of 1829 has an interesting defence of his history by Lord Redesdale, his younger brother. There is also a cabinet edition in 8 vols., published in 1835, and continued from the death of Agesilaus, where Mitford had stopped, to that of Alexander, by R. A. Davenport.
- [10:1] The dates are, Thirlwall's history, 1835, Grote's first two volumes, 1846. But Grote says he had his materials collected for some years. Upon the publication of these volumes, Thirlwall at once confessed his inferiority, and wrote no more upon the subject.
- [11:1] The most obvious proof of this is the price of the book in auction catalogues. The second (octavo) edition is both rare and expensive. The first is the cabinet edition in Lardner's series, the editor of which suggested the work.
- [12:1] Published by the Clarendon Press. Clinton alludes to Mitford's effect upon him in his *Journal*.
- [15:1] Thus the recent book on the Homeric theory, by Professor Jebb, a scholar who in an earlier primer had inclined to the views of Theodor Bergk, now advocates mainly Grote's theory. Thus Zeller's latest edition of the *History of Greek Philosophy*, a masterly work, treats the Sophists with constant reference to Grote's views. Both the recent German histories of Greece, Holm's and Busolt's, acknowledge fully the great merits of Grote, whose attitude towards the Greek myths is indeed maintained by Holm.
- [17:1] In his Editorial Preface to the 2nd ed. of Mitford's *Greece*.
- [18:1] This curious contrast should be carefully noted in estimating Grote. The justified and reasonable objections of Greek historians to ultra-democracy he ignores; their violent and personal objections to the despots he adopts without one word of qualification.
- [18:2] I am glad to see this point dwelt on with great justice and discrimination in Mr. E. Abbott's recent *History of Greece*, i. 368.
- [19:1] Thus Strabo says, when speaking of Sicyon, that the tyrants who had long ruled the city before its liberation by Aratus were for the most part good men; and this accounts for the high reputation of Sicyon for culture. It was Lycophron, in his tragedy entitled the *Casandreans*, who painted the typical portrait of a tyrant in the monster Apollodorus. (Cf. my *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 283.) Whether he was really as bad as he was painted,

and whether his Galatian guards really drank human blood, &c., depends on the comparative weight the critic assigns to general improbability, as against the veracity of a stage portrait. We have no other evidence, for the late historians borrow the traditional features without criticism. But let us suppose that in the next century the evidence concerning the character of Napoleon III depended upon Mr. Freeman's allusions in his *Federal Government*, and upon V. Hugo's monograph, would the inferences from these great writers be even near the real truth?

- [20:1] The original preface to his first volume marks out the limits which he duly attained.
- [23:1] The first edition of Niebuhr's history appeared in 1811. The second, a wholly different and enlarged work, was published in 1827, and translated into English by Thirlwall and Hare in 1828. Grote quotes Niebuhr constantly, and takes from his Lectures on Ancient History more than from any other modern source.
- [25:1] Thus Duncker's chapter on the Olympic games shows at once that he never was at Olympia, and does not understand the site.
- [26:1] *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, p. 107. See also the excellent note in Duruy's *History*, ii. chap. vii. sect. 1, on the frequent exaggerations of the number of Athenian citizens, which never reached this high figure.
- [26:2] Dr. Dörpfeld, with his new map before him, estimated the area for me the last time I was at Athens. He found that counting in every available space, such as gangways, &c., 16,000 was the limit. It seems, therefore, highly probable that an average audience would not exceed 10,000. I cannot remember in Attic literature any allusion to crowding or want of room in this theatre.
- [26:3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 108-9. Duruy, at the opening of his twentieth chapter, has given excellent pictures and plans of the theatre in question.

CHAPTER II.

[28]

RECENT TREATMENT OF THE GREEK MYTHS.

§ 14. We may now pass to the more modern treatment of the myths and mythical history of Greece. There are before us the essays of several men since the monumental work of Grote. First there is that of Ernst Curtius; then Duncker's (both translated into English); still more recently the shorter histories of Holm, Busolt, Hertzberg, and other Germans, not to speak of Sir George Cox's history and the first volume of that of Mr. Evelyn Abbott. In fact they are so many and so various that the production of a new work on Greek history requires some special justification. For the time has really come when we may begin to complain of new histories that are not new, but merely reproduce the old facts and the old arguments, without regard to what specialists have been doing to clear up particular questions. Duncker's large work, of which the earlier period of Greek history forms the closing part, is indeed an important book, and cannot be dismissed so easily. But if I may venture to speak out, I do not think it was worth translating into English. Scholars earnest and patient enough to read through it can hardly fail to have learned German, and therefore require no English version. I cannot believe that the English-speaking public will ever read it, nor do I think this should be expected. For in the first place the book is sadly deficient in style,—not merely in the graces of style, which are seldom attained by professional scholars, but in that higher quality of style produced either by burning passion or delicate æsthetic taste. Duncker is not, like most of the English historians, a politician. To him despot and democracy are mere things to be analyzed. Nor does he strive to advocate novel and picturesque views, like Ernst Curtius. His mind is so conservative that he rather takes a step backward, and reverts, especially in his chronology, to statements which of late seemed likely to be discarded as obsolete. He is always sensible and instructive; he has an excellent habit of making his authorities speak for themselves: but he wants *verve* as well as originality in treating old, unsettled problems, though he has made some remarkable re-constructions of history from conflicting myths.

The newer histories.

Not justifiable without particular reasons.

Max Duncker.

Not suited to English readers.

[29]

The two best recent histories to which I have referred, Busolt's in 1885, Holm's in 1886 (I speak of the first volumes), are by no means so conservative as Duncker; Holm is as advanced in his scepticism as Grote; but, as I shall show in the sequel, their scepticism is still spasmodic, or shall I say varied with touches of credulity, which are probably the necessary relief of all scepticism. Nothing strikes the reader of these new Greek histories more forcibly than their abandonment of the combinations of the school of E. Curtius, and their return to the attitude of Grote, whose decision concerning the utter untrustworthiness of legends for historical purposes they all quote with approval. The ground taken by Grote was the possibility of 'plausible fiction' which could not possibly be distinguished, as miraculous stories can, from sober history. Holm adds to this some excellent arguments showing the strong temptations to deliberate invention which must have actuated the old chronographers and genealogists^[30:1]. Nevertheless, Holm devotes 200 12mo pages, Busolt 100 8vo, of their 'short histories' to the analysis and discussion of the legends and discoveries concerning pre-historic Greece, in the

Busolt and Holm.

Return to Grote.

Holm's postulate.

[30]

course of which they cannot avoid many inferences from very doubtful evidence. Holm very justly demands that historians should let the reader know in the stating of it, what has been handed down to us, and what is modern hypothesis, and claims to have observed this distinction himself. But there are traditions which are manifestly late and untrustworthy, such as that which fixes the dates of Arktinos and Eumelos, and tells us of written registers in the eighth century B.C., which he accepts without a due caution to his readers.

§ 15. I think, moreover, that even the most trenchant of sceptics does not consistently deny that there must be some truth in legendary history, though we may not be able to disentangle it from miracles and misunderstandings. And when once we have abandoned Grote's position, and hold it more probable that old legends are based on facts than purely invented, nothing will prevent the sanguine student from striving to pick out for himself the facts and making a probable, if not a certain, sketch of the otherwise unrecorded *incunabula* of a nation's history.

The modern attitude.

[31]

This view and these attempts are based upon an ascertained truth in the psychology of all human societies. Just as people will accommodate a small number of distinct words to their perpetually increasing wants, and will rather torture an old root in fifty ways than simply invent a new combination of sounds for a new idea; so in popular legends the human race will always attach itself to what it knows, to what has gone before, rather than set to work and invent a new series of facts. Pure invention is so very rare and artificial that we may almost lay it aside as a likely source for *old* legends^[31:1], and we may assume either a loose record of real facts, or the adoption and adaptation of the legends of a previous age, as our real, though treacherous, materials for guessing pre-historic truth. This is the reason why we later students have not adhered without hesitation to the sceptical theory that plausible fiction *may* account for all the Greek myths, and we look for some stronger reason to reject them altogether.

Pure invention a rare occurrence;

plausible fiction therefore not an adequate cause.

[32]

§ 16. There are cases, for example, where we can see distinct reasons why people in a historic age should have invented links to attach themselves to some splendid ancestry. Just as the heralds of our own day are often convicted of forging the generations which connect some wealthy upstart with an ancient house, so it is in Greek history. No larger and more signal instances of this can be found than the barefaced genealogies made by the learned in the days of Alexander's successors^[32:1], when any of the new foundations,—Antioch, Seleucia, &c.,—wanted to prove themselves ancient Hellenic cities, re-settled upon a mythical foundation. Not different in spirit were the Pergamene fabrications, which not only invented a mythical history for Pergamum, but adopted and enlarged the Sicilian fables which connected a Pergamene hero, Æneas, with the foundation of Rome^[33:1]. What capital both the Ilians and the people of Pergamum made out of these bold mendacities, is well known. I shall return in due course to another remarkable instance, which I have set before the world already, where a great record of Olympic games was made up at a late date by a learned man in honour of Elis and Messene. Later Greek history does show us some of these deliberate inventors,—Lobo the Argive, Euhemerus the Messenian, and a few more; a list which the Greeks themselves augmented by adding the travellers who told wonderful tales of distant lands which conflicted with Hellenic climate and experience. But here too the Greeks were over-sceptical, and rejected, as we know, many real truths only because they found them marvellous. In the same way, modern inquirers who come to estimate the doubtful and varying evidence for older history must be expected to differ according to the peculiar temper of their minds.

Cases of deliberate invention,

at Pergamum,

which breed general suspicion of marvellous stories.

[33]

§ 17. But perhaps the reader will desire to hear of a case where a legend has conveyed acknowledged truth, rather than the multifarious cases where it may lead us into error. I will give an instance from Roman history, all the more remarkable from the connection in which it is found.

Example of a trustworthy legend from Roman history.

[34]

That history, as we all know, used to commence with a pretty full account of the seven kings, who ruled for very definitely stated periods. The difficulties in accepting this legend were first shown by Niebuhr; and then came Arnold, who told again the legend as a mere nursery tale, refusing to call it history. Mommsen, in his very brilliant work, goes further, and omits the whole story contemptuously, without one word of apology. The modern reader who refers to his book to know who the kings of Rome were, would find one casual and partial list, no official chapter. I am not sure that Mommsen names most of them more than once in any passing mention.

Niebuhr, Arnold, Mommsen.

But does it follow that Mommsen denies there ever were kings at Rome? Far from it. For there were laws and ordinances, lasting into historical times, which would be wholly inexplicable had they not come down from a monarchy. Thus there remained a priest of great dignity, though of little importance, whose very title—*rex sacrorum*—shows that his office was created to perform those priestly functions once performed by the abolished kings, and not otherwise provided for in the reformed constitution. The fact therefore asserted by the famous legend, that there were once kings in Rome, is established to the satisfaction of any reasonable man by the evidence of surviving

The *rex sacrorum* at Rome.

usages.

In the same way we have at Athens legends of kings, but all of such antiquity as to make us hesitate in believing them, had there not survived into historical days the *king-archon*, whose name and functions point clearly to their being a survival of those kingly functions which were thought indispensable on religious or moral grounds, even after the actual monarchs had passed away [35:1].

The king-archon at Athens.

[35]

The legends, therefore, which tell of a gradual change from a monarchy to an aristocracy, and a gradual widening of the Government to embrace more members by making its offices terminable, are no mere plausible fictions, but an obscure, and perhaps inadequate, yet still real account of what did happen in Attica in the days before written records existed.

§ 18. Larger and more important is the great body of stories which agree in bringing Phœnician, Egyptian, and Asianic princes to settle in early Greece, where they found a primitive people, to whom they taught the arts and culture of the East. To deny the general truth of these accounts now would be to contradict facts scientifically ascertained; it is perfectly certain that the Greek alphabet is derived from the Phœnician, and it is equally certain that many of the artistic objects found at Orchomenos, in Attica, and at Mycenæ, reveal a foreign and Oriental origin. At the same time Duruy, in the luminous discussion he has devoted to the subject [36:1], shows that, however certain the early contact with the East, there is hardly any trace in Greece of the language of any non-Hellenic conquerors, as there is, for example (he might have added), in the names of the letters, which mostly bear in Greece their Semitic names. He thinks, therefore, that although early Asianic Greeks were the real intermediaries of this culture, they merely stimulated the latent spark in the natives, which shows itself in certain original non-Asiatic features which mark pre-historic Greek remains. But those who in their enthusiasm for Greece go even further in rejecting any foreign parentage for the higher Greek art [36:2], will now no longer deny that the occurrence of amber, ostrich-eggs, and ivory, which surely were not all imported in a rude or unmanipulated condition, prove at least the lively traffic in luxuries which must have existed, and which cannot exist without many other far-reaching connections.

Legends of foreign immigrants.

Corroborative evidence of art, but not of language.

[36]

There are even lesser matters, where legends might seem only to set before us the difficulty of harmonizing conflicting statements; and yet archæology finds that there is something real implied. Thus the legend which asserts that the older Perseids were supplanted by the Pelopids in the dominion of Mycenæ is in striking agreement with the fact that there are two styles of wall-building in the extant remains, and that the ruder work has actually been re-faced with the square hewn blocks of the later builders [37:1].

Corroboration of legends in architecture.

[37]

§ 19. But we have here been dealing with political legends, which are less likely than genealogical or adventurous legends to excite the imagination, and so to be distorted from facts. Let us turn to consider some of these latter.

When we approach such a story as the rape of Helen by Paris, the consequent expedition of the Greeks, and the siege of Troy, we are confronted, or at least we were confronted a few years ago, with a theory which professed to explain all such stories as mere modifications or misunderstandings of the great phenomena of Nature expressed in pictorial language. The break of day, the conquest of the Sun over the morning mists, his apparent defeat at night, and the victory of the Powers of Darkness,—all this was supposed to have affected so powerfully the imaginations of primitive men that they repeated their original hopes and fears in all manner of metaphors, which by and by became misinterpreted, and applied to the relations, friendly or hostile, of the various superhuman powers known as gods or heroes. Helen, if you please, was the Dawn, carried off by Paris, the Powers of Night, and imprisoned in Troy. Achilles was only the Sun-god, who struggles against the Night, and after a period of brilliancy succumbs to his enemies. It appeared that in the *Vedas* and the *Zend-Avesta*, which may be regarded as older cousins of the Greek mythologies, the names of the gods pointed clearly to their original connection with solar phenomena, and some of the Greek names were shown to be merely the Greek forms of the same words.

Explanation of myths by the solar theory.

The analogy of Indian and Persian mythology,

[38]

It is not necessary for me here to expound more fully this celebrated theory, seeing that it has acquired great popularity in England from the brilliant statement of it by Professor Max Müller in his early *Lectures on the Science of Language*. It was a learned theory, requiring a knowledge of the various languages as well as the various mythologies of the Indians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and even other branches of the great Indo-European family. It required, too, a knowledge of that wonderful new science, the science of comparative etymology, by which two names as diverse as possible could be shown to be really akin. The ordinary reader was surprised at the scientific legerdemain by which *Helen* was identified with *Sarama*, and was disposed to accept a great deal from men who claimed to have made such astonishing discoveries.

expounded by Professor Max Müller,

founded on very wide learning,

§ 20. It is now very long since I first declared myself against this

[39]

theory^[39:1], not as false, but as wholly inadequate to explain the great wealth and variety of the Greek legends. On that occasion I argued the case at length, and showed more especially that the mental condition presupposed in the primitive Indo-Europeans by this theory was not provable, and was, moreover, contradicted by everything which we know of the psychological condition of any such people. The theory implies such a daily joy and a nightly terror, when the sun rose and set, as coloured the whole language of the primitive race, and gave them one topic which wholly occupied their imaginations. Seeing that men must have existed for a long time before they invented legends, perhaps even before they used language, such fresh and ever-recurring astonishment would be indeed a marvellous persistence of childish simplicity^[39:2]. Moreover, what we do know of savage men shows us that surprise and wonder imply a good deal of intellectual development, and that the primitive savage does not wonder at, but ignores, those phenomena which interest higher men. [40]

long since shown inadequate,
because it implies sentimental savages,
which is contrary to our experience.

It is a much more reasonable view to discard the changes of the day, and adopt those of the year, as having suggested early myths of the death of beautiful youths, and the lamentation of those that loved them. I do not know a more masterly treatment of this cause for early myths, such as the death of Adonis, of Linus, of Maneros (in Egypt), than the opening of K. O. Müller's *History of Greek Literature*. It is a book now fifty years old, and our knowledge has so much advanced that Müller's views are in many points antiquated, as I have shown in re-writing the history of the same great subject^[40:1]. But nothing could antiquate the genius of K. O. Müller, or the grace with which he shows that the plaintive lays of shepherd and of vine-dresser express the poignant regrets excited by the burning up of green and bloom in the fierce heats of a semi-tropical summer. We now know that Nature provides this rest for her vegetation in meridional climates; but the sleep of plants in the drought of torrid sunshine seems to men far less natural than their rest in the long nights and under the white pall of a northern winter, and thus were suggested myths of violence and cruelty.

K. O. Müller's contribution.

§ 21. These things, however, account for only a small fraction of the great volume of Greek legend. It is indeed true that the same story will be renewed, the same ideas repeated, by succeeding generations. There is such a principle as the *spontaneous transference of myths*, similar to the constant recurrence of the same old stories in our modern society under new scenery and with new characters. If, for example, a man of odd ways and ridiculous habits haunts any society for a long time, and becomes what is called 'a character,' a number of anecdotes cluster about his name, which are told to illustrate his peculiarities. Any old person who hears these stories will be certain to recognize some of them as much older than the character in question, and as having been told about some other oddity long passed away; and we may predict with confidence that by and by they will be fitted on again to some new person who is a suitable subject for them. But what would be thought of the logic which inferred that the story must be false from the beginning because it wanders down the lapse of time, making itself a new home in each epoch, or that the person to whom it is fitted must be unreal because he is the hero of a tale which does not originally belong to him? Yet I could show that this has been the very attitude assumed by some of the comparative philologists. [41]

The transference of myths.

Old anecdotes doing fresh duty.

§ 22. I will take an instance which the reader will naturally expect to find discussed in this Essay—the legend of the siege of Troy. It may be quite true that old names and old metaphors about the sun or the summer lie hidden in the names of the heroes. It is to me certain that older stories were taken from their place and fitted on to the newer and more celebrated circumstances of this famous War. But all this I take to be not inconsistent with fact, but even to imply as a necessity that there must really have been such a war, which excited the minds of all the Greeks of a certain date, and so formed the obvious nucleus for all the poetical adventures which clung around it. [42]

Example from the Trojan legend,

but not therefore false.

The brilliant researches of Dr. Schliemann have demonstrated that the locus of the legend was not chosen at random, but that Troy, or Ilium, was in the first place the site of a prehistoric settlement; in the next, that it was conquered and burned, and re-settled again and again. There existed, moreover, a venerable shrine in the obscure historic town, to which the Locrians, at an early date, sent donations of virgins to atone for the outrage of their mythical ancestor, the lesser Ajax of the *Iliad*. These facts show that here, as elsewhere, the legend formed itself about a historic site, and with some nucleus of historic fact,—how much will probably for ever remain a subject of dispute^[42:1]. If history were an exact science, in which strict demonstration were required at every step, this conclusion might warrant our pursuing Grote's course and rejecting the whole legend as imaginary. But history is really a science of probabilities, in which this perhaps is the greatest charm, that it leaves large room to the imagination in framing hypotheses to supply a rational explanation of results which come before us full-grown, without their beginnings being recorded. [43]

The contribution of Dr. Schliemann.

History not an exact science.

I am not concerned here with the problem of the origin of the Homeric poems. Those who desire a summary of modern research in this great field, and care to know what conclusions I have adopted, may consult my *Greek Literature*, in which the English reader for the first time found a

full conspectus of this great controversy^[43:1]. What now comes before us is to estimate the amount of historical truth which can be extracted from our so-called Homer.

It is certain that there was a great struggle round the very site given in the poems. It was alleged to be a struggle of many Greek chiefs, at a time when Mycenæ was the richest capital, against the wealth and discipline of the princes about the Troad, of whom the chief of Ilion was the head. This, too, is remarkable, that in spite of the superior wealth and larger population of Asia Minor, the superiority of the Greek peninsula over this greater and richer land is plainly asserted. The whole course of known history has verified the broad fact taught by the legend. Greece has always been the poorer sister, and the superior, of Asia Minor.

Historical value of the Homeric poems.

[44]

That Mycenæ was really the most powerful city in the Greece of some early period, is another fact which nobody would ever have suspected but for the teaching of the legend. Even Dr. Schliemann's new demonstration of its truth, by the display of wealth and of high art which he found in the royal tombs, would never have been attempted had he not been guided by the consistent assertions of the *Iliad*. For the massive remains of the fortifications, and the tombs, proved no guides to the historical Greeks, who knew Argos only as the head of that province, and early forgot the splendour of Mycenæ so far as it was not kept alive in their epic Bible.

Mycenæ preserved in legend only.

§ 23. Quite apart from such particular facts, which teach us that the statements of Greek legend are never to be despised, there are large general conclusions which most of us think warranted by the Homeric poems. We may infer the political ideas prevalent when they were composed; the relative importance of king, nobles, and commons; the usages of peace and war; the life of men in its social side; the position of women and of slaves; the religious notions of the day; and such other questions as must be answered if we desire to obtain a living picture of the people. Every recent history of Greece has a chapter on the Homeric poems from this point of view—none of them fuller or better than the chapters of Grote.

General teaching of the epic poems.

[45]

What I had to say on this subject was set down in the opening chapters of my *Social Life in Greece*, from which some stray critics have indeed expressed their dissent, without undertaking to probe and refute my arguments. Until that is done, the sketch there given of the aristocratic society described in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* claims to be just, and it is unnecessary to defend it here. Perhaps, however, recent inquiry may have led some students to imagine that I have attached too much credit to the Homeric pictures of life, seeing that they are now often asserted to be artificial, and constructed by the poets to represent an age and a society different from their own.

Social Life in Greece.

Alleged artificiality of the poems.

We cannot verify what these poets describe by anything which we know in historical Greece, without making very large allowances. The games, for example, described in the twenty-third book of the *Iliad*, are totally distinct in character from the Olympic games,—the oldest historical contests of the same kind known to us. The monarchy of Agamemnon and of Menelaus is totally different from that of Sparta, which survived into the light of history; and even the poets themselves constantly tell you that they speak of men not such as the men of their own day, but greater, stronger, and happier. On the other hand, when we seek for support from the very ancient remains found at Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Troy in recent years, we find no clear corroboration, and must admit that the arms, the dress, and probably the life of the great men whose splendour we have unearthed do not correspond to the descriptions of the same things in Homer. This has been the subject of a special book by W. Helbig^[46:1], and the general result at which he arrives is merely negative. The civilization found by Dr. Schliemann is apparently not that of Homer. Is the latter then purely imaginary, neither prehistoric nor historic? Is the life described as artificial as the language?

Examples from the Iliad,

not corroborated by recent discoveries.

[46]

§ 24. For now we are assured, by the researches of Fick, that the apparent jumble of dialects in the poems cannot possibly be any original language which embraced all the dialects, far less a judicious selection from each due to the genius of the poet, but rather the incongruous result of the adaptation of an older form (Æolic) to the wants of a newer and different (Ionic) public. This rehandling of great poems to make them intelligible is an almost universal phenomenon, and now affords us the first reasonable theory for the extraordinary facts presented by Homer's language. Of course there are later poems, and possibly later passages in the old poems, where this artificial dialect was deliberately imitated by men who found it already achieved, and merely accepted it as the received epic language. But these passages are insignificant. The body of the poems seems to have been rehandled for the practical purpose of making them intelligible, just as Dryden rehandled Chaucer.

Fick's account of the Homeric dialect.

[47]

In this theory of Fick, which he has defended with extraordinary acuteness and learning, we have the greatest advance made in our day as regards the language of Homer. Of course it has not yet been accepted by the world of scholars^[47:1]. I myself think Fick's weak point is his close adherence to the dissection of the *Iliad* into three successive layers by A. Kirchhoff, and his attempt to show

Difficulties in the theory.

that the parts severed from the older as accretions by Kirchoff are also exactly the parts which were composed in the later (Ionic) dialect, and which therefore do not show the traces of older forms elsewhere to be found. Fick may be right even here; but I am not persuaded by his arguments^[47:2].

But when the conservatives retorted that in presupposing a rehandling of the dialect, and an imperfect translation into newer forms, he was assuming a fact unique in literature,—certainly in Greek literature,—he smote them 'hip and thigh' by showing parallel cases, not only in mediæval poetry, but in the collateral Greek lyric poetry. He showed that old epigrams, for example, had been altered to make them intelligible, while an occasional form for which no *metrical* equivalent could be found was allowed to remain^[48:1].

Analogies in its favour.

[48]

§ 25. I have delayed over this important and novel theory not unduly, because its adoption affects the question of the artificiality of the poems. If, as was thought formerly, the poets were distinctly composing in an artificial dialect, into which they foisted forms from various dialects for the purpose of appearing learned in archaic language, we might fairly suspect such a pedantic school of playing tricks with manners and customs, and of omitting or accentuating as they fancied, in order to make an archaic picture according to their lights. And this is in fact what they are accused of having done by the most recent English historian of Greece^[48:2].

Its application to the present argument.

But on the new theory, we have before us merely verbal changes, perhaps made with all care to preserve the original work in the parts which are old and genuine. It is as if some Englishman were to make one of Burns's Scotch poems, which are so difficult to ordinary people, accessible by turning the hard words into their English equivalents, leaving here and there those which could not be removed without destroying rhythm or metre. The new version would doubtless sacrifice the flavour of the rude original, but could in no deeper sense be called an artificial composition, and would probably preserve in its mongrel jargon all the facts set down by the poet.

Illustration from English poetry.

[49]

There is another point alleged for the artificiality of the Homeric poems which has not any greater weight. It is the use of epithets and of forms evidently determined by the convenience of the metre. In all poetry of all ages metre is a shackle,—perhaps modern rime is more tyrannous than the quantities of the hexameter. Yet these shackles, if they mar the efforts of the poetaster, only serve to bring out into clearer light the excellence of the true poet. And the longer the Homeric poems are read, the more firmly are all good critics persuaded of their supreme excellence.

The use of stock epithets.

[50]

This it is which makes any systematic artificiality to my mind most improbable. The difference between the learned epic of a really reflective age and the *Iliad* is illustrated by comparing with it the *Argonautics* of Apollonius Rhodius, a great poet in his way, but unmistakably and lamentably artificial. I agree, therefore, with Thirlwall, that the Homeric poets described an age not very different from that in which they lived, and that the reason why widely varying societies, such as the democratic Athenian, or the modern European, can appreciate these pictures, is that they are not artificially constructed, but adapted from a real experience, drawn from very human nature, and reflecting permanent human passions^[50:1]. The most unreal thing in the poems is of course their theology; and yet this became in after days perhaps more real than the rest by its universal adoption among the Greeks as the authoritative account of their gods.

High excellence incompatible with artificiality.

The Homeric poems therefore mainly natural;

[51]

§ 26. The Homeric poems therefore give us a general picture of the state of the Greeks at a time shortly before the dawn of history; for such poems could hardly be composed and held together without writing, and when writing becomes diffused, history begins^[51:1]. Still, the poets lived in an age not controlled by criticism, or subject to the verifications of study. Hence they could deal loosely with particulars, omit details that suited them not, and describe places poetically rather than topographically. So it is that the Catalogue of the Ships will not agree with the rest; and in many other cases there is evidence that the lays brought together were not weeded of their mutual inconsistencies, or compelled to conform strictly to the final plan.

but only generally true;

[52]

It is therefore certain that according as critics lay stress on the great consistency of character and feeling in these poems, they will, as Mr. Gladstone does, exaggerate their historical value, and set them down as almost sober history. When the other spirit prevails, and we attend to the many flaws in plot and inconsistencies of detail, we shall have acute scholars, like Mr. Evelyn Abbott, denying that either the assertions or the omissions in the poems are evidence worth anything for any historical purpose. Yet even such sceptics will not refrain from drawing pictures of Greek life from these false and treacherous epics.

and therefore variously judged by various minds.

- [30:1] Cf. his early chapters, especially i. pp. 43 *sq.* Busolt's 2nd edition, now in the press, contains an exhaustive analysis of all the recent discoveries.
- [31:1] The main causes of invented legends are: first, the glorification of national heroes; secondly, the desire of chronographers to obtain synchronisms, and make the heroes of one place contemporaneous with, and related to, those of another. In the former case it is generally an older or better known story which is transferred to the new case, with more or less modification; in the latter there may be deliberate fraud, as Holm has argued. Of all old Greek legend the chronology is the most suspicious part, because this has been invented in comparatively late times, and by learned men, not by, but for, the people.
- [32:1] A fine specimen is the pedigree of the Ptolemies direct from Dionysus and Heracles, given by the historian Satyrus. Cf. C. Müller, *Fragg. Histor. Graec.*, iii. 165. The substance of it is as follows: From Dionysus and Althea was born Dejanira, from her and Heracles, Hyllus, and from him in direct descent Kleodaos, Aristomachas, Temenos, Keisos, Mason, Thestios, Akoos, Aristodamidas, Karanos, Kœnos, Turimmas, Perdikkas, Philippos, Aerope, Alketas, Amyntas, Balakros, Meleager, Arsinoe. From her Lagus, Ptolemy Soter, &c., down to Philopator, the then reigning king. Hence, he adds, were derived the names of the *demes* in the Dionysiac *phyle* at Alexandria, viz. Dejaniris, Ariadnis, &c.
- Here is a most instructive fabrication.
- [33:1] Cf. Mommsen, R. G. i. 466-8.
- [35:1] We have not a few instances in Greek polities—Megara, Borysthenes, Calymnos occur to me—where there still existed in late days magisterial βασιλείς and even μόναρχοι. Cf. *Bull. de Corr. hell.* viii. 30; ix. 286.
- [36:1] *Hist. of Greece*, chap. ii. sect. 3.
- [36:2] Holm (G. G. i. 125) admits this motive for the Germans: 'Im Grunde leugnet man phönizische Siedelungen in Griechenland besonders deswegen, weil man nicht will, dass die Griechen jenen Leuten Wichtiges verdanken'—that is to Semites. He himself asserts early contacts, and thinks their influence upon Greece but trifling.
- The general body of opinion in Germany seems to agree with what I have cited from Duruy in the text. The words just quoted may serve to put the English reader upon his guard against the *subjective* tone of many of the most learned modern studies on Greek history.
- [37:1] On this cf. Adler's remarkable preface to Schliemann's *Tiryns*.
- [39:1] Cf. my *Prolegomena to Ancient History*, Longmans, 1872. A *reductio ad absurdum* which attained serious attention, in spite of its patent jocoseness, appeared in an early number of the Dublin University *Kottabos*.
- [39:2] Accordingly, some use was made of the exceptional and alarming phenomena, such as thunder-storms and eclipses, to supply a more reasonable and adequate cause for the violent transitions from terror and grief to joy, which the theory demanded. But it was the regular daily phenomena which figured in the leading rôle of the comparative mythologers.
- [40:1] *A History of Greek Classical Literature* (3rd ed.), Macmillan, 1891. The history of K. O. Müller has since been re-edited and supplemented by Heitz, but in a very different style.
- [42:1] Duruy, in speaking of the controversy as to the site (is it Hissarlik, or Bunarbaschi?), says that even this will never be settled, in spite of the striking discoveries by which Dr. Schliemann has shown that Hissarlik was a prehistoric city, and the total absence of any evidence for a city upon the other site. And Duruy is probably right, because on these matters writers are too often pedants, who, if once committed to a theory, will not accept the most convincing evidence that they have been mistaken. They seem to think the chief merit of a scholar is to maintain an outward show of impeccability, and therefore hold the candid confession of a mistake to be not honourable, but disgraceful. Duruy himself inclines to follow E. Curtius, who holds the wrong opinion. Holm (i. 96) sees clearly that in the light of Schliemann's discoveries there can hardly remain a doubt that Hissarlik was the site which the Homeric poets had in view, though their details may be inaccurate. This conclusion would have been universally accepted, had not certain scholars pledged themselves to the other site.
- [43:1] It has since been treated in a separate form by Professor Jebb. The third edition of my *Greek Literature*, being still more recent (1891), gives additional material.
- [46:1] *Das Homerische Epos aus den Denkmälern erläutert*, 1884.
- [47:1] Probably a generation will pass away before it is appreciated; or it may soon pass into oblivion, to be rediscovered by some future thinker. All the newer histories agree in disapproving it, but chiefly on the authority of the philologers. Most of these are committed, both by tradition and by their own special researches, to the theory of a *natural mixture* of dialects at Smyrna, the border town of Æolic and Ionic settlements.
- [47:2] I understand that Mr. W. Leaf, one of the highest English authorities, agrees generally with Fick on this problem. On the other hand, the Provost of Oriel, as he informs me, does not see his way to accept it.
- [48:1] Thus at the end of a famous epigram on Thermopylæ composed in Laconian Greek, and reformed into literary language, χιλιάδες τέτορες remained, because τέτορες would not scan. Fick has now applied his theory to the early Lyric poets, and even printed a revised text of most of them in *Bezzenberger's Beiträge*, xi, xiii, and xiv, &c. I have criticised the

newer developments of his theory in the third ed. of my *Greek Literature*.

- [48:2] Evelyn Abbott, *History of Greece*, i. 158 *seqq.* I cannot but suspect that the account of the diet of the Homeric chiefs—great meals of roast meat, and no fish—is a piece of deliberate archaism, which contradicts all we know of any historical Greeks from the earliest to the present days. The Greeks were probably never a meat-eating race, and even the early athletes trained on cheese (cf. my *Rambles and Studies*, p. 290). The poets knew all about fishing, for it appears in a simile, and yet in no case does fish, the great delicacy of Attic days, appear upon a Homeric table.
- [50:1] Holm gives a very ingenious solution of the difficulty, which is, I think, quite original. He thinks that the Æolic and Ionic settlers who were driven out by the Dorian immigration carried with them recollections and traditions of the splendour of the pre-Doric Mycenæ, Orchomenos, &c. In Asia Minor they sang of these old glories, clothing the old kings and heroes of the land, and the cities they had left, in the dress and manners of the Ionia of their own day. Thus their picture is true traditionally, for we know that the palaces of Greece were in the places they describe; their pictures of manners were also true, in another sense, of the society in which they actually lived.
- [51:1] When once composed, they could be easily enough *remembered* by trained guilds of reciters. It is therefore the composition, and the transmission as large unities, which imply, in my opinion, that use of writing which the poets avoid attributing to the society they depict as one of the past. If we could determine the date of the first fluent use of writing in Ionia, I think we could also determine the date of the creation of the *Iliad* as an artistic whole. At the same time I think it right to caution the reader, that he need not assume lapidary inscriptions to mark the first stage. This has been very justly pointed out by Mr. E. Abbott, and it is here most important; for we have no extant inscription on stone which can be surely attributed to a date earlier than 600 B.C., and I am convinced that had such use of writing been in common use earlier, we should long since have found evidence of it. Probably the first writing seen and learned by the Greeks was that of the Phœnician traders, who kept their accounts either on papyrus or perhaps on wood. Thus the *Iliad* may have been composed with the aid of writing, and yet there may have been no contemporary records on stone.

CHAPTER III.

[53]

THEORETICAL CHRONOLOGY.

§ 27. We may now pass from so-called legend to so-called early history. All students, from Thucydides downward, have held that shortly after the state of things described in Homer, important invasions and consequent dislocations of population began throughout Greece, so that what meets us in the dawn of sober history differs widely from what Homer describes. These various movements have their mythical name,—the return of the Heracleidæ; and their quasi-historical,—the invasion of Bœotia and Phocis by the Thessalians, and the invasion and conquest of Peloponnesus by the Dorian mountaineers. The pressure so produced drove waves of settlers to Asia Minor, where the coasts and islands were covered with Greek cities,—Æolian, Ionian, and Dorian. But these cities always claimed to be colonies from Greece, and told of mythical founders who led them to the East.

Transition to early history.

The Asiatic colonies.

We have no early account of these Asiatic settlements. Their traditions were not apparently discussed critically till the time of Ephorus, the pupil of Isocrates, who lived close to Alexandrian days; and we know part of what he said from quotations in Strabo and from the account given, rather irrelevantly, by Pausanias in the book on Achaia in his *Tour*, which was not composed till our second century. The metrical geography attributed to Scymnus of Chios^[54:1] gives us some additional facts; but on the whole we may say that our account of all this early history is derived from late and very theoretical antiquarians. They did not hesitate to put these events into the tenth or eleventh century before Christ, but on what kind of evidence we shall presently discuss.

Late authorities for the details.

[54]

From the Asiatic settlements and from the rich cities in Eubœa (Chalcis and Eretria) went out more colonies to the coasts of Thrace and the Black Sea; but these are placed at such reasonable dates, in the seventh century, that we must be disposed to give them easier credence.

§ 28. Intermediate between these two waves of colonization, both in date and in credibility of details, come the famous settlements in Sicily, of which a brief account is given by Thucydides at the opening of his sixth book; and it is no doubt the apparent precision of this account, and the general accuracy of the author, which has made this colonization of Sicily and Southern Italy one of the early portions of Greek history most readily accepted by even the newest sceptics. It is quite extraordinary how the general seriousness and the literary skill of an author may make even practised critics believe anything he chooses to say^[55:1].

The colonization of the West.

[55]

Any one who reads with care the account of Thucydides will see that he cannot possibly be writing from his own knowledge or research, but from some older and far worse authority,—doubtless one of the

The original authority.

chroniclers^[55:2] or story-tellers who gathered, most uncritically, the early legends of various portions of the Greek world. It has long since been suggested, and with the strongest probability, that Thucydides' authority was the Syracusan Antiochus, who compiled the early annals of Sicily with the evident intention of enhancing the glory of his native city.

On what principles did these chroniclers proceed?

The great and only patent of respectability in any Greek house or city of early times was foundation by a hero or the direct descendant of a hero; for the heroes were sons or grandsons of the gods, from whom all Greek nobility was derived. The Homeric poems, in making or defining the Greek theology, also told of the great houses directly descended from Zeus or Heracles; and so a royal house which was descended from these personages, or a city founded by them, secured for itself a dignity recognized by all the race. To cite late historical instances: the Macedonian kings made good their claim to being Greeks and civilized men by showing their descent from the hero Æacus, whose descendants the Æacids figure so prominently in the legendary wars. The Romans, when first they came into contact with Greek culture, and felt at the same time their superior strength and their social inferiority, at once accepted and promoted the story invented for them at Pergamum or adapted for them in Sicily, that they were a colony of Trojans, led by Æneas, the child of Aphrodite by a mortal hero.

What was nobility in early Greece?

Macedonian kings.

Romans.

[56]

If these things took place in the dry tree of sober history, what must have taken place in the green? Every city was bound to have a heroic founder, and to have been established in almost mythical times. Even in late and reflecting days, as I have already mentioned (§ 16), when the successors of Alexander founded new towns in Syria and Asia Minor, stories continued to be invented alleging old Hellenic settlements of mythical heroes in these places, whose shrines were accordingly set up, and their worship instituted, to produce an appearance of respectability in upstart polities.

Hellenistic cities.

It is not usually felt by modern readers that in consequence of these sentiments the great thing was not to have a long pedigree for a family or city, but to have as short a pedigree as possible for its founder. To be the son or grandson of a god was splendid; to be his remote descendant was only to cling on to real nobility like the younger and remoter branches of great English families. This will indicate how strong was the tendency to derive an early origin from a great and known descendant of the gods or their acknowledged sons. The subsequent history and fortunes of a city were comparatively vulgar, provided it was founded by a Heracleid,—the second or third in descent from Temenus or Hyllus. Hence the systematic habit of all early chroniclers *of counting downwards from Heracles or the Trojan war*, and not upwards from their own days.

Glory of short pedigrees.

[57]

§ 29. I have already declared that I put more faith than the modern sceptical historians in the pictures of life and manners left us in Greek epic poetry, that I do not believe pure invention to be a natural or copious source for the materials of early poets. But the very sceptics to whom I here allude are in my mind quite too credulous on the matter of early chronology, and quite too ready to accept statements of accurate dates where no accurate dates can be ascertained^[57:1].

The sceptics credulous in chronology.

This is the main topic on which I claim to have shown strong reasons for rejecting what Grote, Curtius, and even the recent sceptical historians have accepted. They have all agreed in giving up such dates as 1184 B.C. for the siege of Troy, or 1104 B.C. for the Return of the Heracleids^[58:1]; and yet they accept 776 for the first Olympiad, and 736 for the first colony (Naxos) in Sicily, on nearly the same kind of evidence. And they do this in spite of the most express evidence that the list of Olympiads was edited or compiled *late* (after 400 B.C.), *and starting from no convincing evidence*, by Hippias of Elis. This passage from Plutarch's *Life of Numa*, which I cited and expounded in an article upon the Olympiads in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* which I have reprinted in the [Appendix](#) to this book, is so capital that it shows either ignorance or prejudice to overlook its importance. 'To be accurate,' says Plutarch, 'as to the chronology [of Numa], is difficult, and especially what is inferred from the Olympic victors, whose register they say that Hippias the Eleian published late, starting from nothing really trustworthy^[59:1].' Nor is it possible to hold that this was some sudden and undue scepticism in the usually believing Plutarch; for I showed at length that the antiquarian Pausanias, whose interest in very old things was of the strongest, could find at Olympia no dated monument older than the thirty-third Olympiad. If he had seen an old register upon stone, he would most certainly have mentioned it, nor can I find in any extant author any direct evidence that such a thing existed. I predicted confidently, when the recent excavations began, that no such list, or fragment of a list, would be found, and negatively at least, my prediction was verified^[59:2].

The current scheme of early dates.

The so-called Olympic register.

Plutarch's account of it.

[58]

[59]

§ 30. It is curious, moreover, that on one point this traditional chronology had been rejected, and an important date in early Greek history revised, by Ernst Curtius; and yet he holds to the tradition in every other case. The date of Pheidon of Argos, the famous tyrant who first coined money in Greece, and who celebrated an Olympic contest in spite of Sparta and

The date of Pheidon of Argos

revised by E. Curtius

[60]

Elis, was placed by most of the old chronologers in 747 B.C., the eighth Olympiad, I believe, because Pheidon counted as the tenth from Temenus, the first Heracleid king of Argos. All the rational inferences, however, to be made from his life and work pointed to a much later date^[60:1]; so that by a simple emendation the twenty-eighth Olympiad—also an irregular festival, according to Hippias' list—was substituted; and thus Curtius has made a most instructive and interesting combination, by which this tyrant and his relation to Sparta become part of the rational development of Peloponnesian history.

There seems to be an agreement in the more recent historians^[60:2] to abandon even this gain, and go back to the old date,—probably because such a step would imperil many other old dates, and cast the historians into the turmoil of revising their traditional views. For when you once root up one of these early dates, many others are bound to follow. The uncertainty and hesitation of the critics seem now to arise from doubts about the authority of Ephorus, from whom most of our knowledge is ultimately derived^[61:1]. As I have elsewhere said, I regard this *Quellenkritik* as little more than a convenient way of airing acuteness and learning, and therefore highly useful for theses or exercises of philological candidates for honours. But as regards what we can really trace to Ephorus, concerning the date of Pheidon, the reforms of Lycurgus, and other such questions, two separate inquiries must be satisfied before we accept his word: first, what documents or other evidence were accessible to Ephorus; secondly, with what honesty and judgment did he use them? There are scholars who believe him implicitly, and even believe implicitly statements which they have fathered upon him by very doubtful inference. There are others who treat him with contempt. There is even a third class which accepts him sometimes, and rejects him at others, because he will not fit in with their preconceived opinions.

Since abandoned.

The authority of Ephorus

[61]

The question now before us is this: If Ephorus did put Pheidon in the eighth Olympiad, or about 747 B.C., upon what authority did he do so? Had he any evidence to go upon different from that which we can still name and criticise? I will here add my opinion to the many which the reader of German can consult for himself. Ephorus was a pupil of Isocrates, brought up to consider style and effect the main objects of the historian. To this he added the usual prejudices of the Greek for his native city, Kyme, which he glorifies upon every occasion. Thus it is to Ephorus that we owe the absurd date of the founding of the Italian Cumæ (1050 B.C.) as an evidence of the early greatness of the Æolic city. It has been shown by A. Bauer and by Busolt that, in telling the story of the Persian Wars, Ephorus (as appears in the second-hand Diodorus) not only rearranged facts in such order as seemed to him effective, but often invented details. Whenever he adds to the narrative of Herodotus, this seems to be the case. The night attack of the Greeks on the Persians at Thermopylæ (Diod. xi. 9) is a signal instance of this, not to speak of the rhetorical display, which is so widely different from the admirable and simple narrative of Herodotus. All such early history, therefore, as depends upon Ephorus, is to me highly suspicious.

not first-rate.

[62]

There is another 'tenth Temenid,' specially connected in the legends with Pheidon as a contemporary and opponent, Archias of Corinth, who is said to have led the first colony to Sicily. I have no doubt that the same chronography which placed Pheidon in the eighth Olympiad (747 B.C.) placed Archias there, and, allowing for a few years of domestic struggles, sent him to Sicily in 735 B.C.^[62:1] To my mind this legend is quite unhistorical, nay, it may possibly have falsified real history; for though it may have suited the national vanity of Antiochus of Syracuse and other old historians to magnify their own city by putting it first, or practically first, in the list, the whole situation points to a different course of events.

Archias, the founder of Syracuse,

[63]

Archias, when on his way, is said to have left a party to settle at Corcyra; he is also said to have helped the founder of Croton. It is surely improbable that Greek adventurers in search of good land and convenient harbours should fix on Sicily, passing by the sites of Tarentum, Sybaris, Croton, and Locri. That these sites were fully appreciated is shown by the flourishing cities which the legend asserts to have been founded in the generation succeeding the origin of Syracuse. Will any unprejudiced man believe all this most improbable history? The one fact which the old chronologers of Syracuse could not get over was this: from time immemorial Greek ships arriving in Sicily offered sacrifices at the temple of Apollo Archegetes at Naxos. Hence Naxos must have been the first settlement. In the following year, says Thucydides, Syracuse was founded; and then all the dates which he copies from his authority—most likely Antiochus—are, as usual, downward from the date of Syracuse, and almost all in numbers divisible by five.

associated with legends of Corcyra and Croton.

Thucydides counts downward from this imaginary date.

[64]

I will pause a moment, and give the reader a summary of the conclusions to which critical scholars in general have given their assent. It is conceded that Thucydides must have used Antiochus of Syracuse as his principal source in narrating the archæology of Sicily. This opinion, first stated by Niebuhr, has been argued out fully by Wölfflin, and accepted with some reluctance by Holm, Classen (the best editor of Thucydides), and Busolt^[64:1].

Even the language of Thucydides in these chapters shows phrases which we recognize in the fragments of Antiochus cited by Strabo. The prominence of Syracuse, the city of Antiochus, and the mention of the constitutions of the new cities, are also features pointing to the work of Antiochus. In his special article Busolt has shown with great acuteness

Antiochus of Syracuse

not trustworthy;

that all the later authorities, cited by some in support of Thucydides' data, really rest upon him or upon Antiochus^[64:2]. What was the character of this author? He was an early contemporary of Herodotus, and is never cited by the ancients as a specimen of critical acumen, but rather as possessing special knowledge on an outlying part of the Greek world. We have, moreover, his opening words quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus^[65:1], which are most important in the present connection: *Ἀντίοχος Ξενοφάνεος τάδε συνέγραψε περὶ Ἰταλίας ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων λόγων τὰ πιστότατα καὶ σαφέστατα*. In other words he used oral tradition for his facts, and this he also did in his account of early Sicily^[65:2]. He was, at best, one of the most serious, if you please, of the *logopoioi*, or chroniclers, who are always being contrasted with critical historians such as Thucydides. Such being the state of the facts, we are compelled to accept as our only authority for the early traditions concerning Sicily this solitary chronicler, who seems to have had no difficulty in fixing dates centuries before the first immigration of the Greeks. In a loose thinker of this kind, patriotism may be fairly assigned as a strong moving cause in determining his facts and dates. Indeed, when Archias is said by this Antiochus to have aided at the founding of Croton, Grote and Holm are quite ready to set it down to his desire to magnify Syracuse. When Ephorus of Kyme sets down the Italian colony of his city (Cumæ) at 1050 B.C., all critical historians reject this date upon the same ground. If this criticism be indeed valid, are we only to use it when we choose, or to apply it generally? Busolt shows (in his article) that the actual year of the founding of Syracuse (and hence of the other Sicilian colonies) cannot be regarded as certain. Surely he and his brother critics stop short illogically, and refrain from pushing their doubts as far as they are bound to do. To me not only the exact year, but the exact generation—it is by generations and round numbers that Antiochus counted—is quite uncertain; and we are thrown back on arguments from general probability such as those which I have indicated.

his dates illusory,

[65]

[66]

§ 31. It is the authority of Thucydides which has imposed upon the learned an artificial chronology. The scholar is often wanting in acuteness. There are, I suppose, plenty of philologists who believe Thucydides far more implicitly than their Bible, and because he appears careful and trustworthy in contemporary affairs, actually assume that he must be equally credible in matters wholly beyond his ken. I suppose they imagine, though they do not state it, that the historian consulted State archives in Sicily, and set down his conclusions from a careful analysis of their evidence. We have no trace or mention of any such systematic archives; and if the historian indeed confined himself to these, what shall we say to his assertion that the Sikels passed from Italy to Sicily just three hundred years before the advent of the Greeks? How could he know this? But the solemn manner of the man and his habitual reticence concerning his authorities have wonderfully imposed upon the credulity of the learned.

though supported by Thucydides,

who is not omniscient.

[67]

Nobody rates Thucydides higher than I do, wherever he is really competent to give an unbiassed opinion. His accuracy is not, to my mind, impeached by the fact that he is found to have made a slovenly copy of a public document lately recovered on the Acropolis^[67:1]. The variations, though many, are trifling, and do not affect the substance of the document. Yet this may do more to discredit him with the pedants than what seems to me dangerous credulity in larger questions. He is hardly to be blamed; no man escapes entirely from the prejudices of his age. The most sceptical in some points, as I have already noticed^[67:2], let their credulity transpire in others. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, whose whole life was spent in framing sceptical arguments against early history, is found to accept the unity of authorship and unity of design of the Homeric poems. Grote, so careful and precise in accepting documents, subscribes to the genuineness of the Platonic *Letters*, which no other competent scholar admits; and so I suppose that in every sceptic, however advanced, some nook of belief will be found, often far less rational than the faith he has rejected.

Credulity in every sceptic.

This truth, which applies to modern scholars so signally, applies no less to the ancient critics of the Greek legends. When we find that Thucydides accepts a piece of ancient history like this account of the Greek settlement of Sicily, we must first of all be sure that he is not the victim of a fit of acquiescence in an older chronicler. When we hear that Aristotle and Polybius, two great and sceptical men, accepted the Olympiads, we must first know exactly what they said about the earlier dates^[68:1], and then we must be assured that they did not simply acquiesce in the work of Hippias. For this Hippias was clearly a man writing with a deliberate policy. He must produce a complete catalogue; he must make his documents conform to it. And so there is evidence in Pausanias that he not only succeeded in his purpose, but that he modified or re-wrote certain inscriptions which we may suppose did not suit his purpose. I refuse to put faith in such an authority, and I refuse to accept as the first real date in Greek history an epoch fixed by all the Greek chronologers in a downward calculation from the Trojan war,—as may be seen even in the scientific and accurate Eratosthenes. His fragments, written at a time when there really existed Greek science, in a day rich with all the learning of previous centuries, still manifest the old faith in the Trojan war, the Return of the Heracleids, the colonization of Ionia, and the guardianship of Lycurgus, as events to be fixed both absolutely and in relation to one another, and to serve as a basis for all the succeeding centuries down to the day of real and contemporary records. 'In these early dates and eras,' says Fynes Clinton in a remarkable passage^[69:1], 'by a singular error in reasoning, the

Its probable occurrence in ancient critics.

Value of Hippias' work.

Even Eratosthenes counts downward.

Clinton's warning.

[68]

[69]

authority of Eratosthenes is made to be binding upon his predecessors; while those who come after him are taken for original and independent witnesses in matters which they really derived from his chronology. The numbers given by Isocrates for the Return of the Heracleidæ^[69:2] are repeated three times, and are more trustworthy; and yet the critics try to correct them by the authority of Eratosthenes.'

§ 32. What, then, is the outcome of all this discussion?

The first three stages of Greek history are, so to speak, isolated, and separated by two blank periods, one of which has to this day remained a great gulf, over which no bridge has yet been constructed. Over the second, which immediately precedes proper history, the Greeks made a very elaborate bridge, which they adorned with sundry figures recovered from vague tradition and arranged according to their fancy. But it is only after this reconstructed epoch of transition that we can be sure of our facts.

Summary of the discussion.

[70]

The first stage is that represented by the pre-historic remains, which, though they are plainly very various in development, and therefore probably in age, are yet by most of us classed together as 'without father, mother, or descent,' discovering to us the earliest civilization in Greek lands. But to assert this foundling character is perhaps too sceptical a position. For there can hardly be any likelihood that the Eastern parentage of this early luxury, suggested by the legends, will hereafter be disproved. And now even the most extreme advocates of Greek originality must allow this early intercourse with, and influence of, the older civilizations. As to their effects upon historic Greek art, there seemed to be a gap between the bee-hive tomb or fortress-wall and the pillared temple, which was a 'great gulf fixed,' till Dr. Schliemann found the doorways of the palace of Tiryns. They are all planned like a temple *in antis*,—the earliest form, from which the *peripteral* easily follows. And early vases are adorned with rude figures which may be copies of old models such as those found at Mycenæ. But the intermediate steps are still hopelessly obscure.

The stage of pre-Homeric remains.

Prototype of the Greek temple.

The earliest and rudest of these remains are not in Greece, but at the island of Santorin, under the lava, and in the fort of Ilion (Troy) excavated by Dr. Schliemann^[71:1]. The more developed, both in architectural skill and in ornamental designs, are in Argolis (Mycenæ, Tiryns) and in Attica (Spata, Menidi). As I have already mentioned, this civilization does not appear to be the same as that of the epic poems, and the verdict of the learned declares that it dates from a long anterior epoch. What occurred in Greece between the epoch of this curious pre-Hellenic and, partially at least, imported culture, and the age of Homer, none of us can as yet do more than guess^[71:2]. But the fact that the popular poetry chose for the scenes of its adventures the very sites of this pre-historic culture, seems to show that the importance of Troy, Mycenæ, and Tiryns either lasted down to the 'epic' time, or was so recent as to hold the popular imagination.

Degrees in this stage.

[71]

On the whole, therefore, I am disposed to consider these pre-historic splendours as not so extravagantly old,—surviving, perhaps, till 1000 B.C.; though of course the Trojan remains may be far older than the Mycenæan. Duncker, in his very careful discussion^[72:1], thinks the end of this period came about 1100 B.C. I look upon this, in an author who is always liberal with his figures, as a substantial agreement with me, but I can now add a remarkable corroboration. Mr. Flinders Petrie, coming fresh from a prolonged and scientific study of Egyptian art-remains, has examined with care the pre-historic collections in Greece, and has established^[72:2] (1) a very early and widespread communication between the peoples of the Ægean and Egypt; (2) a close similarity, both in materials and workmanship, between the Mycenæan ornaments and the Egyptian of about 1200-1000 B.C. The Egyptian pottery, &c., from dynasties earlier or later than this epoch show marked contrasts, and are easily to be distinguished. At the same time, I protest against making the *rudeness* of pottery in itself, without any corroboration, a proof of great antiquity. For there is such a thing as neo-barbarism, especially in pottery; and moreover, simple people will go on for a thousand years making their plain household utensils in the same form and with the same decoration.

Probably not so old as is often supposed.

Mr. Petrie's evidence.

[72]

§ 33. As regards the second stage, or 'epic age,' I have already, in my *Greek Literature*, shown ample reasons for not dating it very early; and further researches since made rather confirm this view. The personages described seem to belong to the ninth century before Christ; but it was gone before the poets brought together their work into the famous epics which were the opening of Greek literature. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* therefore seem to me to describe the second, then already bygone, stage of Greek history, which was certainly separated by a gap from the third. This last begins with the contemporary allusions of the earliest lyric poets, Archilochus, Callinus, Tyrtaeus,—none of whom were earlier than 700 B.C., and who more probably lived from 660 B.C. onward^[73:1].

The epic stage.

The earliest historical stage.

[73]

According to the theory of the Greeks, which is not yet extinct, three centuries separated this real history from the epic period, when the Trojan heroes and their singers lived; and even among recent critics there are some who wish to place the composition of the *Iliad* as far back as 900 B.C.

I do not believe in so huge a gap in Greek literature. It seems to me impossible that the stream of original epic should have dried up long before Archilochus arose towards the middle of the seventh century B.C. And here it is that the moderns have been deceived by the elaborate construction of four centuries of history made by the Greeks to fill the void between the events of the *Iliad* and the events of the earliest history. In the seventh century we have contemporary allusions to Gyges, king of Lydia, known to us from Assyrian inscriptions; we have yearly archons at Athens, and a series of priestesses at Argos; presently we have historical colonies and many other real evidences on which to rely.

But before 700 B.C. it is not so. Some stray facts remained, as when Tyrtæus tells us that he fought in the second Messenian war, and that the first had been waged by the grandfathers of his fellow-soldiers^[74:1]. The double kingship of Sparta was there, though I am at a loss to know how

we can trust a list of names coming down from a time when writing was not known^[74:2]. Nay, we have even distinct examples of fabricated lists. Hellanicus wrote concerning the list of the priestesses at Argos,—in after days a recognized standard for fixing events. But this list reached back far beyond the Trojan war, as it started with Io, paramour of Zeus. The name of the priestess marking the date of the war was solemnly set down. The lists of the Spartan kings came straight down from Heracles. Again, at Halicarnassus has been found a list on stone of twenty-seven priests, starting from Telamon, son of Poseidon, and bringing back the founding of the city to 1174 B.C.^[75:1] The tail of this list also was historical; the beginning must have been deliberately manufactured! From such data the early history of Greece was constructed^[75:2]. Lycurgus is a half-mythical figure, and probably represents the wisdom of several lawgivers. But however individual cases may be judged, in chronology all the early dates are to be mistrusted, and to reconstruct the Greece of the eighth century B.C. requires as much combination and as much imagination as to construct a real account of the Homeric age. I am convinced that two capital features in the usual Greek histories of the eighth century, the reign of Pheidon and the colonization of Sicily, belong, not to that century, but to the next.

Let not the reader imagine that he finds in me one of those who delight in reducing the antiquity of history, and who advocate the more recent date in every controversy. There are nations whose culture seems to be

undervalued in duration; to me, for example, those arguments are most convincing^[76:1] which place the great Sphinx at the Pyramids in an epoch before any written records, even in Egypt, so that it remains a monument of sculptured art many thousand years before the Christian era. But the Greeks were mere children in ancient history, and they knew it^[76:2].

[74]
**The gap between
Homer and
Archilochus.**

**Old lists suspicious,
and often fabricated.**

**No chronology of the
eighth century B.C. to
be trusted.**

**Cases of real
antiquity.**

FOOTNOTES:

[54:1] Printed in C. Müller's *Geographi Graeci*.

[55:1] We shall soon come to a similar instance in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

[55:2] The Greek name is λογοποιοί, seldom λογογράφοι, which usually means a speech-writer. Cf. below, § 31, a passage from Clinton which also applies here.

[57:1] The solitary exception is Sir G. Cox, whose *History of Greece* has found little favour, in spite of its originality. He will not set down any date earlier than 660 B.C. as worthy of acceptance; and I think he is right. But he also rides the solar theory of the myths to death, and so repels his reader at the very outset of his work.

[58:1] The arguments of Busolt (G. G. i. 86) which I had intended to discuss, will be antiquated by the appearance of his 2nd edition, which is now in the press, and which discusses the prehistoric conditions by the light of evidence which has accrued since the first publication of his important work. But for the printers' strike (November, 1891) I should probably have been able to quote his revised and amended views. Holm's appears to me a reasonable view. After stating that Apollodorus (ii. 7), Diodorus (4, 33), Plato (*Legg.* iii. 6, 7), and Isocrates (*Archidam.* 119) are all at variance, he adds (i. 181): 'One of these is just as historical as the other; the current traditions are not better than the accounts of Plato and of Isocrates; they are all mere tales (*Sagen*) which can neither be proved or refuted.' Here we have the attitude of Grote, pure and simple, but applied to a quasi-historical period.

[59:1] Will it be believed that E. Curtius paraphrases this remark (ἀπ' οὐδενὸς ὀρμώμενον ἀναγκαίου πρὸς πίστιν) by 'zuerst wissenschaftlich bearbeitet von Hippias'?

[59:2] It is an axiom, to which I shall revert, that all sceptics have their credulous side; and so we find that Mr. Evelyn Abbott, a learned and able man, who will not accept anything as real fact from the Homeric poems, takes with childish faith the list in Eusebius, and tells us that there we can read the names of the actual victors from 776 B.C. to 221 A.D.! (*History of Greece*, i. 246.) And he adds, with charming *naïveté*, that the alleged fact of one thousand years' record of foot-races 'would be incredible if it were not true. But it is true,' etc. That a critical historian should tell us these things dogmatically, without touching upon any of the difficulties involved, can only be accounted for by the theory that he was following some authority he respected, such as Duncker, without thinking the matter out for himself.

- [60:1] I notice that older scholars, such as Newton, in his *Chronology*, and Mitford, show quite a wholesome scepticism concerning Pheidon's date, which they are disposed to bring down even lower than Curtius proposes.
- [60:2] *E. g.* Duncker, Abbott, Duruy, Busolt (i. 140) with the recent literature cited, Holm (i. 256).
- [61:1] The reader may consult a long list of tracts on the credibility of Ephorus, and the accuracy with which our extant Greek authors cited him, with the general conclusions to be inferred, in Busolt (i. 97 and elsewhere) or Holm (i. 11-15).
- [62:1] Though the Return of the Heracleids was placed by Eratosthenes in 1104 B.C., older authorities, just as competent, placed it later. Thus Isocrates, in three of his orations, delivered 366-342 B.C., repeats that the Dorians had now been four hundred years in Peloponnesus. Applying this round number, we obtain 1066-1042 for the Return of the Heracleids. The tenth generation, according to Greek counting, down from this date for Temenus, would give us 760-730 B.C. This may be the very computation by which the dates of Archias and Pheidon were fixed. Duncker (i. 139) thinks the Dorians cannot have come before 1000 B.C. If he reasoned like a Greek, and held Pheidon to be the tenth Temenid, he would straightway put him below 700 B.C.
- [64:1] The last has given a summary of the arguments in his *History*, pp. 224, 241, and in the *Rhein. Museum* for 1885, pp. 461 *seq.*
- [64:2] That Hippys of Rhegium lived during the Persian Wars, and wrote Σικελικά, is stated by Suidas only and without any evidence.
- [65:1] *Arch.* i. 12.
- [65:2] Diod. xii. 71. I now repeat these facts, which I had urged long ago, from the recent summary of Busolt (*op. cit.* p. 224).
- [67:1] It is the treaty which he professes to give verbatim in v. 47, with which the reader may compare the actual, though somewhat mutilated text in C. I. A. i. Suppl. 46^p.
- [67:2] Cf. above, § 29.
- [68:1] The excerpt alluding to Polybius (printed in his text as vi. 2, 2) merely asserts that in the book of Aristodemus of Elis it was stated that no victors were recorded till the twenty-eighth Olympiad, when Corœbus the Elean won and was recorded as the first victor; from which time the Olympiads were then reckoned. Aristotle is reported to have called Lycurgus the founder (fr. 490). Aristodemus was later than Hippias (cf. above, p. 58); and still *it is to his book, and not to old registers*, that the Greek writers refer. The recurrence of the 28th as an improper Olympiad shows that this number had some important place in the whole discussion. I think it likely that Corœbus really belonged to the twenty-eighth after 776, and not to that year. The oldest actual record of a victor which Pausanias could find was from Ol. 33, and this he describes as of extraordinary antiquity. Other details are given in the [Appendix](#).
- [69:1] *Fasti Hell.*, vol. ii. p. vii.
- [69:2] Cf. above, § 30, [note](#).
- [71:1] I incline, with Mr. Bent, to place the remains of Santorin before those of Hissarlik, even though they may be in some respects superior in development. As is obvious, the culture of one place need not keep pace with that of another. But the total disappearance from the legends of any mention of the eruption which must have disturbed the whole Ægean Sea, compared with the living memories of Troy, is to me a proof that the latter and its destruction must be far more recent than the former. Mr. E. Abbott, who refers to Bent's *Cyclades*, is disposed to the other view (*History of Greece*, i. 43); and so are Duruy (vol. i. chap. ii. § 1) and Holm.
- [71:2] Many writers put the Dorian immigration and the resulting changes of population, and emigration to Asia Minor, in the gap.
- [72:1] i. 131. Busolt, as he informs me, now agrees with this view.
- [72:2] In two remarkable articles (*Hellenic Journal* for 1890 and 1891).
- [73:1] The date of Archilochus, the earliest of the historical figures among Greek poets, used to be fixed about 709 B.C. The researches of Gelzer, *Das Zeitalter des Gyges*, make it certain that this date is wrong, and must be reduced to at least 670 B.C.; for Archilochus names Gyges in an extant fragment, and Gyges appears on a cuneiform inscription as the vassal of an Assyrian king whose time is determinable. Moreover, an eclipse which Archilochus mentions seems to be that in April, 647 B.C., which was total at Thasos, where the poet spent his later years. Even the conservative Duncker (vol. ii. p. 175, English ed.) adopts these arguments. Nevertheless, some recent histories still acquiesce in the exploded date!
- [74:1] The connected history was, however, not set down then, but by a late epic poet, Rhianus, and a late prose historian, Myron, both of whom Pausanias, who gives us what we now know of these wars, criticises severely, saying that the prose author is the worse of these bad or incomplete authorities (Pausanias, iv. 6), since he conflicts with Tyrtæus. How modern historians in the face of this passage can set down fixed dates for these wars, beginning with 785 B.C., passes my comprehension.
- [74:2] It is perhaps the most extraordinary fact in the results of the excavations pointed out to me by Mr. Sayce, that in none of the early Greek tombs or treasures discovered have we a single specimen of early writing, though both Egyptians and Phœnicians, who supplied so much to them, must have been long familiar with that art. The author of the Sixth

Book of the Iliad refers once to writing as a strange or mysterious thing, and yet on a folded tablet, which could not have been used at the origin of writing, or indeed till far later times.

[75:1] C. I. G. 2655.

[75:2] These inventions were produced at a comparatively late period, and therefore do not conflict with what I said of the rarity of invention in a primitive age which had no theories to support.

[76:1] I allude to the views of M. G. Maspero, in his admirable *Archéologie égyptienne*.

[76:2] We have now positive evidence that the Athenians registered their public acts on stone as early as 570-560 B.C. On the Acropolis has been found (in 1884) the broken slab which contained the decree as to the legal status of the first cleruchs sent to Salamis upon its conquest by Athens. (See the article of Koehler in the *Mittheilungen* of the German Institute at Athens, vol. ix. p. 117 sq., and the *Bull. de Corresp. hell.* xii. 1 sq. where Foucart comments upon the inscription.) Three conditions are implied: (1) the *cleruch* is assimilated to Athenian citizens, as to taxes and military service, though he is bound to reside on Salamis and not leave his land. This was no doubt a novelty, and distinguishes the Athenian cleruch from the older colonist who had gone to Pontus or Magna Græcia. (2) If he did not reside, or while he did not, he must pay a special absentee's tax to the State. (This is understood differently by Koehler and by Busolt, G. G. i. 548.) The original number of cleruchs was apparently 500 (Foucart *op. cit. ibid.*). (3) If he defaulted in his payment there was a fine of thirty drachmæ—a very small penalty, even regarding the modest means of the early Greek states.

CHAPTER IV.

[77]

THE DESPOTS; THE DEMOCRACIES.

§ 34. At last we emerge into the open light of day, and find ourselves in the seventh century (more strictly 650-550 B.C.), in that brilliant, turbulent, enterprising society which produced the splendid lyric poetry of Alcæus and Sappho, of Alcman and Terpander, and carried Greek commerce over most of the Mediterranean^[77:1]. We have still but scanty facts to guide us; yet they are enough to show us the general condition of the country,—aristocratical governments which had displaced monarchies, and beside them the ancient twin-monarchy of Sparta, gradually passing into the oligarchy of the ephors. There is evidence in the character of Alcman's poetry that he did not sing to a Sparta at all resembling the so-called Sparta of Lycurgus. The remains of early art found there point in the same direction, as do also the strange funeral customs described by Herodotus on the death of the kings^[78:1]. It would seem that there was luxury, that there was artistic taste, that there was considerable license in this older society. The staid sobriety and simplicity of what is known as Spartan life seems therefore rather a later growth, than the original condition of this Doric aristocracy. And so this type is far more explicable, in its exceptional severity, and its contrast to all other Dorian states, if we take it to be the gradual growth of exceptional circumstances, than if we regard it as a primitive type, which would naturally appear in other branches of the race.

Brilliant age of the great lyric poets.

The Sparta of Alcman's time.

[78]

At all events the Greeks had before them the example of an ancient, a respectable and a brilliant monarchy. It is nevertheless most remarkable that in all the changes of constitution attempted through the various States, amid the universal respect in which the Spartans were held, no attempt was ever made in practical^[78:2] Greek history to copy their institutions. The distinct resemblances to Spartan institutions in some of the Cretan communities were probably not imitations, nor can we say that they were Dorian ideas, for the many Dorian States we know well, such as Argos, Corinth, Syracuse, did not possess them.

Its exceptional constitution.

The Spartan State may therefore be regarded as standing outside the development of Greece, even in the political sense^[78:3]. In one respect only was its policy an aggressive one,—in interfering on the side of the aristocracies against the despots who took up the cause of the common people against their noble oppressors. It is one of those brilliant general views which make Curtius' history so attractive, that he interprets this great conflict as partly one of race, so far as Ionic and Doric can severally be called such. The Doric aristocracies of the Peloponnesus were opposed by their Ionic subjects, or by Ionic States rising in importance with the growing commerce and wealth of the Asiatic cities. The tyrants generally carried out an anti-Dorian policy, even though they were often Dorian nobles themselves. There was no more successful aspirant to a tyranny than a renegade nobleman who adopted the cause of the people.

E. Curtius on the age of the despots.

[79]

§ 35. I have already alluded to the chapter in Grote's history^[79:1]—indeed there is such a chapter in most histories—entitled the 'Age of the Despots.' The mistake which such a title is likely to engender must be carefully noticed. If we mean the age when this kind of monarch first arose, no objection need be urged; but if it be implied that such an age ceased at any definite moment, nothing can be further from the truth.

Grote's view.

For this form of government was a permanent feature in the Greek world. When the tyrants were expelled from Athens and from the Peloponnesus, they still flourished in Sicily, Italy, the Black Sea coasts, and Cyprus, till they reappeared again in Greece^[80:1]. There was no moment in old Greek history when there were not scores of such despots. The closing period, after the death of Alexander, shows us most of the Greek States under their control. It was the great boast of Aratus that he freed his neighbours from them, and brought their cities under the more constitutional Achæan League. But at this period a despot, if he ruled over a large dominion, called himself a king; and we may therefore add to the list most of the so-called kings, who close the history of independent Greece, as they commenced it in the legends.

[80]

The despot, or tyrant^[80:2] as he is called, has a very bad reputation in Greek history. The Greeks of every age have not only loved individual liberty, but are a singularly jealous people, who cannot endure that one of themselves shall lord it over the rest. Even in the present day Greeks have often told me that they would not for a moment endure a Greek as king, because they all feel equal, and could not tolerate that any one among them should receive such honour and profit. This is why the ancient tyrant, however wisely and moderately he ruled, was always regarded with hatred by the aristocrats he had deposed; so that to them the killing of him was an act of virtue approved by all their society. I very much doubt whether in early days the common people generally had any such feeling, as the tyrant usually saved them from much severer oppression. Of course any individual might avenge a particular wrong or insult, and in later days, when a despot overthrew a democratic constitution, the lower classes might share in the old aristocratic hatred of the usurper.

Greek hatred of the despot,

how far universal in early days.

[81]

§ 36. But Greek literature was in the hands of the aristocrats; and so we have a long catalogue of accusations from Alcæus, Herodotus, Xenophon, Plato, Polybius, Plutarch,—in fact all through Greek literature; according to which the tyrant is a ruffian who usurps power in order that he may gratify his lusts at the expense of all justice and mercy. Feeling himself the enemy of mankind, he is perpetually in a panic of suspicion, and surrounds himself with mercenaries who carry out his behests. He plunders, confiscates, and violates the sanctity of the family and the virtue of the young.

Literary portraits of the Greek despot.

How far exaggerated.

This terrible indictment, of which the climax was Lycophron's *Casandreans*, has been indorsed by the great democratic historian of our century^[81:1], to whom the completeness of political liberty is the great goal of all civilization, and who therefore looks with horror upon those who retard its growth.

But it seems to me that the problem has not been fairly handled, and that there is a great deal to be said for these tyrants, in the face of all this literary evidence^[82:1]. Of course their irresponsible powers were often abused. Coming without the shackles of tradition or the scruples of legitimacy to a usurped throne, the same Greek who was so jealous of his neighbour was sure to feel insolent elation at his own success, and deep suspicion of his unsuccessful rivals. And if a case can be found of a tyrant overthrowing a fairly working constitution, I surrender it to the verdict of the jury of historians from Herodotus to Grote.

[82]

But if the *tyrannis* was so unmixed an evil, how comes it to have been a constant and permanent phenomenon in Greek politics? Man may indeed, as Polybius says, be the most gullible of all animals, though professing to be the most sagacious, and may ever be ready to fall into the same snares that he has seen successful in entrapping others^[82:2]. But surely it exceeds all the bounds of human, not to say Greek, stupidity that men should perpetually set a villain over them to plunder, violate, and exile men and women.

Reductio ad absurdum of the popular view.

The fact is that the tyrant was at one time a necessity, and even a valuable *moment*, in the march of Greek culture. The aristocratic governments had only substituted a many-headed sovereignty over the poor for the rule of a single king, who might be touched by compassion or reached by persuasion. But who could argue with the clubs of young patricians, who thought the poor no better than their slaves, and swore the solemn oath which Aristotle has preserved: 'I will be at enmity with the Demos, and will do it all the harm I can.' To these gentlemen the political differences with the people had gone quite beyond argument; whatever they urged was true, whatever was against them false: each side regarded its opponents as morally infamous. Whenever politics reach this condition, it is time to abandon discussion and appeal to an umpire who can enforce his decision with arms.

The real uses to politics of temporary despots.

[83]

When the commons had gained wealth and acquired some cohesion, there were consequently violent revolutions and counter-revolutions, massacres and confiscations, so that 'peace at any price' was often the cry of the State. Thucydides has drawn a famous picture of the political factions of his day, in which he declares their violence, fraud, and disregard of every obligation but that of party interests to be novel features of his times. That clever rhetorician knew well enough that these frauds and violences were no new thing in Greek politics. The poems of Alcæus, still more those of Theognis, and many more that were known to him, must have taught him that this war of factions was as old as real Greek history, and that the earliest solution of this

Questionable statement of Thucydides.

terrible problem was the tyrant, who made peace by coercing both sides to his will and punishing with death or exile those that were refractory.

§ 37. In the shocking condition of cities like Athens before Peisistratus, or the Megara of Theognis, we may even go so far as to say that, without an interval during which both parties were taught simply to obey, no reasonable political life was possible. The haughty noble must be taught that he too had a master; he must be taught to treat his plebeian brother as another man, and not merely as a beast of burden. The poor must learn that they could be protected from every rich man's oppression, that they could follow their business in peace, and that they could appeal to a sovran who ruled by their sympathy and would listen to their voice.

The tyrant welds together the opposing parties.

[84]

There were even a few cases where the opposing parties voluntarily elected a single man, such as Pittacus or Solon, as umpire, and where their trust was nobly requited. But even in less exceptional cases, such as that of Peisistratus of Athens, I make bold to say that the constitution of Cleisthenes would not have succeeded, had not the people received the training in peace and obedience given them by the Peisistratid family. The despots may have murdered or exiled the leading men; they at all events welded the people into some unity, some homogeneity, if it were merely in the common burdens they inflicted, and the common antipathies they excited. And this is the most adverse view that can be urged. The picture we have of Peisistratus, especially in the *Polity of the Athenians* of recent fame, is that of a just and kindly man, wielding his power of coercion for the general happiness of his subjects.

Cases of an umpire voluntarily appointed.

[85]

This then was the *political* value of the early tyrants, and a feature in them which is generally overlooked. Their services to the *artistic* progress of Greece in art and literature are more manifest, and therefore less ignored. The day of great architectural works, such as the castles and tombs of Argolis, the draining of Lake Copais, had passed away with the absolute rulers of pre-historic times. Even Agamemnon and his fellows, who probably represent a later stage in Greek society, would not have dared to set their subjects to such task-work. So long as there were many masters in each city and State, all such achievements were impossible. With the tyrants began again the building of large temples, the organizing of fleets, the sending out of colonies, the patronage of clever handicrafts, the promoting of all the arts. It was the care of Peisistratus for the study of Homer, and no doubt for other old literature, which prepared the Athenian people to understand Æschylus. Nay, this tyrant is said to have specially favoured the nascent drama, and so to have led the way to the splendid results that come upon us, with apparent suddenness, in liberated Athens. The Orthagorids, the Cypselids, and single tyrants such as Polycrates of Samos and Pheidon of Argos, did similar services for Greek art: they organized fleets and promoted commerce; they had personal intercourse of a more definite and intimate kind with one another than States as such can possibly have; they increased the knowledge and wealth of the lower classes, as well as their relative position in the State; and so out of apparent evil came real good^[86:1].

Services of the tyrants to art.

Examples.

[86]

Even after all the full experience of Greek democracies, of the complete liberty of the free citizen, of the value of public discussion, and of the responsibility of magistrates to the people, we find all the later theorists deliberately asserting that if you could secure the right man, a single-headed State was the most perfect. All the abuses of tyranny, therefore, so carefully pictured by literary men, had not seemed to them equal to the abuses of mob-rule,—the violence and the vacillation of an incompetent or needy public. I cannot but repeat, that if we regard the world at large, and the general fitness of men for democratic liberties, we shall hesitate to pronounce the majority of races even now fit for government by discussion and by vote of the majority.

Verdict of the Greek theorists.

It is very instructive to reflect that Peisistratus, the most enlightened of tyrants, was contemporary with Solon, the father of Greek democracy. The theory, therefore, of a constitution in which wealth as well as birth should have influence, and which should also regard the rights and the burdens of the poor, was not only alive, but represented by Solon, when Peisistratus made himself master of the State. Solon's theory, though supported by his *law against neutrality*^[87:1], was unable to overcome the turbulence of faction; and it required a generation of strong rule to prepare the whole people for the revival of Solon's theory, with many further developments, by Cleisthenes.

Peisistratus and Solon.

[87]

Nevertheless, Solon remains a capital figure in early Greek history, known to us not by legends and legislation only, but also by the fragments of his poetry^[87:2].

§ 38. This is the right place to consider the nature of those Greek democracies that followed upon the expulsion of aristocrats and tyrants, and that have been so lauded in modern histories. The panegyric of Grote is well known; and there is also a very fine chapter^[88:1] in which Duruy, without being intimate, apparently, with Grote (for he only quotes Thirlwall in his support), has not only defended and praised this form of government at Athens, but even justified the coercion of all recalcitrant members of the Delian confederacy. The student has, therefore, the case of democracies in Greece ably and brilliantly stated.

Contrast of Greek and modern democracy.

[88]

But in the first place let me repeat that they were one and all slave-holding democracies, and that for each freeman with a vote there were at least three or four slaves. Hence a Greek democracy can in no wise be compared with the modern democracies of artisans and labourers who have to do all their own drudgery, and have hardly any servants. Even very poor Athenians kept a slave or two; they were saved the worry of much troublesome or degrading manual labour; and so the Athenian or the Tarentine, even when poor and over-worked, was in a serious sense an aristocrat as well as a democrat: he belonged to a small minority ruling a far greater population. Still more eminently was this the case, when the democracy was, like Athens or Rhodes, an Imperial one, ruling over subjects, or allied with smaller polities which were little better than subjects. Holm argues that under Pericles the poorest citizen was paid by public money for doing public duties, and was thus above all care concerning his daily bread^[89:1]. But when he adds that by this means Pericles succeeded in making the Athenians in one respect (materially) equal to the Spartans, in that they could be (if they performed public duties) noblemen and gentlemen like the latter, he surely overstates the case. The traditions of a landed aristocracy are wholly different from those of salaried paupers, however great may be the power wielded by these latter, or the privileges that they enjoy.

Slave-holding democracies.

Supported by public duties.

[89]

Still it is quite possible that all the modern aids which our poor can use are not as efficient in helping them to attain culture as the leisure granted to the Greek democrat by slave-labour at home. Nor have we as yet any instance of a society becoming really refined without the aid of some inferior class, some Gibeonites, to hew wood and draw water.

Athenian leisure.

But if from this point of view the ancient artisan was far freer than his modern counterpart, in another he was not so. As against his brother-citizen, the laws secured him equality and justice; but against the demands of the State he had no redress. The Greek theory required that all citizens should be regarded simply as the property of the State; and such a thing as an appeal to a High Court of Judicature against the decree of the Assembly would have been regarded as absurd^[90:1]. The Demos was indeed 'the sovran people,' but sovran in the sense of a tyrant, or irresponsible ruler, as Aristophanes tells the Athenians.

The assembly an absolute sovran.

[90]

These are the general features of Greek democracy, which are not always understood by foreign, and not urged with sufficient clearness by English, historians.

FOOTNOTES:

[77:1] The reader who desires fuller details may consult the chapter on the 'Lyric Age' in my *Social Life in Greece*, and the chapters on the lyric poets in my *History of Greek Literature*.

[78:1] Herodotus, vi. 58.

[78:2] The theorists were always framing policies after Spartan ideas.

[78:3] The two accounts of early Sparta which are cited with general approval are those of Duncker in his history, and Busolt's monograph, *Die Lakedaimonier* (Leipzig, 1878). But there is a host of additional literature, cf. Busolt, G. G. i. 95.

[79:1] Above, § 8.

[80:1] It is likely enough that at no time were they really extinct in the Peloponnesus or in the lesser towns of northern Greece.

[80:2] There is a good note upon this word in the Greek argument to the *Œdipus Tyrannus*.

[81:1] Cf. above, § 8.

[82:1] Mitford, who wrote in the days when tirades against tyrants were in high fashion, brought down a torrent of censure upon his head by saying his word for absolute government against democracy.

[82:2] Cf. my *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 416.

[86:1] I shall return to this subject of tyrants in connection with their later and Hellenistic features. Cf. below, § 71.

[87:1] Three remarkable laws, all intended to save the Athenian democracy, whose ministers had no standing-army at their control, from sudden overthrow, seem to me never to have been clearly correlated by the historians. Solon's law (1) ordained that where an actual *στάσις* had arisen, every citizen must take some side, calculating that all quiet and orderly people, if compelled to join in the conflict, would side with the established Government. Cleisthenes saw that this appeal to the body of the citizens came too late, and indeed had failed when the usurpation of Peisistratus took place. He (2) established *Ostracism*, which interfered before the *στάσις*, but when the rivalry of two leaders showed that the danger was at hand. So far Grote expounds the development. But this expedient also failed when the rivals combined, and turned the vote against Hyperbolus. It is from that date only—about 416 B.C.—that I can find cases (3) of the *γραφὴ παρανόμων*, or prosecution for making illegal *proposals*, thus interfering at a still earlier stage. This last form of the safeguard replaced Ostracism, and lasted to the end of

Athenian history. It was a democratic engine often abused, but always safe to be applied in good time.

- [87:2] These have been increased for us by the text of the Aristotelian *Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία*, from which Plutarch cited, but not fully, his quotations in the *Life of Solon*.
- [88:1] *Hist. of Greece*, vol. ii. chap. xix. § 2. He claims in his interesting preface to the last edition to have attained Grote's conclusions independently thirty years ago, when they were regarded in France as dangerous paradoxes.
- [89:1] G. G. ii. 391. There is a very curious summary of the various classes of public employments on which the Attic citizen lived in the Aristotelian *Ἀθηναίων Πολιτεία*, § 24. The author estimates the total number of civil servants or pensioners at over 20,000.
- [90:1] This has for the first time been clearly put by Duruy in his *History of Rome*. Our irresponsible and final Houses of Parliament, whose acts may annul any law, are a very dangerous modern analogy.

CHAPTER V.

[91]

THE GREAT HISTORIANS.

§ 39. I now pass on to the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, and their treatment by ancient and modern critics.

It is our peculiar good fortune to have these two wars narrated respectively by the two greatest historians that Greece produced,—Herodotus and Thucydides. Unfortunately, perhaps, after the manner of most historians, they have made wars their chief subject; but this criticism applies less to Herodotus, who in leading up to his great climax has given us so many delightful digressions on foreign lands and their earlier history, that his book is rather a general account of the civilized world in the sixth century, with passages from older history, than a mere chronicle of the great war. Nor does he disdain to tell us piquant anecdotes and unauthorized gossip,—all giving us pictures of his own mind and time, if not an accurate record of older history. Making, therefore, every allowance for the often uncritical, though always honest^[92:1] view he took of men and affairs, there can be no doubt that the very greatness of his subject puts him far above Thucydides, whose mighty genius was unfortunately confined to a tedious and generally uninteresting conflict, consisting of yearly raids, military promenades, very small battles, and only one large and tragic expedition, throughout the whole course of its five-and-twenty years.

Herodotus and Thucydides.

Herodotus superior in subject.

[92]

Still sadder is that this great man, having undertaken to narrate a very small, though a very long, war, so magnifies its importance as to make it out the greatest crisis that ever happened, and therefore excludes from his history almost everything which would be of real interest to the permanent study of Greek life. He passes briefly over the deeply interesting but now quite obscure period of the rise of the Athenian power. A detailed history of the fifty years preceding his war would indeed have been an inestimable boon to posterity. He passes in contemptuous silence over all the artistic development of Athens. The origin of the drama, Æschylus, Susarion, Cratinus; the growth of sculpture, Pheidias, Ictinus, the building of the Parthenon, of the temple of Theseus,—all this is a blank in his narrative. And yet he does not think it inconsistent with his plan to give us a sketch of the famous *fifty years* that elapsed between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars. He proposes to correct the inaccuracies of Hellanicus, his only predecessor in this field, and there can be no doubt that what he has condescended to give us is both accurate and valuable. But so scanty are his details, so frequent his silence on really important public events, that we are fain to turn to any inferior author to fill the gap.

Narrow scope of Thucydides.

His deliberate omissions,

[93]

Of these there are (apart from the poets) two extant, Diodorus and Plutarch. Both these men lived long after the events, and were beholden to literary sources for their information. The whole tone and the arrangement of Diodorus' eleventh book show that he used Ephorus as his chief authority. The citations from Ephorus by other authors make this conclusion unavoidable. The value of Diodorus' account, when it adds to what Thucydides has said, is therefore to be estimated by the value of Ephorus as an independent historian. On this I have already declared my opinion (§ 30), to which I need only add that I fully agree with Busolt when he says that for the early years of the period Ephorus had no other authority than Thucydides of any value. The only new fact that Diodorus preserves for us is the alleged destruction of Mycenæ by the Argives (*circ.* 464 B.C.), at a moment, he infers, when Sparta was in the crisis of the Helot insurrection, and unable to interfere.

supplied by inferior historians.

Diodorus.

Date of the destruction of Mycenæ.

[94]

I have long since explained (in Schliemann's *Mycenæ*) why I discredit the whole story. Holm is the only writer who seems to feel with me the difficulty of supposing such an event to have been passed over with indifference by the patriotic Greek States, whom the Mycenæans and

Silence of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Tiryinthians had joined in the great Persian crisis. And when Holm urges political expediency to account for Sparta's non-interference, he surely forgets that the literary men of Athens were restrained by no such considerations. Thucydides (i. 102) mentions Argos at this moment: is it likely that even he would pass over this territorial aggrandisement of Argos without a syllable of notice? But apart from this mass of reticences, what of Æschylus, the comrade of the Mycenæans on the field of battle, what of Sophocles, what of Euripides, all of whom ought to have celebrated Mycenæ, and who celebrate Argos instead? They seem to have absolutely forgotten Mycenæ! What of the absolute reticence of the remains found by Schliemann, not one of which belongs to the fifth or sixth century B.C., but all to a long anterior period? The whole affair is, therefore, placed two centuries too late, and, for all we know, may not be derived from Ephorus at all, but from some inferior source, or from Diodorus' own combination. Even if Ephorus was the source, I refuse to accept his authority.

[95]

When we turn to Plutarch, whose object was indeed rather artistic and moral than historical, we are in a far better plight. For although his *Lives* of Themistocles and Cimon do not give us much material of a trustworthy kind beyond what we know from Thucydides, this is not the case with the *Life of Pericles*, in which he has collected much valuable information from sources now lost to us, which all the researches of the Germans have not even succeeded in specifying by name. Our whole picture of the splendour of Athens in her greatest moment is derived not so much from the vague phrases of the speeches in Thucydides as from the deeply interesting facts preserved by Plutarch. His brilliant sketch and the narrative of Thucydides have been illustrated, since the days of Curtius and of Grote, by the recovery of a large number of inscriptions, chiefly from the Acropolis at Athens, recording the quotas paid from the tribute of the several allied cities to Athena and to the other gods. These lists, together with several fragments of treaties with the various cities, and the lists of offerings recently found at Delos, have afforded Holm the materials for his fascinating chapters upon Imperial Athens^[96:1].

**Value of Plutarch's
Lives.**

[96]

But even since the appearance of his book (1889) a new and important review of the obscure moments of Athenian growth has been recovered in the work of Aristotle on *The Polity of the Athenians*^[96:2]. He does not indeed concern himself either with the foreign policy or with the artistic grandeur of the city. But as regards her internal development he brings us several new and curious facts. He ascribes the creation of the sovran Demos living at Athens on salaries for public duties, not to Pericles, but to Aristides. The whole democratic reform is in fact completed before the former arrives at power. The political activity of Themistocles is also prolonged for several years later than we had suspected, and it is even at his instigation that Ephialtes attacks the Areopagus. The political *rôle* of Pericles is in fact so reduced, that we almost suspect an *animus* against him in the author, who elsewhere shows his preference for the conservative side in politics. We should indeed rejoice could we confront this Aristotle with Thucydides, and see what truth there is in his departure from our received histories. Plutarch, who uses the work constantly in the *Life* of Solon, evidently disregards it when he comes to treat of Themistocles and Pericles. Had Thucydides been a little fuller, had he given himself the trouble to preserve a few more details, we should be in a better position to face this new historical problem, and estimate the really great period of the history of Athens.

**The newly-found
tract *On the
Constitution of
Athens*.**

[97]

And yet such was his literary genius, such his rhetorical force, that, crabbed and sour as he may have been, he has so impressed his own and his subject's importance upon the learned world as to bring the Peloponnesian war into much greater prominence than the greater events of Greek history. Thus in a well-known selection of fifteen decisive battles from the world's history, the defeat of the Athenians at Syracuse figures as a world event; whereas it only settled the question whether one kind of Greek or another should dominate in Sicily, and perhaps in Greece. The domestic quarrels within the limits of a single nationality are not of this transcendent import. If the Carthaginians had crushed Rome, or the northern hordes of Asia destroyed the civilization of Persia when it was growing under Cyrus, there indeed a great battle might be called a decisive event. But even had the Athenians conquered Syracuse, it is quite certain that their domination of the Greek world would have broken down from within, from the inherent weaknesses in all Greek democracies, which Plato and Aristotle have long ago analyzed and explained.

**Effects of his literary
genius.**

**The Peloponnesian
war of no world-wide
consequence.**

[98]

§ 40. This statement requires some further illustration to the modern reader, who thinks, I suppose rightly, that the surest and most stable of governments is that based upon the free resolve of the whole nation. But the Athenian imperial democracy was no such government. In the first place, there was no such thing as *representation* in their constitution. Those only had votes who could come and give them at the general Assembly, and they did so at once upon the conclusion of the debate^[98:1]. There was no Second Chamber or Higher Council to revise or delay their decisions; no Crown; no High Court of Appeal to settle claims against the State. The body of Athenian citizens formed the Assembly. Sections of this body formed the jury to try cases of violation of the constitution either in act or in the proposal of new laws.

**No representation in
Greek assemblies.**

[99]

The result was that all outlying provinces, even had they obtained votes, were without a voice in the government. But as a matter of fact they had no votes, for the States which became subject to Athens were merely

**No outlying members
save Athenian
citizens settled in**

tributary; and nothing was further from the ideas of the Athenians than to make them members of their Imperial Republic in the sense that a new State is made a member of the present American Republic.

subject towns.

This it was which ruined even the great Roman without any military reverses, and when its domination of the world was unshaken. Owing to the absence of *representation*, the Empire of the Roman Republic was in the hands of the city population, who were perfectly incompetent, even had they been in real earnest, to manage the government of the vast kingdoms their troops had conquered. In both cases the outsiders were governed wholly for the benefit of the city crowd.

Similar defect in the Roman Republic.

The mistakes and the injustices which resulted in the Roman executive were such that any able adventurer could take advantage of the world-wide discontent, and could play off one city faction against the other. It is not conceivable that any other general course of events would have taken place at Athens, had she become the ruler of the Hellenic world. Her Demos regarded itself as a sovran, ruling subjects for its own glory and benefit; there can, therefore, be no doubt that the external pressure of that widespread discontent which was the primary cause of the Peloponnesian war, would have co-operated with politicians within, if there were no enemies without, and that ambitious military chiefs, as at Rome, would have wrested the power from the sovran people either by force or by fraud.

Hence an extended Athenian empire not maintainable.

[100]

Hence I contend that the result of the Peloponnesian war even in its largest crisis had little import in the world's history. That the little raids and battles, the capture of a couple of hundred Spartans, or the defeat of twenty ships should still be studied with minuteness, and produce libraries of modern criticism, is due solely to the power of the historian and the just preeminence of the famous language in which he wrote his book.

§ 41. This is, I think, the most signal instance on record of the falsification of the proper *perspective* of history by individual literary genius. It was a commonplace in old days that Achilles and Agamemnon, Ulysses and Diomedes, all the famous heroes of the Trojan war, would have died in obscurity and passed out of sight but for the voice of the inspired poet. How much truer is it that Phormion and Brasidas, Gylippus and Lamachus would have virtually disappeared from history but for the eloquence of the Attic historian! Pericles would have remained an historic figure, and so does Lysander (who is almost beyond the period), whether any single historian intended it or not. The rest were important in their day and to their city, not beyond these limits. The really great spirits from whom the Athens of that day derives her eternal supremacy, which no Lysander could take away, are, except Pericles, never mentioned in all his work. No one could ever suspect, from this severe and business-like narrative, that the most splendid architects, sculptors, and dramatic poets the world has yet seen were then jostling each other in the streets of Athens.

The glamour of Thucydides.

[101]

It seems thankless to complain of what Thucydides has not done, instead of acknowledging what he undertook to do and has performed with extraordinary ability. Never was the history of a long war written with more power, judgment, and, I was going to say, impartiality. But I honestly believe that his book would have been far inferior had it indeed been coldly impartial; and I think Grote has shown, what I have supplemented in my *Greek Literature*, that strong personal feelings underlie the apparent calmness of his decisions^[101:1].

His calmness assumed.

§ 42. This estimate of Thucydides is, however, one which will make its way but slowly in the English classical world,—by which I mean that large and important body who teach classics to schoolboys and college students,—and the schoolmaster interest so completely commands our literary journals that any opinion which runs counter to scholastic traditions is sure to be set down there also as the outcome of rashness or of ignorance. For Thucydides, in addition to his just influence as a great writer, has enlisted in his favour all those to whom Greek grammar with its intricacies is the most divine of all pursuits.

He is backed by the scholastic interest,

If his speakers, as one of them tells us, strove hard to conceal what they had to say under new and startling forms, in order to outrun in smartness the cleverness of their audience, and play a sort of intellectual hide-and-seek with their critics, so Thucydides himself plays hide-and-seek with the grammarians, both ancient and modern. To make out exactly what he means his speakers to say, and to render it with every shade of nicety into modern English, is a task to which many acute men have devoted years, and upon its success very considerable reputations depend. It is but natural that this school, or these schoolmen, should become so enamoured of his intricacies as to love them with a love passing the love of women, and consequently to resent bitterly any word of depreciation which affects the importance of their idol.

on account of his grammatical difficulties.

[102]

Enthusiastic study of any subject is always praiseworthy; the insistence upon minute accuracy, and contempt for slovenliness in writing, are always to be admired and encouraged, for it is to these qualities in the

He remains the special property of critical scholars.

minute scholars that we owe much of our precision in thinking, and still more the sense of clearness and correctness in style. To this class, therefore, let Thucydides remain forever the foremost of books; but let them not bully us into the belief that because they have studied his

grammar more carefully than any other, they are therefore to decide that he is absolutely faultless as a narrator, and absolutely trustworthy as a historian.

I have already dealt with this latter point^[103:1], what I am here concerned with is the exaggerated place given in our modern histories to the petty feuds and border-raids of his often tedious chronicle,—tedious only because the events he describes are completely trivial. Herodotus, on the other hand, is apt to be underrated in these modern days. The field he covers is so wide, and the chances of error in observation so great, that it is impossible he should not often be found wrong. But what would our notions of earlier Greece or Asia Minor be without his marvellous prose epic?

**Herodotus
underrated in
comparison.**

[103]

The reader will pardon me for expressing my satisfaction, that this comparative estimate of the two great historians which I published some twenty years ago, and which is still regarded by many of my English critics as a mere paradox, has now become a widely and solidly defined belief among the best German critics. Of course they began by exaggerating the new view. Müller-Strübing especially, as has been freely exposed by his opponents, has advanced from criticism to censure, from censure to contempt of Thucydides. This is of course silly pedantry. Thucydides was a very great historian, and whoever cannot recognize it, shows that he has no proper appreciation for this kind of genius. But let the reader consult the passages in which the newest, and perhaps the best, of Greek histories, Holm's, gives a summary of the researches on the contrasted masters of historiography, and he will see that the result is much the same as that which I have long advocated. Holm argues (ii. pp. 346 *sq.*) that Herodotus has been underrated; he argues (*ibid.* pp. 369 *sq.*) that Thucydides has been overrated. Let me call particular attention to the details of the latter estimate, as one to which I thoroughly subscribe. But let no one charge me with despising the great Athenian; I believe I appreciate his greatness far better than do his random panegyrists.

**The critics of
Thucydides.**

[104]

§ 43. Let us pass by anticipation to another remarkable case of distorted perspective, likewise due to transcendent literary ability.

The next great author who has fascinated the world by the grace and vividness of his style is the Athenian Xenophon. In his famous *Anabasis*, or Expedition of the Ten Thousand to assist the insurgent Cyrus, he has told us the story of what must have happened (on a smaller scale) many times before, of Greek mercenaries being induced by large pay to serve in the quarrels of remote Asiatic sovrans, and finding their patron assassinated or defeated. They had then their choice of taking service under his rival (with the chance of being massacred), or of cutting their way out of the country to some Hellenic colony. It seems to have been mainly due to the ability and eloquence of Xenophon that the present very large and formidable body of mercenaries chose and carried out the latter course. His narrative of this Retreat, in which he claims to have played the leading part, is one of the most delightful chapters of Greek history.

**The Anabasis of
Xenophon.**

But in all the modern accounts, without exception, both the events and the narrator have assumed what seem to me gigantic proportions. It is not the least true that the Greeks were dependent upon this source for their knowledge of the weakness of the Persian Empire. The campaigns of Agesilaus in Asia Minor, which were almost synchronous, and not by any means suggested (so far as we know) by the expedition, showed the same facts clearly enough. The military weakness of the Empire was already a commonplace. Its financial power, in the face of the poor and divided Greek States, was the real difficulty in the way of a Hellenic conquest.

**The weakness of
Persia long
recognized.**

[105]

The manner in which the Ten Thousand were received, upon their return to Greek lands, shows all this plainly enough. Instead of being hailed as pioneers of a new conquest, as heroes who had done what nobody dreamed of doing before, they were merely regarded as a very large and therefore very dangerous body of turbulent marauders, who had acquired by the force of adversity, and who might make a dangerous attack on any civilized city, unless a little time were gained, during which their strength and harmony would give way to defections, and quarrels among themselves. Their ill-gotten wealth would soon be squandered, and they must then be induced to seek new service separately, and not in such a mass as to intimidate their employers.

**Reception of the Ten
Thousand on their
return.**

This is the rational account of what historians often represent as the shabby, or even infamous, conduct of the Lacedæmonians, then the leading power in Greece. The policy they adopted was as prudent as it was successful, and the Ten Thousand melted away as quickly as they were gathered; but we can hardly hope that many of them retired into so innocent and cultivated a leisure as Xenophon did in after years.

The army dissipated.

[106]

§ 44. So much for the expedition; now a word or two concerning this famous Xenophon. If his expedition had indeed made the figure in the contemporary world that it does in his *Anabasis* and in modern histories, who can doubt that he would have been recognized as one of the chief military leaders of the age; and, as his services were in the market, that he would have been at once employed, either as a general or as a minister of war, in the

**Xenophon's strategy.
His real strategy was
literary.**

memorable campaigns which occupied the Greeks after his return? Why did he never command an army again^[106:1]? Why was he never tried as a strategist against Epaminondas, the rising military genius of the age? The simple fact is that he has told us the whole story of his Retreat from his own point of view; he has not failed to put himself into the most favourable light; and it is more than probable that the accounts given by the other mercenaries did not place him in so preeminent a position. The *Anabasis* is a most artistic and graceful self-panegyric of the author, disguised under an apparently candid and simple narrative of plain facts, perhaps even brought out under a false name,—Themistogenes of Syracuse,—to help the illusion; nor was it composed at the spur of the moment, and when there were many with fresh memories ready to contradict him, but after the interest in the affair had long blown over, and his companions and rivals were scattered or dead.

[107]

It is of course an excellent text for Grote to develop into his favourite historical sermon, that the broad literary and philosophical culture of the Athenian democracy fitted any man to take up suddenly any important duties, even so special as the management of a campaign. But however true or false this may be, it is certain that Xenophon's contemporaries did not accept him as a military genius, and that he spent his after years of soldiering in attendance upon a second-rate Spartan general as a volunteer and a literary panegyrist.

A special favourite of Grote.

[108]

§ 45. For in me the suspicion that Xenophon may have been guilty of strong self-partiality in the *Anabasis* was first awakened by the reflection that his later works show the strongest partiality for his patron, and the most niggardly estimate of the real master of them all, the Theban Epaminondas. If instead of spending his talents in glorifying the Spartan king—a respectable and no doubt able but ordinary personage, he had undertaken with his good special knowledge to give us a true account of the military performances of Epaminondas, then indeed he would have earned no ordinary share of gratitude from all students of the world's greatness. He was in the rare position of being a contemporary, a specialist, standing before the greatest man of the age, and capable of both understanding his work and explaining it to us with literary perfection; yet his *Hellenica* is generally regarded as a work tending to diminish the achievements of the Theban hero^[108:1].

Xenophon on Agesilaus and Epaminondas.

Injustice of the Hellenica.

Happily we have here means to correct him, and to redress the balance which he has not held with justice. Shall we believe that when he had no one to contradict him, and his own merits to discuss, he is likely to have been more strictly impartial?

[109]

Xenophon will never cease to be a popular figure, and most deservedly; for he added to the full education of an Athenian citizen in general intelligence, in politics, and in art, the special training given by the conversations of Socrates, and the tincture of occasional abstract thinking. But this was only a part of his education. He learned knowledge of the world and of war by travel and exciting campaigns, and completed his admirable and various training by a close intimacy with the best and most aristocratic Spartan life, together with that devotion to field-sports which is so far more gentlemanly and improving than training for athletics. In the whole range of Greek literature he appears the most cultivated of authors, in his external life he combines everything which we desire in the modern gentleman, though his superficiality of judgment and lesser gifts place him far below Thucydides, or even Polybius.

Yet Xenophon is deservedly popular.

FOOTNOTES:

[92:1] Mr. Sayce will not admit even this, and indeed the habit of appropriating previous work, which Greek literary honesty seems to have allowed, must naturally offend an original inquirer like Mr. Sayce, whose ideas are so often pilfered without acknowledgment. But Greek historians seldom name their authority unless they are about to differ from it, and criticise or censure it. It is for this reason that I distrust the usual enumeration of Herodotus' travels (e.g. Busolt, G. G. ii. 90 *sq.*), which assumes that whatever lands he describes he must himself have seen. I feel sure that he borrowed a great deal, even a great many bare facts, from other books. But I call attention with pleasure to the suggestion of Holm (ii. 330), who shows that with the extended trade relations of Periclean Athens, information upon Pontus, Persia, and Egypt was of great practical value, and that the story of the ten talents reward given him by the Athenians may point to a real reward for his valuable reports, which were most important to their 'Foreign Office.' Hence the great and immediate popularity of his work. Holm feels as I do, that Herodotus has been underrated, in comparison with Thucydides (G. G. ii. 346).

[96:1] ii. 11, 12, 16-20.

[96:2] I call it the work of Aristotle, in spite of the many critical doubts expressed in England, for I cannot ignore the persistent citations of Plutarch and of many good Greek grammarians and antiquarians, who express no word of doubt, nor do the peculiarities of style seem to me to prove anything more than carelessness in revision, or perhaps the work of a pupil under the master's direction. Cf. § 53.

[98:1] Cicero specially mentions this as a grave defect in Greek democracies, and compares it with the Roman precaution of making the voting by tribes or centuries a formal act at a

distinct time. Here is this important and little-known passage (*pro Flacco*, cap. vii.): 'Nullam enim illi nostri sapientissimi et sanctissimi viri vim concionis esse voluerunt; quae scisceret plebes, aut quae populus juberet, summota concione, distributis partibus, tributim et centuriatim descriptis ordinibus, classibus, aetatibus, auditis auctoribus, re multos dies promulgata et cognita, juberi veterisque voluerunt. *Graecorum autem totae republicae sedentis concionis temeritate administrantur.*' The Roman safeguards were, however, quite insufficient, as the course of history proved. The Athenians also had some safeguards, especially in preparing resolutions for the assembly by a previous council; but these too were almost useless.

[101:1] Cf. my *Hist. Gk. Lit.* ii. 1, chap. 5.

[103:1] Above, § 28.

[106:1] Some of the historians note naïvely enough, that the performance of Xenophon is very wonderful, seeing he had never learned the art of war, or commanded in any previous campaign. Wonderful indeed, but was it a real fact? Holm, who seems to me really awake to the common-sense difficulties which seldom strike learned men, feels this, but accounts for it (iii. 182) in a very surprising way. I may premise that Xenophon is perhaps his favourite authority, whom he defends against all attacks with great spirit. His answer to the question why Xenophon never again commanded an army, is this: He could have, but he would not, because he was exiled from his native city, and despised the career of a mercenary chief! In other words a very ambitious young man, who had deliberately chosen the profession of foreign adventure, when he had succeeded and shown his transcendent powers, stops short because he despises that profession. Is not this most improbable? Had Xenophon brought home with him a really first-rate reputation, he would not have been required to fight the battles of his native city as a mercenary leader: he would very soon have recovered himself in popularity, and have become a leading Athenian. It was not therefore because he could and would not, but because he would and could not, that he retired into obscurity. There is no reason to think he had excited any great or lasting odium at Athens. We hardly know for certain why he was banished.

[108:1] This is stoutly denied by Holm, G. G. iii. 15, and 181 *sq.*, who cites Breitenbach's Edition and Stern's researches in support of his opinion. He regards Xenophon as perfectly impartial to others throughout his *Hellenica*. Whether he was so to himself in the *Anabasis* is of course another question, which Holm has not touched. It may be perfectly true, as Holm insists, that not a single false statement has ever been proved against the author of the *Hellenica*, but does this demonstrate that he was impartial? It is in the selection, in the suppression, in the marshalling of his facts; it is in his *perspective* that disguised partiality seems to have been shown.

CHAPTER VI.

[110]

POLITICAL THEORIES AND EXPERIMENTS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

§ 46. What may most properly make the modern historian pause and revise his judgment of the Athenian democracy, is the evident dislike which the most thoughtful classes, represented by these great historians, and by the professed pupils of Socrates, displayed to this form of society^[110:1]. We are now so accustomed to histories written by modern Radicals, or by men who do not think out their politics, that we may perhaps be put off with the plea that the democracy which these authors and thinkers disliked and derided, and which some of them tried to overthrow, was a debased form of what had been established under Pericles, and that it was the accidental decay or the accidental abuses of democracy which disgusted them, whereas its genuine greatness had been clearly manifested by the great century of progress which had now come sadly to a close.

Literary verdict of the Greeks against democracy.

[111]

Ernst Curtius, a German *savant* of the highest type, has so little thought out this subject that on one page we find him saying that the voluntary submission of the people to a single man, Pericles, was a proof of the high condition of their State; whereas on another he says their voluntary submission to a single man, Cleon, is a proof of its degeneracy. But we can hardly expect any real appreciation of the working of a democracy from a German professor brought up in the last generation. Indeed his inconsistencies, and his hypotheses of decay and regeneration in the Athenian Demos at various moments, are ably dissected by Holm in a valuable appendix to his chapter on Athens in 360 B.C.^[111:1] But our dealing is rather with Grote, who knew perfectly the conditions of the problem. He argues that Cleon, on the whole, and without military ability, tried to carry out the policy of Pericles, and that the policy of Pericles was a sound and far-seeing one, which would have preserved Athens through all her dangers, had she steadily adhered to it.

Vacillation of modern critics.

Grote's estimate of Pericles

§ 47. I have already discussed at length the narrow basis of the Athenian imperial democracy, and expressed my judgment that even great successes would soon have brought about its fall.

But I join issue with Grote, and side with Plato, in thinking that the policy of Pericles, even within the conditions imposed upon him by the

compared with Plato's.

circumstances just mentioned, was so dangerous and difficult that no cautious and provident thinker could have called it secure. Plato goes so far as to say that Pericles had made the Athenians lazy, frivolous, and sensual. Without actually indorsing this, we are warranted by the course of history to say that the hope of holding a supremacy by merely keeping up with all energy and outlay a naval superiority already existing and acknowledged, was truly chimerical. Pericles thought that by making the city impregnable—which was then, against the existing means of attack, quite feasible—and by keeping the sea open, he could amply support his city population and make them perfectly independent even of the territory of Attica. While they could derive money and food from their subjects and their commerce, they might gather in the rural population from the fields, and laugh at the enemy from their walls until his means were exhausted, or he was compelled to retreat for the purpose of protecting his own coasts against a hostile fleet.

The war policy of Pericles.

[112]

Thucydides tells us in affecting language how this experiment actually turned out,—what was the misery of the country people crowded into the city without proper houses or furniture, sleeping in sheds and nooks of streets; what was the rage of the farmers when they saw their homesteads go up in flames, and the labour of years devastated with ruthless completeness. Pericles had not even reckoned with the immediate effects of his singular policy. Still less had he thought of the sanitary consequences of overcrowding his city, which must in any case have produced fatal sickness, and therefore deep indignation among those who suffered from its visitation, even though no one could have anticipated the frightful intensity of the plague which ensued.

His miscalculations.

[113]

But a far larger and more philosophical objection may be based upon the consideration that no city population, trusting mainly to money for a supply of soldiers and sailors, is likely to hold its own permanently against an agricultural population fighting, not for pay, but for the defence of its liberties, and with the spirit of personal patriotism. If you abolish the yeoman of any country, and trust merely to the artisan, you destroy the backbone of your fighting power; and no outlay will secure your victory if a yeoman soldiery is brought into the field against you and well handled. This was perfectly felt in Thucydides' day; for he makes the Spartan king, when invading Attica, specially comment on the fact that the Athenian power was acquired by money rather than native [\[113:1\]](#); and on this he bases his anticipation that the army of Peloponnesian farmers will prevail. It would surely have been a safer and a better policy to extend the area of Athenian yeomen, and secure a supply of hardy and devoted soldiers as the basis of a lasting military and naval power.

He depended on a city population against an army of yeomen.

§ 48. It will be urged, and it was urged in those days, that mercenary forces could be kept at sea more permanently than a body of farmers, who must go home frequently to look after their subsistence and work their fields. This is quite true; but mercenaries without a citizen force to keep them in order were always a failure, they became turbulent and unmanageable, and left their pay-master in the lurch when any new chance of immediate gain turned up. Besides, as the event proved in the next century, when Philip of Macedon rose to power, a mercenary force under a monarch will always defeat mercenaries under leaders directed by the discussion, the hesitation, the vacillation of a debating assembly [\[114:1\]](#).

Advantages of mercenaries against citizen troops.

[114]

The only excuse, therefore, for Pericles' policy was the impossibility of doing anything else with the materials he had at his disposal; and his materials were thus crippled because the Athenian democracy as a ruling power had not the confidence of the subject States. In fact, so long as these were *subjects*, liable to oppression in any moment of panic or of passion, no solidarity, no common feeling of patriotism, no real union could possibly be attained. It has been rather the fashion, since Grote's influence has prevailed, to attribute the breakdown of all attempts at an empire among free Greeks to the incurable jealousy and the love of separatism in their small States. I fancy that at no period in the world's history could any small communities have easily been persuaded to submit to this kind of union, which was built on far too narrow a foundation, and was far too distinctly worked for the almost exclusive benefit of the leading city.

The smaller States necessarily separatists.

[115]

It is necessary to insist upon these things,—the want of representation in a common assembly, the want of scope for talent in the outlying States, the difficulty of redress against the dominant people if they transgressed their State-treaties,—especially for a practical writer, who holds that historical analogies are most serviceable, and help to explain both ancient and modern history. But we must see clearly that the analogies are genuine, and that we are not arguing from an irrelevant antecedent or to an irrelevant consequent.

Yet the necessity of combination was so great, and so keenly felt during the tyrannical ascendancy of Sparta at the opening of the next century, that several attempts were made to obtain the advantages, while avoiding the evils, of the old Athenian supremacy. The first, which was made immediately after the battle of Cnidus (394 B.C.) and which seems to have been originated by Thebes, is passed over in silence by all our literary authorities, and was only discovered upon the evidence of coins. We know that Rhodes, Cnidus, Naxos, Samos, Ephesus, belonged to it, and that they adopted for their common coinage an old Theban emblem—Heracles throttling the snakes. The existence of this confederation seems to justify the hopes of Epaminondas to make his city a naval power, and thus protects the great Theban from a charge of political vanity, often repeated [\[116:1\]](#).

Attempt at federation

[116]

The second was the well-known Athenian Confederacy of 377 B.C. of which, however, the details are only preserved in an important inscription (No. 81 in Mr. Hicks' collection) which gives us most interesting information. It included Byzantium, Lesbos, Chios, Rhodes, Eubœa, and also Thebes. Western tribes and islands brought up the members to seventy in number. But its declared object was mainly to protect these members against Spartan tyranny, and it acknowledged the Persian supremacy in Asia Minor. The safeguards against Athenian tyranny, which were far more important, are a clause forbidding the acquisitions of *cleruchies*, and the appointment of a synod of the allies to sit at Athens, in which Athens was not represented. Decrees proposed either in the Athenian assembly or in this synod (*synedrion*) must be sanctioned by the other body before becoming law^[116:2].

The second Athenian Confederacy; its details,

As might be expected, all these Leagues failed. The precautions against the tyranny of the leading States only hampered the unity and promptness of action of the League, and did not allay jealousy in the smaller, or ambition in the greater, members. Yet these abortive attempts are important to the historian, as showing the intermediate stages in the history of Confederations between the old Attic Empire and the Achæan League.

its defects.

§ 49. The century at which we have now arrived in our survey—the fourth before Christ—was eminently the age of political theories devised by philosophers in their studies; and they give us the conclusions to which able thinkers had come, after the varying conflicts which had tested the capacities of all the existing States to attain peace with plenty at home, or power abroad. The Athenian supremacy had broken down; the Spartan, a still more complete *hegemony*, as the Greeks called it, had gone to pieces, not so much by the shock of the Theban military power, as by its own inherent defects. Epaminondas has passed across the political sky, a splendid meteor, but leaving only a brief track of brilliancy which faded into night.

[117]

Political theories in the fourth century.

And in every generation, if the military efficiency of Persia grew weaker, her financial supremacy became more and more apparent. In the face of all these brilliant essays and signal failures, in the face of the acknowledged intellectual supremacy of the Greeks, coupled with their continued exhibitions of political impotence in foreign policy, it was fully to be expected that Greek thinkers should discuss the causes of these contrasts, and endeavour to ascertain the laws of public happiness and the conditions of public strength. And so there were a series of essays, of which several remain, on the Greek State and its proper internal regulation, and a series of solutions for the practical difficulties of the day, especially the external dangers to which the Hellenic world was exposed. These documents form the main body of the splendid prose Literature of the Attic Restoration, as I have elsewhere called it^[118:1], and of the period which closed with the actual solution of the difficulties in foreign politics by the famous Philip of Macedon^[118:2].

Greece and Persia.

Theoretical politics.

[118]

The historian of Greece must evidently take into account these speculations, though they be not strictly history; but the facts can hardly be understood and appreciated without the inestimable comments of the greatest thinkers and writers whom the country produced.

Inestimable even to the practical historian.

Foremost among these in literary perfection is Plato, whose speculations on the proper conditions—the internal conditions only—of a *Polity* in the Hellenic sense will ever remain a monument of genius, though his ideal could hardly lead, or be intended to lead, to practical results. Then we have Xenophon, who in his political romance on the *Education of Cyrus* stands half-way between the mere philosopher and the practical man of the world. The most instructive of all is Aristotle, who, though he lived to see the old order pass away, and a new departure in the history of the race, nevertheless confined himself to the traditional problems, and composed a special book—his *Politics*—on the virtues and vices of the ordinary Greek polity. The practical side, the necessary steps to reform and strengthen the leading States of Greece, especially in their external policy, and in the face of powerful and dangerous neighbours, we find discussed in the pamphlets of Isocrates and the public speeches of Demosthenes. It is on the proper place of these documents, and the weight assigned to them in modern histories, that I invite the reader's attention.

Plato.

Xenophon.

Aristotle.

[119]

§ 50. I have already mentioned the remarkable fact that though, at every period of this history, Spartan manners and Spartan laws commanded the respect and the admiration of all Greece, though the Spartan constitution had proved stable when all else was in constant flux and change, still no practical attempt was ever made in older Greek history to imitate this famous constitution. It shows, no doubt, in the old Greek legislators, a far keener sense of what was practical or possible than, instead of foisting upon every new or newly emancipated State the ordinances which had succeeded elsewhere as a legitimate, slow, and historic growth, they rather sought to adapt their reforms to the conditions of each State as they found it. They fully appreciated the difference between the normal and the exceptional in legislation.

Sparta ever admired but never imitated.

The politicians of modern Europe, who are repeating gaily, and without any sense of its

absurdity, the experiment of handing over the British parliamentary system to half-civilized and hardly emancipated populations, and who cry injustice and shame upon those who decline to follow their advice—these unhistorical and illogical statesmen might well take lessons from the sobriety of Greek politicians, if their own common-sense fails to tell them that the forest-tree of centuries cannot be transplanted; nay, even the sapling will not thrive in ungrateful soil.

Practical legislation wiser in Greece than in modern Europe.

[120]

But although the real rulers of men in Greece saw all this clearly, it was not so with the theorists, nor indeed were they bound to observe practical limitations in framing the highest ideal to which man could attain. Hence we see in almost all the theorists a strong tendency to make Spartan institutions the proper type of a perfect State. Plato will not even consider the duties of an imperial or dominating State, he rather regards large territory and vast population as an insuperable obstacle to good government. But as a philosopher deeply interested in the real culture of the mind, perhaps as a theorist deeply impressed with the haphazard character of the traditional education, he felt that to intrust an uneducated mob with the control of public affairs was either to hand over the State to unscrupulous leaders, who would gain the favour of the crowd by false and unworthy means, or to run the chance of having the most important matters settled by the caprice of a many-headed and therefore wholly irresponsible tyrant.

Sparta a model for the theorists.

A small State preferred.

Every theorist that followed Plato seems to have felt the same difficulties, and therefore he and they adopted in the main the Spartan solution,—first, in limiting the number and condition of those to whom they would intrust power; secondly, in interfering from the beginning, more or less, in the education and training of the individual citizen. They differed as to the amount of control to be exercised,—Plato and the Stoic Zeno were the most trenchant, and thought least of the value of individual character;—they differed as to the particular form of the actual government; whether a small council of philosophic elders, or some limited assembly of responsible and experienced citizens, or, still better, one ideal man, the natural king among men, should direct the whole course of the State.

Plato's successors.

Their general agreement,

[121]

But on the other two points they were firm. First, universal suffrage had been in their opinion proved a downright failure. And let the reader remember that this universal suffrage only meant the voting of free citizens,—slaves never came within their political horizon,—still more, that the free citizens of many Greek democracies, notably of the Athenian, were more highly educated than any Parliament in our own day [121:1].

(1) especially on suffrage,

We now have as an additional document on the same side, the newly discovered *Polity of the Athenians* [121:2], which, whether it be really Aristotle's work or not, certainly was quoted as such freely by Plutarch, and represents the opinions of the early Peripatetic school. Nothing is stranger in the book than the depreciation of Pericles, as the founder of the extreme democracy of Athens, and the praise of Thucydides (son of Melesias), Nicias, and Theramenes, as the worthiest and best of the later politicians,—Theramenes especially, whose shiftiness is explained as the opposition of a wise and temperate man to all extremes, while he was content to live under any moderate government. [122:1]

[122]

I have already pointed out what important differences in the notions of democracy—the absence of all idea of representation, of all delay or control by a second legislative body, of the veto of a constitutional sovran—make this strong and consistent verdict not applicable by analogy to modern republics. Not that I reject Hellenic opinion as now of no value—far from it; but if we argue from analogy, we are bound to show where the analogy fits, and where it fails,—above all to acknowledge the latter cases honestly. For we are not advocates pleading a cause, but inquirers seeking the truth from the successes and the sufferings of older men of like passions with ourselves.

even though their suffrage was necessarily restricted.

§ 51. Secondly, the education of the citizens should not be left to the sense of responsibility in parents, or to the private enterprise of professional teachers, but should be both organized and controlled by the State [123:1]. So firmly was this principle engrained into Greek political thinkers that Polybius, who came at the close of all their rich experience, and whose opinion is in many respects more valuable than any previous one, expresses his astonishment how the Romans, a thoroughly practical and sensible people, and moreover eminently successful, could venture to leave out of all public account the question of education, and allow it to be solved by each parent as he thought fit. He pointed out this as the most profound existing contrast to the notions of Greek thinkers [123:2].

(2) Education to be a State affair.

Polybius' astonishment at the Roman disregard of it.

[123]

We know very well how the Roman aristocracy in their best days solved the matter; but we must deeply regret that there are no statistics, or even information, how the poorer classes at Rome fared in comparison with the Greeks. National education in Greece was certainly on a far higher level; but here again we have an old civilization to compare with a new one, and must beware of rash inferences. It is,

The practical result in Rome.

[124]

for example, of great importance to note that the Greek State was essentially a city with its suburbs, where the children lived so near each other that day-schools could be attended by all. In a larger State, which implies a population scattered through the country, much more must be intrusted to parents, since day-schools are necessarily inadequate^[124:1]. This is but one of the differences to be weighed in making the comparison. To state them all would lead us beyond reasonable limits.

Still, I take the verdict of the philosophers as well worth considering,—and, indeed, there is no question which now agitates the minds of enlightened democrats more deeply than this: How can we expect uneducated masses of people to direct the course of public affairs with safety and with wisdom? It is certain that even in the small, easily manageable, and highly cultivated republics of the Greeks, men were not educated enough to regard the public weal as paramount, to set it above their narrow interests or to bridle their passions. Is it likely, then, that Education will ever do this for the State? Are we following an *ignis fatuus* in setting it up as the panacea for the defects of our communities?

Can a real democracy ever be sufficiently educated?

§ 52. To these grave doubts there is an obvious but not, I think, a real rejoinder, when we urge that the position of the Christian religion in modern education makes the latter a moral force for good far superior to any devices of legislators.

Christianity gives us a new force.

[125]

While admitting unreservedly the vast progress we have attained by having the Christian religion an integral part of all reasonable education, we must urge on the other side that to most people, and at all times, religion is only a very occasional guide of action, and that what we have attained with all our preaching and teaching is rather an acquiescence in its excellence than a practical submission to its directions. So far as this mere acquiescence in moral sanctions is to be considered, all Greek legislators took care to inculcate the teaching and the observance of a State religion, with moral sanctions, and with rewards and punishments. They knew as well as we do that a public without a creed is a public without a conscience, and that scepticism, however consistent with individual sobriety and goodness, has never yet been found to serve as a general substitute for positive beliefs.

Formal religion always demanded by the Greeks.

But when we come to the case of superior individuals, to whom religion is a living and acting force, then we have on the Greek side those splendid thinkers, whose lives were as pure a model as their speculations were a lesson, to the world. These men certainly did not require a higher faith to make them good citizens, and were a 'law unto themselves, showing forth the work of law written in their hearts,' with a good conscience. The analogy, then, between the old Greek States and ours as regards education may be closer than is usually assumed by those who have before them the contrast of religions.

Real religion the property of exceptional persons.

[126]

I will mention a very different point on which all the ancient educators were agreed, and which seems quite strange to modern notions,—I mean the capital importance of music, on account of its direct effect upon morals. They all knew that the Spartan pipes had much the same effect as the Highland pipes have now upon the soldiers who feel them to be their national expression. Hence all music might be regarded as either wholesome or unwholesome stimulant, wholesome or unwholesome soothing, to the moral nature; and not only does the sober Aristotle discuss with great seriousness and in great detail the question of this influence, but he agrees with Plato in regarding the State as bound to interfere and prevent those strains, 'softly sweet in Lydian measure,' which delighted, indeed, and beguiled the sense, but disturbed and endangered the morals of men.

Greek views on music

On this fascinating but difficult subject I have already said my say in the last chapter of my *Social Life in Greece*^[126:1], and I will only repeat that if the Greeks put too much stress on this side of education as affecting character, the moderns have certainly erred in the opposite directions, and are quite wrong in regarding music as an accomplishment purely æsthetic, as having nothing to say to the practical side of our nature,—our sensual passions and our moral principles.

discussed in my Rambles and Studies in Greece.

[127]

§ 53. It remains for us to note the chief variations between the positions of the various theorists on the ideal State. Xenophon tells us his views under the parable of the ideal education and government of a perfect king. But as he did not conceive such a personage possible in the Hellenic world, he chooses the great Cyrus of Persia,—a giant figure remote from the Greeks of his day, and looming through the mists of legend^[127:1]. But he makes it quite plain that he considers the monarchy of the right man by far the most perfect form of government, and his tract on the Spartan State shows how he hated democracy, and favoured those States which reserved all power for the qualified few.

Xenophon's ideal.

Nor is Aristotle at variance with Xenophon, as both his *Ethics* and *Politics* agree in conviction that there were single men superior to average society, and intended by Nature, like superior races, to rule over inferior men. It starts at once to our recollection that Aristotle had before his mind that wonderful pupil who transformed the Eastern world, and opened a new era in the world's politics. But no. The whole of Aristotle's *Politics* looks

Aristotle's.

Aristotle's Politics ignore Alexander.

[128]

backward and inward at the old Greek State, small, and standing by the side of others of like dimensions, differing as despotisms, aristocracies, republics will differ, but not pretending to carry out a large foreign policy or to dominate the world.

The recently discovered treatise on the History of the Athenian Constitution does not give us any further light as to the foreign policy which Aristotle thought best for a Greek State. Many critics are, moreover, inclined to deny the genuineness of the work, and a sharp controversy is now proceeding, in which, strange to say, the Germans are for the most part ready to accept the work as Aristotle's, while the English are mostly for its rejection. Against it has been urged (1) its general style, which in its easy straightforwardness does not remind the reader of the Aristotle we know; (2) the particular occurrence of a number of words and phrases not elsewhere extant in the very large vocabulary of his works; (3) certain inconsistencies not only with the *Politics*, but with Xenophon, and indeed, with the generally accepted facts of earlier Greek history. Thus while the political activity of Themistocles is prolonged, and that of Aristides is exalted beyond the other extant estimates of these men, that of Pericles is lessened into second-rate proportions. The praise of Theramenes as a moderate politician, as a conservative in a very radical moment, affords no difficulty, for it is not foreign to what we know of Aristotle's views. These, however, are the main objections urged by the English critics who have flooded the literary papers with their emendations. On the other hand, great German scholars,—Gomperz, Wilamowitz von Möllendorf, Kaibel, and others,—have stoutly maintained that there are no adequate reasons for doubting the unanimous testimony of later antiquity, proved as it is by many citations in Plutarch, many more in the Greek grammarians and lexicographers. They add, that we know little or nothing of Aristotle's popular style, and that his lost dialogues have been praised for their easy flow. I do not feel prepared, as yet, to offer an opinion for or against the treatise—*adhuc sub judice lis est*.

**Evidence of the new
Politeia.**

[129]

But in any case the monarchy of Alexander is quite foreign to anything contemplated in the theories or in the reflections of Aristotle. The Greek theorist, even such as he was, could not adjust this new and mighty phenomenon to the laws of Greek human nature. I shall presently show how other great men of that day manifested the same purblindness; but I note it here specially in the case of Aristotle's *Politics*, because it has not been brought out with sufficient emphasis by modern historians. The one man who made Plato and Aristotle the subjects of exhaustive studies, George Grote, did not live to complete his account of Aristotle's theories on the State, and relegated his masterly account of Plato and Xenophon into a separate book, long difficult to procure, and more so to master^[130:1].

**Alexander was to all
the theorists an
incommensurable
quantity.**

[130]

All these theorists, though in close contact with politicians, were themselves outside the sphere of practical affairs, whether from choice or compulsion. As they looked upon the changing phases of society which make up that complicated and various whole called Greek history, they were led to one general conclusion. No State, however perfectly framed, however accurately balanced, was intended by Nature to last for ever. Polities, like individuals, had their youth, development, and decay, and would in the lapse of time give way to newer growths. In this we find one of the most curious contrasts between the buoyant, hopeful Greek and the weary, saddened modern. The former had no hope of the permanent and indefinite improvement of the human race; the latter adopts it almost as an historical axiom. Each modern State hopes to escape the errors and misfortunes which have ruined its predecessors, and makes its preparations for a long futurity. The Greeks were fuller in their experience or fainter in their hope; they would have regarded our expectations as chimerical, and our anticipations as contradicted by all the past records of human affairs.

**Mortality of even
perfect constitutions.**

**Contrast of Greek
and modern
anticipations.**

FOOTNOTES:

[110:1] The tract *de Repub. Athen.* handed down to us among Xenophon's works, is now, by general agreement, assigned to some author who lived earlier, and wrote it before the close of the Peloponnesian war. It does not, therefore, express the individual opinion of Xenophon, though it is an attack upon the Athenian democracy by a determined and bitter aristocrat. Upon the details, cf. my *Gk. Lit.* ii. p. 47.

[111:1] G. G. iii. pp. 221 *sq.*

[113:1] ὠνητή μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκεῖος.

[114:1] Cf. on this point Polybius, xi. 13, whom I have quoted in my *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 416.

[116:1] Cf. the excellent summary in Holm iii. 54-7.

[116:2] Cf. Holm iii. 96 *sqq.*

[118:1] That is, the Restoration of its legitimate democracy. Cf. my *History of Greek Literature*, part ii. cap. v.

[118:2] Roughly speaking, 400-340 B.C.

[121:1] This Professor Freeman has admirably shown in his *History of Federal Governments*; and

it is generally admitted by all competent scholars.

- [121:2] It is perhaps worth calling attention to the fact that the tract on Athens in the Xenophontic collection has the same title as the newly-discovered treatise, so that some distinction is necessary in citing them. For the present the novelty of the Aristotelian book has cast the older document into oblivion.
- [122:1] Cf. *Ἀθ. Πολ.* c. 28. Holm (ii. p. 583) controverts my use of Plutarch's quotation from this chapter of Aristotle, and thinks that I had mistranslated the term *βέλτιστος*. The full text now shows that Holm was mistaken and I was right.
- [123:1] It is well to add, lest the reader might be misled by a false analogy, that this supervision applied to the appointment of teachers, and the regulation of teaching and of school discipline. The Greeks would have despised any system such as ours, which limits the State control to examinations, and which tests efficiency by success in them. The modern notion of disregarding the moral and social conditions under which the young are brought up, provided they can answer at a high-class examination, would have struck them as wicked and barbarous.
- [123:2] Cf. the citation in Cicero *de Repub.* iv. 3. 3.
- [124:1] The makeshift of boarding-schools was unknown to the ancients, but at Sparta, young men were kept together even in their hours of leisure, and away from their homes, so that we must here admit a qualified exception. But what we know of this separate life is rather that of a barrack than of a school.
- [126:1] Seventh Edition. It had been formerly the last chapter of my *Rambles and Studies in Greece*.
- [127:1] It was an artistic device, to make this paternal despot a foreign prince, living in a bygone age, of the same kind as the device of Æschylus to narrate the Persian war from the Oriental side, and make Darius a capital figure. No Greek or contemporary person could have sustained the figure of Cyrus in Xenophon's book. I need only remind the reader that the tract on the Athenian State now preserved among Xenophon's works is by an unknown author, and therefore an authority independent of Xenophon.
- [130:1] Grote's *Plato and the other Companions of Socrates*, 3 vols. (Murray, London.) His *Aristotle* is posthumous and fragmentary, and does not include the *Politics*. Mr. Jowett's expected *Essays on the Politics* may perhaps supply this deficiency.

CHAPTER VII.

[131]

PRACTICAL POLITICS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

§ 54. Let us now pass on to the practical politicians of the day, or to those who professed to be practical politicians, and see what they had to propose in the way of improving the internal condition of Greek society, as well as of saving it from those external dangers which every sensible man must have apprehended, even before they showed themselves above the political horizon.

The practical politicians.

Let us begin with Isocrates, whose pamphlets, though written with far too much attention to style, and intended as rhetorical masterpieces, nevertheless tell us a great deal of what filled the minds of thoughtful men in his day. He sees plainly that the Greeks were wearing themselves out with internecine wars and perpetual jealousies, and he opined, shrewdly enough, that nothing but a great external quarrel would weld them together into unity, and make the various States forget their petty squabbles in the enthusiasm of a common conflict against a foreign foe. He saw plainly enough that the proper enemy to attack was the power of Asia. For it was ill-cemented and open to invasion; it was really dangerous to the liberty even of the Hellenic peninsula,—almost fatal to that of the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and moreover so full of wealth as to afford an enormous field for that legitimate plunder which every conqueror then thought his bare due at the hands of the vanquished.

Isocrates, his anti-Persian policy.

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Isocrates had not the smallest idea of raising the Asiatic nations, or of civilizing them^[132:1]. No Greek down to Aristotle, nay, not even Aristotle himself, ever had such a notion, though he might concede that isolated men or cities could possibly, by careful and humble imitation of Hellenic culture, attain to a respectable imitation of it. Isocrates' plain view of the war policy against Persia was simply this: first, that the internal quarrels of Greece would be allayed; secondly, that a great number of poor and roving Greeks would attain wealth and contentment; thirdly, 'the Barbarians would learn to think less of themselves'^[132:2].

No large ideas of spreading Hellenic culture.

His first proposal was that Athens and Sparta, the natural leaders of Greece, should combine in this policy, divide the command by a formal treaty, and so resume their proper position as benefactors and promoters of all Hellenedom.

Who is to be the leader of Greece?

[133]

But as years went on, the impotence and the strife of these powers made it only too plain that this was no practical solution; so he turns in an open letter to Philip of Macedon, who was

gradually showing how to solve the problem of Hellenic unity, and advises him to use his power, not for the subjugation of the Greeks, but to lead them in a victorious campaign into Asia.

But in Philip they had already found that common enemy against whom they should have united, if voluntary union was ever again possible among them; and their miserable failure to do so showed plainly that the days of independent States throughout Greece were numbered, and that the first neighbouring power with organization and wealth was certain to pluck the over-ripe fruit of Hellenedom.

§ 55. This brings us by natural transition to Demosthenes, on whose life and policy it is very necessary to say a few words, seeing that they have been, like so many other topics in Greek history, distorted by the specialists, and made the ground of sentimental rhetoric instead of being sifted with critical care. To utter anything against Demosthenes thirty years ago was almost as bad as to say a word in old Athenian days against the battle of Marathon. This battle was so hymned and lauded by orators and poets that had you suggested its importance in the campaign to be overrated, had you said that you believed the alleged numbers of the Persians to be grossly exaggerated, you would have been set down as an insolent and unpatriotic knave. In the same way the scholars have laid hold of Demosthenes; they have dwelt not only upon the matchless force of his eloquence, but upon the grammatical subtleties of his Greek, till they are so in love with him that whatever is said in his favour is true, and whatever appears to be against him is false.

Demosthenes another ideal figure in this history.

[134]

As I have not spent the whole of a long life either in commenting on this great author or in vindicating for him all the virtues under heaven, I may perhaps be better able than greater scholars to give a fair estimate of his political merits.

Demosthenes at the outset of his career saw plainly, like Isocrates, that a foreign policy was necessary to give not only dignity, but consistency, to the counsels of Athens; and he too at the outset, misconceiving the real power of Philip, thought that Persia was the serious foe [134:1], and should be the object of most importance to Athenian politicians. Darius Ochus, the last vigorous king of Persia, had made such military preparations for the reconquest of his rebellious provinces as to alarm all the Asiatic Greeks and conjure up the phantom of a new Persian war. But presently the real danger set aside this bugbear; the activity and military skill of Philip, added to his discovery or utilization of the Thracian gold mines, made him clearly the future lord of the Hellenes if he could prevent them from combining against him for a few years.

He sees the importance of a foreign policy for Athens

against Persia or Macedonia.

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The narrative of this famous struggle, carried on mainly by the eloquence of Demosthenes on one side, and the diplomacy of Philip on the other, forms one of the most attractive pages in history; and nowhere is it better told than in the eleventh volume of Grote's work. The cause of Demosthenes naturally attracted the Radical historian [135:1], who sees in the power of Macedon nothing but the overthrow of democracy, of discussion, of universal suffrage; and hence the relapse of society into a condition worse and less developed than what had been attained by all the labours of great and enlightened reform.

Grote on Demosthenes.

The cause of Demosthenes also attracted Arnold Schäfer, who having chosen the orator and his works for his own speciality, spent years in gradually increasing admiration for this choice, till Demosthenes became for him a patriot of spotless purity and a citizen of such high principle that all charges against him are to be set down as calumnies. This enthusiasm has reached so far that if in the collection of law speeches which the orator composed for pay, and often to support a very weak case, there are found illogical arguments or inconsistencies with other speeches on analogous subjects, such flaws are set down as evidence that the particular speech is spurious, and cannot have emanated from so noble a character as Demosthenes [136:1].

A. Schäfer on Demosthenes.

[136]

§ 56. This estimate is totally at variance with the judgment of the ancients, his contemporaries and immediate successors, who openly accused, and indeed convicted, him of embezzling money in his public capacity, as well as of accepting briefs and fees from both sides in a private litigation.

Very different estimate of the ancients.

To this question of his private character I shall revert. But as regards the struggle which he carried on for years, not so much against Philip as against the apathy of his fellow-citizens, it must have been plain from the beginning that he was playing a losing game. The dislike of military service in what is called by Grote the 'Demosthenic Athenian' was notorious; the jealousies of parties within, and of other States without, hampered any strong and consistent line of action. The gold of Philip was sure to command, not only at Athens, but at Thebes, at Argos, in Arcadia, partisans who, under the guise of legitimate opposition, would carry adjournments, postponements, limitations, of all vigorous policy. Mercenary troops, which were now in fashion, if not amply paid and treated with regard to their convenience, became a greater scourge to their own side than to the enemy. It was therefore quite plain that Philip must win, though none of us can fail to appreciate and to admire the persistent and noble efforts of

Conditions of the conflict

made Philip's victory certain.

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Demosthenes, who is never weary of urging that if the free States, especially Athens, would do their duty, and make some sacrifices for the good of Greece, the impending foreign domination would be indefinitely postponed. But this only means that if the Athenians had changed their character, and adopted that of another generation or another race, the issue of the contest might have been different^[137:1].

This is the sort of up-hill game that Demosthenes played for twenty years. At first Athens seemed quite the stronger to superficial observers. But because she was so strong it seemed unnecessary to act with full vigour. Presently she begins to lose, and Philip to make way. Even still she can win if she will rouse herself. But soon he makes further advances, and she is involved in difficulties. Then the faint-hearted begin to fear, and the disloyal to waver. It is not till the very end of the struggle, when Athens is in direct danger of immediate siege, that the whole population wakes up, the traitors are silenced, and the city, in conjunction with Thebes, makes a splendid struggle. But the day for victory had long gone by, and Demosthenes has the bitter satisfaction of at last attaining his full reputation for wisdom and patriotism because his gloomiest prophecies are fulfilled.

Demosthenes fights a losing game.

[138]

§ 57. It is from this time onward^[138:1] that his public acts seem to me hardly consistent with common-sense, or with that higher idea of patriotism which seeks the good of the State at the sacrifice of personal theories or prejudices. Grote has observed of the other leading Athenian of that time, the general Phocion, that while his policy of submission and despair was injurious, nay, even fatal, up to the battle of Chæronea, this tame acquiescence when the struggle was over was the practical duty of a patriot, and of decided advantage to his country. Grote ought to have insisted with equal force that the policy of resistance and of hope, while highly commendable and patriotic up to the same moment, was deeply mischievous to the conquered people, and led them into many follies and many misfortunes. And yet this was the policy which Demosthenes hugged to the last, and which cost the lives and fortunes of hundreds of Athenians.

The blunders of his later policy.

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Compared with Phocion.

I have spoken elsewhere^[139:1] of the peculiar mischief to a nation of having her fortunes at a great crisis intrusted to *old* men. Demosthenes was indeed only fifty years of age when the genius of Alexander showed itself beyond any reasonable doubt. But at fifty Demosthenes was distinctly an old man. His delicate constitution, tried by the severest early studies, had been worn in political conflicts of nearly thirty years' duration; and we may therefore pardon him, though we cannot forget the fatal influence he exercised in keeping both Athens and the other Greek cities from joining heartily in the great new enterprise of the Macedonian king. All the Attic politicians were then past middle life, with the exception of Hypereides.

Old men often ruinous politics.

[140]

So then the old republican glories of Athens, the old liberties of the Greeks, which had been tried and found wanting, were praised and hymned by all the orators, and the great advent of a new day, the day of *Hellenism*, was cursed as the setting of the sun of Greece. Modern scholars, led, as usual, by literary instead of political greatness, have in general adopted this view; and so strongly do they feel that the proper history of Greece is now over that they either close their work with the battle of Chæronea, or add the conquests of Alexander and the wars of the Diadochi as a sort of ungrateful and irrelevant appendix. On this subject I have already spoken in connection with the work of Grote^[140:1].

Hellenism despised.

The love of political liberty, and the importance attached to political independence, are so strong in the minds of the Anglo-Saxon nations that it is not likely any one will persuade them, against the splendid advocacy of Grote, that there may be such losses and mischiefs in a democracy as to justify a return to a stronger executive and a greater restriction of public speech. Nevertheless, the conviction derived from a life-long study of Greek history is so strong in me on this question that I feel compelled to state my opinions. It is all the more a duty as I hold that one of the greatest lessons of ancient history is to suggest guiding-posts and advices for the perplexities of modern life. So far is mankind the same in all places and countries, that most civilized peoples will stumble upon the same difficulties and will apply the same experiments to their solution.

The author feels he is fighting a losing game against democracy and its advocates.

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§ 58. There is no one more convinced than I am that this complex of small, independent cities, each forming a separate State in the strictest sense of the term, each showing modifications of internal constitution, each contending with the same obstacles in varied ways,—this wonderful political Many-in-one (for they were one in religion, language, and general culture) afforded an intellectual education to Greek citizens such as the world has not since experienced. The *Politics* of Aristotle is a summary of the theoretical side of that experience, which could find no parallel till the days of Machiavelli, whose scheme, if completed by the promised *Repubblica*, would have been very similar. For his *Principe* is plainly suggested by the then re-discovered *Politics* of Aristotle, which naturally struck the Florentine statesman with its curiously close and various analogies to the history of the Italian republics of the Middle Ages.

The education of small free States.

Machiavelli and Aristotle.

Even far more deeply did the lessons of Athenian political life act upon **Greek democratic**

the practical character of the citizen, and train him to be a rational being **patriotism.** submitting to the will of the majority, to which he himself contributed in debate, taking his turn at commanding as well as obeying, regarding the labours of office as his just contribution to the public weal, regarding even the sacrifices he made as a privilege,—the outward manifestation of his loyalty to the State which had made him in the truest sense an aristocrat among men. Even when he commanded fleets or armies he did so as the servant of the State; and any attempt to redress private differences by personal assertion of his rights, other than the law provided, was regarded as essentially a violation of his civility and a return to barbarism. To carry arms for personal defence, to challenge an adversary to mortal combat, to take forcible possession of disputed property,—these things were greater outrages and greater violences to civilization at Athens than they are in most of the civilized countries of the nineteenth century.

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To have attained this high level, four centuries before Christ, without the aid of a really pure system of State religion, without the aid of that romantic sentiment which is so peculiar to Northern nations, is to have achieved a triumph which no man can gainsay. Had the Greeks not been subjected to this splendid training, which radiated from politics into art and letters, and which stimulated, though it did not create, that national genius that has since found no rival, all the glories of Hellenism, all the splendours of Alexander's successors, all the victories over Western barbarism would have been impossible.

Its splendid results

§ 59. But when all this is said, and however fully and eloquently it may be urged, the fact remains that the highest education is not all-powerful in producing internal concord and external peace. There seems, as it were, a national strain exercised by a conquering and imperial democracy, which its members may sustain for a generation or two, but which cannot endure. The sweets of accumulated wealth and domestic comfort in a civilized and agreeable society become so delightful that the better classes will not keep up their own energy. All work, says Aristotle, to which men submit, is for the purpose of having leisure; and so there is a natural tendency in the cultivated classes to stand aside from politics, and allow the established laws to run in their now accustomed grooves. Hence the field of politics is left to the poorer, needier, more discontented classes, who turn public life into a means of glory and of gain, and set to work to disturb the State that they may satisfy their followers and obtain fuel to feed their own ambition. To such persons either a successful war upon neighbours, or an attack upon the propertied classes at home, becomes a necessity.

appear to be essentially transitory, from internal causes.

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Let me state a modern case. The natural resources of America are still so vast that this inevitable result has not yet ensued. But whenever a limit has been reached and the pinch of poverty increases, we may expect it to arise in the United States. Even the Athenian democracy, when its funds were low and higher taxes were threatened, hailed with approval informations against rich citizens, in the hope that by confiscations of their property the treasury might be replenished.

The case of America.

This is the heyday of the demagogue, who tells the people—the poorer crowd—that they have a right to all the comforts and blessings of the State, and that their pleasures must not be curtailed while there are men of large property living in idle luxury. Such arguments produce violences instead of legal decisions; the demagogue becomes a tyrant over the richer classes; the public safety is postponed to private interests; and so the power of the democracy as regards external foes is weakened in proportion as the harmony among its citizens is disturbed.

The demagogue.

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Such are the changes which Greek theorists regarded as inevitable in a democracy, and as certain to bring about its ultimate fall. Whatever may be the case with the great States of modern days, this prognosis was thoroughly verified in Greek history. It may safely be said that no State was ever crushed by external adversaries at the period of its perfection. In every case internal decay has heralded the overthrow from without. There is no reasonable probability that, had there never been a Philip or an Alexander, Athens, Sparta, Thebes, or Argos would have risen into a glorious future and revived the splendours of Leonidas or of Pericles. We may deeply regret that the maintenance of such prosperity should seem impossible; we may laud in the strongest words the condition of things which had once made it actual: but the day for this splendour was gone by; and far better than the impotence of an unjust mob, and the chicanery of an unprincipled leader, is the subjection of all to external control, even with the impairing or abolishing of universal suffrage.

Internal disease the real cause of decadence.

The Greek States all in this condition,

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This was evidently the opinion of Phocion, an honourable and experienced man, whose contempt for the floods of talk in Athens, leading to waste of time and delay in action, made him the persistent opponent of Demosthenes, but nevertheless trusted and respected even by the mob whom he openly despised. We may indeed feel glad that his policy did not earlier prevail,—we should have lost the speeches of Demosthenes; and to the after world this loss would not have been compensated, had the Athenians merely escaped their troubles and lived in peaceful submission.

as Phocion saw,

Demosthenes says proudly, in a famous passage of his immortal *De Corona*, that even in presence of his life's failure, even after all he had attempted had been wrecked by circumstances, he would not recall one act of his life, one argument in his speeches, no, not by the heroes that

but which Demosthenes ignored.

stood the brunt of battle at Marathon, by the memory of all those who died for their country's liberty!

§ 60. We may all applaud this noble self-panegyric, but not the irritating agitation which he had adopted and continued for fifteen years against the Macedonian supremacy, and which involved his country in further distresses, and cost him and his brother-agitators their lives. For the very means he used to carry on his policy of revolt were more than doubtful in their honesty, and have thrown a dark shade upon his memory. The fact is, as I have already said, that while Phocion, the enemy of the democratic policy, is above all suspicion, both contemporaries and survivors had their doubts about Demosthenes.

The dark shadows of his later years.

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I need not discuss here the allegation that he made speeches for money on opposite sides in the successive trials of the same case. The fact appears to me clear enough, for it is only evaded by his panegyrists with their stock expedient of declaring one of such opposing speeches, though accepted by the best ancient critics, to be spurious. But the morals of the bar from that day to this are so peculiar—I will not say loose—as to make the layman hesitate in offering an opinion. That a man should take fees for a case in which he cannot appear, or retain them when he is debarred by lucrative promotion from appearing for his client, seems to be consistent with the morality of the modern bar. Why then try Demosthenes by a severer standard?

His professional character as an advocate.

But a larger question arises when we find him arraigned for embezzling a sum of money brought to Athens by a fugitive defaulter from Alexander's treasury, and moreover convicted of the embezzlement. The chorus of modern critics, with a very occasional exception, cry out that of course the accusation was false, and the verdict simply a political move to escape the wrath of the formidable Macedonian. But the facts remain, and this moreover among them, that the principal accuser of Demosthenes was his brother-patriot Hypereides, who afterwards suffered death for the anti-Macedonian cause^[147:1].

The affair of Harpalus.

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The evidence left to us seems to me not sufficient to overthrow the Athenian verdict on political grounds, and is certainly not such as to justify us in acquitting Demosthenes without further consideration. The real ground, however, which actuates modern historians is quite a different one from that of the evidence adduced, and is, I think, based on a historical misprision, a false estimate of the current morals of the day. I think it well to state the case here; for it is a test case, and affects many of our judgments of other Greek politicians as well as of Demosthenes.

Was the verdict against Demosthenes just?

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§ 61. The modern ground of acquittal urged is this, that we cannot for a moment conceive a pure and high-souled patriot, who had risked all for the national cause, to have been guilty of taking bribes or embezzling money. Schäfer indeed distinctly says^[148:1] that his judgment is determined by his estimate of the moral character of its hero; and so not only weak and illogical speeches, but immoral or dishonest acts, are simply to be set aside as inconceivable in so lofty and unsullied a nature. Whether this be a sensible way of writing history, I leave the reader to decide. What I am now going to urge is this, that in the morality of Attic politics, taking money privately was not thought disgraceful, but was, with certain restrictions, openly asserted to be quite justifiable.

The modern ground of acquittal.

Hypereides puts it plainly in his speech in this very case. Seeing that it was not the practice at Athens to pay salaries to politicians for their services, the public, he says, was quite prepared that they should make indirect profits and receive money privately for their work; the one thing intolerable was that they should take it from the enemies of their country or to prejudice Athenian interests.

Morality of politicians expounded by Hypereides.

In England we have had the good fortune to find rich men of high traditions to carry on the affairs of the nation, and even where we do not, or used not, to give salaries, it has been long thought disgraceful to make politics the source of private gain. How far it was done or not, in spite of this feeling, we need not inquire. There can be no doubt that now, at all events, there are large numbers of men supporting themselves by a parliamentary career; and it is usually said of America also, that politics are there regarded as a lucrative profession, and that the men who spend their lives in politics from mere ambition or from pure patriotism are very rare indeed. Still I think modern sentiment, theoretically at least, brands these indirect profits as disgraceful; nor do I think any modern advocate would describe such a practice as perfectly excusable in the way that Hypereides expresses it.

Modern sentiment at least repudiates these principles.

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We are dealing, therefore, with a condition of public morality in which taking bribes, to put it plainly, was not at all considered a heinous offence, provided always that they were not taken to injure the State. You might therefore be a patriot at Athens, and yet make that patriotism a source of profit.

This combination of high and sordid principles seems so shocking to modern gentlemen that I must remind them of two instances not

As regards practice we have Walpole

irrelevant to the question in hand. In the first place men who were thoroughly honourable and served their country faithfully, as, for example, Sir Robert Walpole, have thought it quite legitimate to corrupt with money those under them and those opposed to them. Though they would scorn to receive bribes, they did not scruple to offer them; and they have left it on record that they found few men unwilling to accept such bribes in some indirect or disguised form.

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Again, if the reader will turn to the narratives of the great War of Liberation in Greece, which lasted some ten years of this century (1821-1831), and will study the history of the national leaders who fought all the battles by sea and land, and contributed far more than foreign aid to the success of that remarkable Revolution, he will find that on the one hand they were actuated with the strongest and most passionate feelings of patriotism, while on the other they did not scruple to turn the war to their own profit^[150:1]. They were klephts, bandits, assassins. They often took bribes to save the families of Turks, and then allowed them to be massacred. They made oaths and broke them, signed treaties and violated them. And yet there is not the smallest doubt that they were strictly patriots, in the sense of loving their country, and even shedding their blood for it.

and the Greek patriots of our own century.

§ 62. Let us now come back to the case of Demosthenes. At the opening of his career he would have gladly obtained money and men from Macedon to use against Persia; for Persia then seemed a danger to Greece. Later on, his policy was to obtain money from Persia to attack Macedon; and we are told that in the crisis before Chæronea he had control of large funds of foreign gold, which he administered as he chose. The one great end was to break the power of Macedon. And so I have not the smallest doubt that if he thought the gold of Harpalus would enable him to emancipate Athens, he was perfectly ready to accept it, even on the terms of screening Harpalus from any personal danger, provided this did not balk the one great object in view. Thus the telling of a deliberate lie, which to modern gentlemen is a crime of the same magnitude as taking a bribe, is in the minds of many of our politicians justified by urgent public necessity^[151:1]. It is hardly worth while to give instances of this notorious laxity in European public life. Is it reasonable, is it fair, to try Demosthenes by a far higher standard?

Analogous to the case of Demosthenes.

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The end justified the means.

This is why I contend that it is illogical and unhistorical to argue that because Demosthenes was an honourable man and a patriot, therefore he could not have done what he was convicted of doing by the Areopagus^[152:1].

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At no time was the average morality of the Greeks very high. From the days of Homer down, as I have shown amply in my *Social Life in Greece*, we find a low standard of truth and honesty in that brilliant society, which is gilded over to us by their splendid intellectual gifts. As Ulysses in legend, Themistocles in early, Aratus in later history are the types which speak home to Greek imagination and excite the national admiration, so in a later day Cicero, in a remarkable passage, where he discusses the merits and demerits of the race^[152:2], lays it down as an axiom that their honesty is below par, and will never rank in court with a Roman's word.

Low average of Greek national morality.

Exceptions there were, such as Aristides, Socrates, Phocion; but they never enlisted the sympathy, though they commanded the respect, of the Greek public. Nay, all these suffered for their honesty. I do not believe Demosthenes to have been below the average morality of his age,—far from it; he was in all respects, save in military skill, much above it: but I do not believe he was at all of the type of his adversary, Phocion, who was honest and incorruptible in the strictest modern sense.

Demosthenes above it.

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The illusion has here again been produced by the perfect art of Demosthenes, whose speeches read as if he spoke the inmost sentiments of his mind and laid his whole soul open with all earnestness and sincerity to the hearer. I suppose there was a day when people thought this splendid, direct, apparently unadorned eloquence burst from the fulness of his heart, and found its burning expression upon his lips merely from the power of truth and earnestness to speak to the hearts of other men. We know very well now that this is the most absurd of estimates. Every sentence, every clause, was turned and weighed; the rythm of every phrase was balanced; the very interjections and exclamations were nicely calculated. There never was any speaking or writing more strictly artificial since the world of literature began. But as the most perfect art upon the stage attains the exact image of nature, so the perfection of Greek oratory was to produce the effect of earnestness and simplicity by the most subtle means, adding concealed harmonies of sound, and figures of thought, by which the audience could be charmed and beguiled into a delighted acquiescence. This is the sort of rhetorician with whom we have to deal, and who regarded the simple and trenchant Phocion as the most dangerous 'pruner of his periods.' To many persons such a school of eloquence, however perfect, will not seem the strictest school for plain uprightness in action; and they will rather be surprised at the eagerness of modern historians to defend him against all accusations, than at the decisive, though reluctant, condemnation which he suffered at the hands of his own citizens^[154:1]. All the life of Demosthenes shows a strong theatrical tendency, even as he is said to have named *ὑπόκρισις* (the art of delivery) as the essence of eloquence. It is in this connection that Holm justly finds fault with the modern critics, who reject indeed the ribaldry of Æschines as mendacious, but set

Deep effect of his rhetorical earnestness.

The perfection of his art is to be apparently natural.

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down that of Demosthenes as a source of sober history. The scandalous accusations made by all these orators against their opponents have one distinct parallel in earlier history—the sallies of the Old Comedy. This kind of political play died out with the rise of dramatic oratory, which was fully as libellous. Holm's remark is also worth repeating in this connection, that the dialectical discussions of the later tragedy were appropriated by the philosophers, whose dialogues satisfied the strong taste of the Athenians for this kind of intellectual exercise.

FOOTNOTES:

- [132:1] He says indeed in one place (*Panegy.* p. 51) that Hellenedom is rather a matter of common culture, than of common race. But nowhere does he ever acknowledge that foreign races as such can attain this culture, and he shows the respect of every old-fashioned Hellene for the Spartans, who belonged to the race, but were devoid of this culture.
- [132:2] The texts are all cited in my *History of Greek Literature*, ii. 215, when treating of Isocrates.
- [134:1] Cf. the texts in my *Greek Lit.* ii. 2, pp. 87, 105.
- [135:1] As it did Niebuhr, who was brought up in the great struggle of Germany with Napoleon.
- [136:1] This absurd feeling has gone so far as to lead Demosthenes' admirers to blacken the character of all those who opposed him, not only of Philip of Macedon, but of Eubulus and other Attic politicians. Holm has very well defended Eubulus (G. G. iii. 252 *sq.*), and has also vindicated Philip from the usual accusations of treachery, cruelty, and tyranny (*ibid.* 327).
- [137:1] I cannot avoid citing a parallel from contemporary history, which is by no means so far-fetched as may appear to those who have not studied both cases so carefully as I have been obliged to do. The Irish landlords, a rich, respectable, idle, uncohesive body, have been attacked by an able and organized agitation, unscrupulous, mendacious, unwearied, which has carried point after point against them, and now threatens to force them to capitulate, or evacuate their estates in the country. It has been said a thousand times: Why do not these landlords unite and fight their enemy? They have far superior capital; they have had from the outset public influence far greater; they have a far stronger case, not only in law, but in real justice: and yet they allow their opponents to push them from position to position, till little remains to be conquered. Even after a series of defeats we tell them still that if they would now combine, subscribe, select, and trust their leaders, they could win. And all this is certain. But it is not likely that they will ever do it. One is fond of his pleasures, another of his idleness, a third is jealous of any leader who is put forward, a fourth is trying underhand to make private terms with the enemy. A small and gallant minority subscribe, labour, debate. They are still a considerable force, respected and feared by their foes. But the main body is inert, jealous, helpless; and unless their very character be changed, these qualities must inevitably lead to their ruin.
- [138:1] Holm, in his remarkable estimate of the Greek policy of this time, goes so far as to say that Demosthenes' efforts even before Chæronea were mischievous, and that the idea he constantly puts forward, of making Athens great by weakening her old rivals Sparta and Thebes, is no better than supporting that old particularism which always made the Greeks inferior to any powerful or wealthy foreign State. Holm thinks that a larger and truer policy was that of Isocrates, who would have loyally accepted the hegemony of Philip, that he might lead the whole nation against a foreign enemy. We may be able to see things in that light now, yet I cannot blame Demosthenes, and the patriotic party at Athens, for neglecting the essay of Isocrates, and desiring to maintain Athens upon the old lines. But their effort was neither honestly nor persistently supported by the main body of the Athenians.
- [139:1] *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 4.
- [140:1] Above, § 10.
- [147:1] It is nevertheless not likely that Hypereides was personally intimate with Demosthenes, for he was not, as is usually stated, his contemporary, but a man of a younger generation, as I have argued in my *Greek Lit.* ii. 2, p. 371. I invite the critics either to refute or to accept the arguments there stated.
- I can now cite several scholars of the first magnitude whose estimate of Demosthenes agrees in almost every detail with what I had argued in my *History of Greek Literature*. They are H. Weil, in his admirable edition of Demosthenes (Paris, 1886), and Holm in the third volume of his *History* (1891), especially the passage (pp. 247-9), which shows that there is now a general tendency to judge Demosthenes less leniently than Grote and Schäfer have done. Beloch, Sittl, Spengel, and other considerable critics are quoted in his summary. It is no small satisfaction to me to see the opinions I put forth in the first edition of *Social Life in Greece* (1871), which were then treated as paradoxes, now adopted, quite independently, by a large body of the best critics. I do not, however, think that they have sufficiently appreciated the low standard of political honesty at Athens, as compared with ours. This affords the best apology for Demosthenes' faults. He was, after all, the child of his time.
- [148:1] *Demosthenes*, iii. 239 *et passim*: cf. Curtius, G. G. iii. 774 (note 44).
- [150:1] Finlay even goes so far as to say that the islanders of Hydra, who were certainly the most prominent in the cause of patriotism, were actuated by no higher motives than despair at

the loss of the lucrative monopoly they had enjoyed of visiting all the ports of Europe during the great Napoleonic wars under the protection of the neutral flag of Turkey! The patriotism of these people did not include gratitude.

[151:1] But according to our evidence, Demosthenes did not deny that he had taken the money; he pleaded as an excuse that he had advanced for the Theoric Fund, for the benefit of the Athenians, twenty talents, and that he had recouped himself for this money. This is the plea put into his mouth by Hypereides (*in Demosth.* 10). Such a defence, which merely amounted to making the Athenian public an unwitting accomplice, is so suicidal in Demosthenes' mouth, that I hesitate to accept it as it stands, though Holm (G. G. iii. 420) does so.

[152:1] All the evidence has been justly weighed by Holm, G. G. iii. 420-4, who comes to the same conclusion which I had put forward twenty years ago, long before the recent change of opinion concerning Demosthenes. That the Athenians condemned the orator justly, and to a moderate penalty, can be demonstrated from his own admissions. Political expediencies doubtless secured his conviction; they do not prove it to have been unjust.

[152:2] *Pro Flacco*, cap. iv. *Graeca fides* was a stock phrase.

[154:1] Cf. now the sensible remarks of Holm, G. G. 501 *sq.*, who criticises this exceedingly studied oratory from the very same standpoint.

CHAPTER VIII.

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ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

§ 63. As I have said already, the death of Demosthenes is the favourite terminus for the political historians of Greece. But let us not grow weary, —let us survey the fortunes of the race for some centuries more, touching upon those turning-points or knotty points where it seems that the evidence has not been duly stated or weighed.

The further course of Greek history.

In approaching the work and the character of Alexander, we come upon a new authority among modern historians, whom we have not yet encountered. Droysen, who unfortunately devoted the evening of his life to Prussian history, employed his brilliant abilities for years in researches upon the history of Alexander and of his immediate successors. His latest work on this period is no doubt the fullest and best to which we can refer, and it seems a very great omission that it has not been as yet translated into our language.

Droysen's *Geschichte des Hellenismus*.

This is more specially to be desired as we have no great English history of these times. It is but another instance of what has been so often urged in these pages. Greek history has been in the hands of people with literary and scholastic interests. So long as there are great authors to be translated, explained, panegyricized, all the most minute events are recorded and discussed with care; but as soon as we come to an epoch certainly not less important in human affairs, perhaps more decisive than any that had gone before in shaping the future history of the world, we are deserted by our modern historians, because the Greeks had lost that literary excellence which makes their earlier records the proper training for the schoolboy and the collegian^[156:1]. We are now reduced to Diodorus, Plutarch, Arrian, Strabo, for our materials, and there are those who think that the moral splendour and unflinching interest of the famous *Parallel Lives* do not atone for the want of Attic grace and strength which marks the decadence of Greek prose literature. Yet surely to the genuine historian, to whom all these records are merely sources of information on the course of affairs and the characters of men, literary perfection should only be an agreeable accident, an evidence, if you like, of that day's culture, not a gauge to test the pre-eminence of one century or one nation over another.

This period much neglected by English historians.

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Nature of our authorities.

§ 64. Accordingly, the character of Alexander and his work have not yet been sufficiently weighed and studied to afford us a perfectly clear picture, which might carry conviction to the majority of readers, and finally fix his place in history. As I said above^[157:1], Grote's picture of him—the only recent study of the period in England previous to my own *Alexander's Empire and Greek Life and Thought*—is so manifestly unfair that no candid judge will be satisfied with it. If any other writer had used against Demosthenes or Pericles such evidence as Grote cites and believes against Alexander, the great historian would have cried shame upon him, and refuted his arguments with the high satisfaction of supporting an unanswerable case.

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Alexander's place in history still disputed.

Thus, for example, Grote finds in Q. Curtius, a late, rhetorical, and very untrustworthy Latin historian of Alexander, theatrical details of Alexander's cruelties to the heroic defender of Gaza, or the mythical descendants of the Milesian Branchidæ who had settled in Inner Asia,—details unknown to Arrian, unknown apparently to the Athenians of the day, and fairly to be

Grote's unfairness in accepting evidence against him.

classed with the king's adventures among the Amazons or in the land beyond the Sun. Yet these stories have their distinct effect upon Grote's estimate of Alexander, whom he esteems hardly a Hellene, but a semi-barbarian conqueror, of transcendent military abilities, only desirous of making for himself a great Oriental despot-monarchy, with a better and more efficient military and civil organization, but without any preparations for higher civilization.

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The estimate of Droysen is nearer the truth, but still not strictly the truth itself^[158:1]. To him the Macedonian is a political as well as a military genius of the highest order, who is educated in all the views of Aristotle, who understands thoroughly that the older forms of political life are effete, that small separate States require to be united under a strong central control. He even divines that the wealth and resources of Asia require regeneration through Greek intelligence and enterprise, and therefore the 'marriage of Europe and Asia,' of which the manifest symbol was the wholesale matrimony of his officers with Persian ladies, was the real aim and goal of all his achievements. As such Alexander is more than the worthy pupil of Aristotle, and the legitimate originator of a new and striking form of civilization.

Droysen's estimate.

§ 65. There is, I think, a great tendency, whenever we come to estimate a great and exceptional genius, to regard him as manifesting merely a higher degree of that conscious ability called talent, or cleverness. It is much easier to understand this view of genius than to give any rational account of its spontaneity, its unconscious and unreflective inspirations, which seem to anticipate, and solve without effort, questions laboriously answered by the patient research or experiment of ordinary minds^[159:1]. We talk of 'flashes of genius.' When these flashes come often enough, and affect large political questions, we have results which baffle ordinary mortals, and are easily mistaken either for random luck or acute calculation.

Tendency to attribute calculation to genius.

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Its spontaneity.

If I am right, Alexander started with few definite ideas beyond the desire of great military conquests. On this point his views were probably quite clear, and no doubt often reasoned out with his early companions. He had seen the later campaigns of Philip, and had discovered at Chæronea what the shock of heavy cavalry would do against the best infantry the Greek world could produce. In his very first operations to put down revolt and secure his crown, he had made trial of his field artillery, and of the marching powers of his army through the difficult Thracian country. He therefore required no Aristotle to tell him that with the combined arms of Greece and Macedonia he could conquer the Persian Empire. His reckless exposure of his life at the Granicus and at Issus may indeed be interpreted as the divine confidence of a genius in his star, but seems to me nothing more than a manifest defect in his generalship, counterbalanced to some extent by the enthusiasm it aroused in his household troops.

Alexander's military antecedents.

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But it also taught him a very important lesson. He had probably quite underrated the high qualities of the Persian nobles. Their splendid bravery and unshaken loyalty to their king in all the battles of the campaign, their evident dignity and liberty under a legitimate sovran, must have shown him that these were indeed subjects worth having, and destined to be some day of great importance in checking Greek discontent or Macedonian insubordination. The fierce and stubborn resistance of the great Aryan barons of Sogdiana, which cost him more time and loss than all his previous conquests, must have confirmed this opinion, and led to that recognition of the Persians in his empire which was so deeply resented by his Western subjects.

He learns to respect Persian valour and loyalty.

§ 66. His campaigns, on the other hand, must have at the same time forced this upon his mind, that the deep separation which had hitherto existed between East and West would make a homogeneous empire impossible, if pains were not taken to fuse the races by some large and peaceful process^[160:1]. This problem was the first great political difficulty he solved; and he solved it very early in his career by the successful experiment of founding a city on the confines of the Greek seas and the Asiatic continent, into which Jews and Egyptians crowded along with Greeks, and produced the first specimen of that composite Hellenistic life which soon spread over all his empire.

He discovers how to fuse the nations in Alexandria.

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This happy experiment, no doubt intended as an experiment, and perhaps the easiest and most obvious under the circumstances, must have set Alexander's mind into the right groove. Further advances into Asia showed him the immense field open to conquest by his arms, and also by the higher culture and enterprise of Greeks and Jews. He must have felt that in the foundation of chains of cities peopled by veterans and traders he would secure not only a military frontier and military communications, but *entrepôts* for the rising trade which brought new luxuries from the East, and new inventions from the West. Two distinct causes tended largely to promote this commerce, the vigorous maintenance of peace and security on roads and frontiers, and still more the dissemination of a vast hoard of gold captured in the Persian treasuries. This hoard, amounting to several millions of our money, not only stimulated trade by its mere circulation, but afforded the merchant a medium of exchange as superior in convenience to baser metals as bank-notes are to gold. The new merchant could pay out of his girdle in gold as much as his father had paid out of a camel's load in silver or copper. I have no doubt the Jews were the first people to profit by these altered circumstances, and thus to attain

His development of commerce.

Diffusion of gold.

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that importance from Rhodes to Rhagæ which comes to light so suddenly and silently in the history of the Diadochi.

These changes seem to me to have dawned gradually, though quickly, upon the powerful mind of the conqueror, and to have transformed him from a young knight-errant in search of fame into a statesman facing an enormous responsibility. His intense and indefatigable spirit knew no repose except the distraction of physical excitement; and unfortunately, with the growth of larger views, his love of glory and of adventure was not stilled. No cares of State or legislative labours were able to quench the romance of his imagination and the longing to make new explorations and new conquests. This is the feature which legends of the East and West have caught with poetic truth; they have transformed the visions of his fancy into the chronicle of his life. But all that he did in the way of real government, of practical advancement in civilization, of respecting and adjusting conflicting rights among his various subjects, seems to me the result of a rapid practical insight, a large comprehension of pressing wants and useful reforms, not the working out of any mature theory. Hence I regard it as nonsense to call the politician and the king in any important sense the pupil of Aristotle. There is hardly a point in the *Politics* which can be regarded as having been adopted in the Macedonian settlement of the world. The whole conditions of this problem and its solution were non-Hellenic, non-speculative, new.

Development of Alexander's views.

His romantic imagination.

No pupil of Aristotle.

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§ 67. It is quite possible that some of Alexander's most successful ordinances were not fully understood by himself, if what I have said above of the spontaneous action of genius be true. But certainly many of them were clearly seen and really planned. What astonishes us most is the supernatural quickness and vigour of the man. He died at an early age, but we may well question whether he died young. His body was hacked with wounds, worn with hard exercise and still harder drinking. His mind had undergone a perpetual strain. We feel that he lived at such a rate that to him thirty years were like a century of ordinary life.

His portentous activity.

It is a favourite amusement to compare the great men of different epochs, who are never very similar, for a great genius is an individual belonging to no class, and can neither be copied nor replaced. Nevertheless it may be said that Napoleon shows more points of resemblance than most other conquerors to the Macedonian king. Had he died of fever on his way to Russia, while his Grand Army was unbroken, he would have left a military reputation hardly inferior to Alexander's. He won his campaigns by the same rapidity in movement, the same resource in sudden emergencies. But if Alexander's strategy was similar to that of Napoleon, his tactics on the battlefield bear the most curious resemblance to those which Cromwell devised for himself under analogous circumstances. Both generals saw that by organizing a heavy cavalry under perfect control, and not intended for mere pursuit, they could break up any infantry formation then possible. Both accordingly won all their battles by charges of this cavalry, while the enemy's cavalry, often equally victorious in attack, went in wild pursuit, and had no further effect in deciding the contest. It is even the case that both chose their right wing for their own attack, and used their infantry as the defensive arm of the action. This curious analogy, which seems never to have been noticed, only shows how great minds will find out the same solution of a difficulty, whenever like circumstances arise. It is in the use of field artillery, which Alexander brought to bear in quite a novel way upon the northern barbarians in his first campaign, that we should probably find, were our evidence more complete, a resemblance to the tactics which Napoleon employed at Waterloo, attacking with cavalry and artillery together, in a manner which appeared strange even to Wellington.

Compare with Napoleon,

and Cromwell.

Use of artillery.

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But the analogy to Napoleon holds good beyond the battlefield. Although both conquerors commenced their career as soldiers, both showed themselves indefatigable in office-work of a peaceful kind, and exceedingly able in the construction of laws. Napoleon imposed, if he did not originate, the best code in modern Europe, and he is known to have worked diligently and with great power at its details.

Both showed the same disagreeable insistence upon their own superiority to other men, whose rivalry they could not brook. But Alexander sought to maintain it by exalting himself to a superhuman position, Napoleon by degrading his rivals with the poisoned weapons of calumny and lies. The falsehoods of Napoleon's official documents have never been surpassed. Alexander did not sink so low; but the assertion of divinity seems to most of us moderns a more monstrous violation of modesty, and a flaw which affects the whole character of the claimant.

Vain but not envious.

§ 68. So strongly is this felt that an acute writer, Mr. D. C. Hogarth, has endeavoured to show^[165:1] that this too was one of the later fables invented about Alexander, and that the king himself never personally laid claim to a divine origin. The criticism of the evidence in this essay is excellent, and to most people will seem convincing. Nevertheless, after due examination of the matter, I am satisfied that the conclusion is wrong, and there is good reason to think that the visit to the temple of Ammon was connected with the policy of deriving Alexander's origin from that god. The very name Alexandria, given at that moment to his new foundation, was a formation only hitherto

His assumption of divinity questioned.

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known in connection with a god's name. The taunt of his soldiers at Babylon, that he should apply to his father Ammon, is perfectly well attested, and implies that his claim to divinity was well known in the army.

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But to my mind a greater flaw in this able essay is the assumption that for a Greek or Macedonian to claim divine origin was as odious and ridiculous as for a modern man to do so. It is only yesterday that men held in Europe the theory that monarchy was of divine origin. In Egypt and the East it was quite the common creed that the monarchs themselves were such.^[166:1] The new subjects of the Macedonian king would have thought it more extraordinary that he should not have claimed this descent than that he should; and in Egypt especially the belief that the king was the son of a god and a god himself did not conflict with the assertion of his ordinary human parentage. This is a condition of thought which we cannot grasp, and cannot therefore realize; but nevertheless the fact is as certain as any in ancient history.

An ordinary matter in those days.

The assertion, therefore, of divinity in the East was an ordinary piece of policy which Alexander could hardly avoid; the writer I have quoted has, however, shown strong reasons to doubt that he ever claimed it in Greece, though individual Greeks who visited his Eastern court at once perceived it in the ceremonial of his household, and though his soldiers taunted him with it during their revolt at Babylon. But this after all is a small matter. He probably knew better than any of his critics how to impress his authority upon his subjects; and whether it was from vanity or from policy or from a contempt of other men that he insisted upon his own divinity, is now of little consequence.

Perhaps not asserted among the Greeks.

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FOOTNOTES:

[156:1] Hence Fynes Clinton's third volume of *Fasti*, now fifty years old, is still by far the most complete collection of materials for studying later Hellenism. He not only gives all manner of out-of-the-way texts in full, but also a very excellent sketch of each of the Hellenistic monarchies, with dates and other credentials. Considering the time of its appearance (1845), it may be regarded as one of the finest monuments of English scholarship.

[157:1] Cf. § 10.

[158:1] With the usual zeal of a specialist, who not only makes a hero his own, but defends him against every criticism, Droysen even justifies Alexander's introduction of the Oriental obeisances at his court. As Holm observes, such ceremonies, in themselves impolitic as regards free subjects, were quite inconsistent with the familiarities of the drinking-parties, which Alexander would not deny himself. A Persian King would have understood this, not so a Macedonian. The latest estimate, that of Holm (iii. 403 *sq.*), appears to me also far the best. Yet he too, seems to attribute too much consciousness to the youthful Alexander.

[159:1] Thus Timoleon set up in his house a shrine to *ἄπροσμάτῃ*, the spontaneous impulse which had led him to many brilliant successes. Cf. my *Greek Life and Thought*, p. 110.

[160:1] We hear of the complaints of Macedonians and Greeks. The complaints of the Persians have not been transmitted to us; but as they were certainly more just and well-founded, and as the king was living in their midst, where he could not but hear them, are we rash in asserting that they must have been fully as important in influencing his decision? Could the many Persian princesses, married to high Macedonian officers, and their native retinues, have been satisfied or silenced without large concessions?

[165:1] In the *Historical Review* for 1887, pp. 317, *sqq.*

[166:1] It is to be noted that the Achæmenid kings, though asserting for themselves a Divine origin, did not claim to be gods. I think the first Greek who received in his lifetime supra-human honours was Lysander, who was flattered by altars, &c., in Asia Minor after his great victory.

CHAPTER IX.

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POST-ALEXANDRIAN GREECE.

§ 69. The period which follows the death of Alexander is one so complicated with wars and alliances, with combinations and defections, with reshapings of the world's kingdoms^[168:1], with abortive efforts at a new settlement, that it deters most men from its study, and has certainly acted as a damper upon the student who is not satisfied with the earlier history, but strives to penetrate to the closing centuries of freedom in Greece. There is very little information upon it, or rather there are but few books upon it, to be found in English. Thirlwall has treated it with his usual care and justice; and to those who will not follow minute and intricate details, I have recently given, in my *Greek Life and Thought*, a full study of the social and artistic development

Tumults of the Diadochi:

their intricacy;

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which took place in this and the succeeding periods of Hellenism in Greece and the East. Hertzberg's and Droysen's histories, the one confined in space to Greece proper, the other in time to the fourth and third centuries B.C., are both thorough and excellent works. Holm's final volume, which will include the same period, is not yet accessible, so that I cannot notice it.

A great part of this history was enacted, not in Greece, or even in Greek Asia Minor, but in Egypt, in Syria, in Mesopotamia, and even in Upper Asia. The campaigns which determined the mastery over Greece were usually Asiatic campaigns, and each conqueror, when he arrived at Athens, endeavoured to enlist the support of Greece by public declarations of the freedom, or rather the emancipation, of the Greeks. This constant and yet unmeaning manifesto, something like the Home Rule manifestoes of English politicians, is a very curious and interesting feature in the history of the *Diadochi*, as they are called, and suggests to us to consider what was the independence so often proclaimed from the days of Demetrius (306 B.C.) to those of the Roman T. Flamininus (196 B.C.), and why so unreal and shadowy a promise never ceased to fascinate the imagination of an acute and practical people.

their wide area.

The liberation of Greece.

For, on the other hand, it was quite admitted by all the speculative as well as the practical men of the age that monarchy was not only the usual form of the Hellenistic State, but was the only means of holding together large provinces of various peoples, with diverse traditions and diverse ways of life. From this point of view the monarchy of the Seleucids in Hither Asia, and that of the Antigonids over the Greek peninsula, are far more interesting than the simpler and more homogeneous kingdom of the Ptolemies in Egypt^[170:1]. For the Greeks in Egypt were never a large factor in the population. They settled only two or three districts up the country; they shared with Jews and natives the great mart of Alexandria, and even there their influence waned, and the Alexandria of Roman days is no longer a Hellenistic, but an Egyptian city. The persecutions by the seventh Ptolemy, who is generally credited with the wholesale expulsion of the Greeks, would only have had a transitory effect, had not the tide of population been setting that way; the persecutions of the Jews in the same city never produced the same lasting results. The Syrian monarchy stands out from this and even from the Macedonian as the proper type of a Hellenistic State. Unfortunately, the history of Antioch is almost totally lost, and the very vestiges of that great capital are shivered to pieces by earthquakes. Of its provinces, one only is tolerably well-known to us, but not till later days, through the *Antiquities* of Josephus, and the *New Testament*^[171:1].

Spread of monarchies.

The three Hellenistic kingdoms.

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§ 70. How did the Greeks of Europe and of Asia accommodate themselves to this altered state of things, which not only affected their political life, but led to a revolution in their social state? For it was the emigrant, the adventurer, the mercenary, who now got wealth and power into his hands, it was the capitalist who secured all the advantages of trade; and so there arose in every city a moneyed class, whose interests were directly at variance with the mass of impoverished citizens. Moreover the king's lieutenant or agent was a greater man in the city than the leading politician. Public discussions and resolutions among the free men of Athens or Ephesus were often convincing, oftener exciting, but of no effect against superior forces which lay quietly in the hands of the controlling Macedonian.

New problems.

We may then classify the better men of that day as follows. First there was a not inconsiderable number of thoughtful and serious men who abandoned practical politics altogether, as being for small States and cities a thing of the past, and only leading to discontent and confusion. These men adopted the general conclusion, in which all the philosophical schools coincided, that peace of mind and true liberty of life were to be obtained by retiring from the world and spending one's days in that practice of personal virtues which was the religion of a nation that had no creed adequate to its spiritual wants.

Politics abandoned by thinking men,

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Nevertheless among other topics of speculation these men sometimes treated of politics; and when they did condescend to action, it was to carry out trenchant theories, and to act on principle, without regard to the terrible practical consequences of imposing a new order of things on a divided or uneducated public. The Stoic philosophers, in particular, who interfered in the public life of that day, were dangerous firebrands, not hesitating at the murder of an opponent; for were not all fools criminal, and was not he that offended in one point guilty of all? Such men as the Sphærus who advised the *coup d'état* of the Spartan Cleomenes^[172:1], and the Blossius who stimulated the Gracchi into revolution, and the Brutus who mimicked this sort of thing with deplorable results to the world in the murder of Cæsar,—all these were examples of the philosophical politician produced by the Hellenistic age.

except as a purely theoretical question,

with some fatal exceptions.

But if there were mischievous exceptions, we must not forget that the main body of the schools kept alive in the Greek mind a serious and exalted view of human dignity and human responsibility,—above all, they trained their hearers in that noble contempt for death which is perhaps the strongest feature in Hellenistic as compared with modern society; for there can be no doubt that Christian dogmas make cowards of all those who do not live up to their lofty ideal. The Greeks had no eternal punishment to scare them from facing death, and so we find whole cities preferring suicide to the loss of what they claimed as their rightful

Dignity and courage of the philosophers

shown by suicide.

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liberty^[173:1]. People who do this may be censured; they cannot be despised.

§ 71. Secondly, most philosophers had become so convinced of the necessity of monarchy, if not of the rule of one superior spirit, as better than the vacillations and excitements of a crowd, that many of their pupils considered themselves fit to undertake the duty of improving the masses by absolute control; and so we have a recrudescence, in a very different society, of those tyrants whose merits and defects we have already discussed at an earlier stage in this essay^[173:2]. The long series of passages from essays *That Monarchy is best*, which we may read in the commonplace book of Stobæus^[173:3], is indeed followed by a series of passages *On the Censure of Tyranny*; but the former is chiefly taken from Hellenistic philosophical tracts, whereas the latter is drawn wholly from older authors, such as Xenophon, who lived in the days of successful republics.

Rise of despots on principle.

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Even the literary men, who are always anti-despotic in theory, confess that many of these later tyrants were good and worthy men; and the fact that Gonatas, the greatest and best of the Antigonids, constantly 'planted a tyrant' in a free State which he found hard to manage, proves rather that this form of government was not unacceptable to the majority, than that he violated all the deepest convictions of his unmanageable subjects for the sake of an end certain to be balked if he adopted impolitic means. The force of imitation also helped the creation of tyrannies in the Greek cities; for were not the Hellenistic monarchies the greatest success of the age? And we may assume that many sanguine people did not lay to heart the wide difference between the requirements of the provinces of a large and scattered empire, and those of a town with a territory of ten miles square.

Probably not wholly unpopular.

These then were phenomena which manifested themselves all over the peninsula,—aye, even at times at Athens and Sparta, though these cities were protected by a great history and by the sentimental respect of all the world from the experiments which might be condoned in smaller and less august cities.

§ 72. But despite these clear lessons, the normal condition of the old leaders of the Greek world was hardly so respectable as that of the modern tyrannies. It consisted of a constant policy of protest, a constant resuscitation of old memories, an obsolete and ridiculous claim to lead the Greeks and govern an empire of dependencies after the manner of Pericles or Lysander. The strategic importance of both cities, as well as their hold upon Greek sentiment, made it worth while for the great Hellenistic monarchs to humour such fancies; for in those days the means of defending a city with walls or natural defences were still far greater than the means of attack, even with Philip's developments of siege artillery,—so that to coerce Athens or Sparta into absolute subjection by arms was both more unpopular and more expensive than to pay political partisans in each, who could at least defeat any active external policy. But if from this point of view these leading cities with all their dignity had little influence on the world, from another they proved fatal to the only new development of political life in Greece which had any promise for small and separate States. And this brings us to the feature of all others interesting to modern readers,—I mean the experiment of a federation of small States, with separate legislatures for internal affairs, but a central council to manage the external policy and the common interests of all the members.

Contemptible position of Athens and Sparta in politics,

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except in mischievous opposition to the new federations,

§ 73. This form of polity was not quite new in Greece or Asia Minor, but had remained obscure and unnoticed in earlier and more brilliant times. We may therefore fairly attribute to the opening years of the third century B.C. its discovery as an important and practical solution of the difficulty of maintaining small States in their *autonomy* or independence as regards both one another and the great Powers which threatened to absorb them.

whose origin was small and obscure.

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The old idea had been to put them under the *hegemony*, or leadership, of one of the great cities. But these had all abused the confidence reposed in them. Athens, Sparta, Thebes, had never for one moment understood the duty of ruling in the interests, not only of the governing, but of the governed. The Athenian law, by which subject-cities could seek redress before the courts of Athens, had been in theory the fairest; and so Grote and Duruy have made much of this apparent justice. But the actual hints we find of individual wrong and oppression, and the hatred in which Athens was held by all her dependencies or allies, show plainly that the democratic theory, fair as it may seem in the exposition of Grote, did not work with justice. Accordingly, we find both in northern and in southern Greece the experiment of federations of cities attaining much success, and receiving much support in public opinion.

The old plan of a sovran State not successful.

It is most significant that these new and powerful federations were formed outside and apart from the leading cities. Neither Athens nor Sparta, nay, not even Thebes, and hardly even Argos, would condescend to a federation where they should have only a city vote in conjunction with other cities; and so the new trial was deprived both of their advice and of the prestige of their arms and arts. If, for example, both Athens and Thebes, but especially the former, had joined the Ætolian League of wild mountaineers, who

The leading cities stood aloof from this experiment.

Athens and the Ætolians

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had wealth and military power, but no practice in the peaceful discussion and settlement of political questions, they would probably have influenced the counsels of the League for good, and saved it from falling into the hands of unprincipled mercenary chiefs, who regarded border wars as a state of nature, and plunder as a legitimate source of income.

But Athens stood sullenly aloof from this powerful organization, remembering always her long-lost primacy, and probably regarding these mountaineers as hardly Hellenes, and as unworthy to rank beside the ancient and educated States, which had once utilized them as mere semi-barbarous mercenaries. And yet the Ætoliens were the only Greeks who were able to make a serious and obstinate struggle for their liberties, even against the power of Rome.

§ 74. But if to have rude Ætoliens as co-equal members of a common council would have been too bitter a degradation for Athens, why not ally herself to the civilized and orderly Achæans? For the Achæan cities, though insignificant heretofore, had old traditions, legendary glories; and in later times Sicyon especially had been a leading centre, a chosen home for the fine arts. When Corinth and Argos were forced to join this League, why should Athens stand aloof? Yet here was the inevitable limit, beyond which the Achæan League could never obtain a footing. It stopped with the Isthmus, because no arguments could ever induce Athens to give it her adhesion [178:1].

or the Achæans.

[178]

Within the Peloponnesus the case was even worse; for here Sparta was ever the active opponent of the Achæan League, and sought by arms or by intrigues to separate cities and to make any primacy but her own impossible. Thus the Leagues had to contend with the sullen refusal or the active opposition of the principal Powers of Greece; and if, in spite of all that, they attained to great and deserved eminence, it only shows how unworthy was the opposition of those States whose narrow patriotism could not rise beyond their own susceptibilities. This it was which made the success of the experiment from the first doubtful.

Sparta and the Achæans.

§ 75. But there was a constitutional question behind, which is one of the permanent problems of statecraft, and therefore demands our earnest attention. The mode of attack upon the Leagues, especially upon the constitutional and orderly Achæan League, adopted by Macedon, Sparta, and Athens, was to invite some member to enter upon separate negotiations with them, without consulting the common council of the federation. And time after time this move succeeded, till at last the interference of the Romans in this direction sapped the power and coherence of the League.

A larger question.

What right has a federation to coerce its members?

[179]

The same kind of difficulty had occurred long before under the old dominations of Sparta, Athens, and Thebes; but I did not refer to it before, because this is the proper place to bring the problem in all its bearings before the reader. Under the Athenian supremacy many members had voluntarily entered into the Delian Confederacy; others had done so either under protest, or for some special object, such as the clearing of the Ægean from Persian occupation. Presently, when the particular object was fulfilled, and when the Athenian tax-gatherers insisted upon the tribute which was spent on public, but Athenian, objects, the separate members declared their right to secede, and revolted whenever they had the power. The Athenians argued that the peace and prosperity of the Ægean had been secured by the common effort of the Confederacy and by the zeal and self-sacrifice of Athens. They denied that each member which had so long profited by the arrangement had a right to secede, and in any case they declared that they would coerce the seceder. In Duruy's chapter on the passage of the Delian Confederacy into the Athenian empire [179:1] he shows little sympathy for the individual members and their hardships, and justifies Athens in her aggressive policy. In a mere passing note he compares the case of the North against the South in the late American Civil War. But as he has not argued out the problem, I may be of service to the reader in discussing it here.

Disputed already in the Delian Confederacy by Athens and the lesser members.

Duruy's attitude on this question.

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It was to this dispute that the real origin of the Peloponnesian war is to be traced. And though most people thought Athens quite justified in holding what she had obtained, and not surrendering the empire which had cost such labour and returned in exchange such great glory, yet the general feeling of the Greek world was distinctly in favour of the seceder,—in favour of the inalienable right of every city to reassert its autonomy as a separate State [180:1], not only with communal independence, but with perfect liberty to treat as it chose with neighbouring States. Whenever, therefore, this conflict between Imperialism and Particularism arose, public sympathies sided with the assertion of local independence.

Greek sentiment very different.

§ 76. The debate in the present case was somewhat different in its details. The Achæan League, a number of small cities situated upon a coast exposed to pirates, and able to foresee from lofty posts the coming raid, united voluntarily for attack and defence, and so formed a Confederacy, which lasted a long time before the wealth gained by its members as mercenaries and the decay of the greater Powers of Greece brought it into prominence [181:1]. These cities had a common executive and a sort of cabinet, preparing the business for the general Assembly, which met for three days twice

Nature of the Achæan League.

[181]

a year, and then decisions were obtained from this Assembly and measures ratified by its votes. But as the more distant members could not attend in great numbers, the members of each city present, whether few or many, gave that city's vote, which counted as an unit in the Confederacy. The result was of course to put political power into the hands of the richer classes, who had leisure to leave their own affairs and go regularly to the Assembly at Ægion^[181:2].

The difficulties which now arose were these: Had any of the original twelve towns, that had voluntarily formed this Union, the right to withdraw their adhesion? In a lesser degree, had the towns that afterwards joined in consequence of the pressure of circumstances, but by a deliberate and public vote, a right to rescind that vote? And in a still less degree, had any town which had subscribed to the Achæan constitution any right to violate its observance in one point, as by negotiating separately with another State, or was it bound to observe in all respects the terms imposed by the Union from which it was not allowed to secede?

Statement of the new difficulty

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The first of these cases is by far the most perplexing, and I am not aware that it has ever been settled by any argument better than an appeal to force. To the Greeks, at all events, it seemed that the right of autonomy—the power to manage one's own affairs—was the inalienable right of every *city*; just as the Irish Nationalists may be heard daily asserting it for every *nation*^[182:1].

in its clearest form never yet settled except by force.

In our own youth we heard this right far more seriously urged by the seceding States of the American Union, some of which had been members of the first combination, and had voluntarily ceded certain portions of their political rights, at least their theoretical rights, in return for the protection and support of the Confederation as a whole. These States argued that if the Union began to interfere in the domestic concerns of each,—such, for example, as the practice of permitting household slaves,—it was a breach of contract, and justified the State in formally repudiating the remainder of the contract. But even had there been no encroachment by new legislation, the Greek city claimed the right of returning to its isolated independence.

Case of the American Union.

[183]

§ 77. On the other side, it has always been argued that though contracts for a definite period need not be renewed, there are many contracts intended by their very nature to be permanent, and which are so far-reaching in their consequences that for any one party to abandon them is a profound injustice to the remainder, whose lives have been instituted and regulated upon these contracts^[183:1]. Let us take an illustration from everyday life. From the contract of marriage there arise such important consequences that a dissolution does not permit the contracting parties to resume their original life; and therefore in all higher civilizations legal divorce has been made very difficult, and secession by either party without legal sanction a grave offence.

Arguments for coercion of the several members.

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In like manner it was argued that the several cities had grown rich and powerful under the League. The lives of its members had been sacrificed to defend every city attacked; the funds of the League had been spent on each as they were needed. Was it just that after growing and thriving upon these conditions any one of them should, for its own convenience, repudiate the bond and regard all the accruing benefits as a private property, to be disposed of to any strange Power?

To answer this question and to adjudicate between the litigants is hard enough, and yet I have stated the simplest difficulty. For in the case of many of the additions to the Achæan League a revolution had first taken place, the existing government had been overthrown, and then the new majority had placed themselves under the protection of the Confederation. If the old rulers returned to power, were they bound by the Government which had coerced them, and which they regarded as revolutionary? Others, again, had been constrained by the presence of an armed force, and by threats of imminent danger if they did not accept the League's protection. When circumstances changed, could they not argue that they were coerced, and that an apparently free *plébiscite* was wrung from them against their better judgment?

Cases of doubtful or enforced adherence.

[185]

§ 78. Such were the profoundly interesting and thoroughly modern problems which agitated the minds of men in post-Alexandrian Greece. There were moreover various internal questions,—whether new cities which joined should have equal rights with the original members; whether large cities should have a city vote only equal to the vote of the smallest; whether the general Assembly should be held in turn at each of the cities, or in the greatest and most convenient centre, or in a place specially chosen for its insignificance, so that the Assembly might be entirely free from local influences? All these questions must have agitated the minds of the founders of the Swiss Union and the American Union, for the problems remain the same, however nations may wax and wane.

Various internal questions.

The Achæan and Ætolian Unions were very popular indeed, especially the latter, which required no alterations in the administration of each State, but accepted any member merely on terms of paying a general tax, and obtaining in lieu thereof military aid, and restitution of property from other members if they had carried off plunder from its territory^[185:1]. The Achæan League required more. A tyrant must abdicate before his city could become a member, and in more than one case this actually

Looser bond of the Ætolian League.

took place.

The most dangerous, though passive, enemy of this hopeful compromise between the Separatist and the truly National spirit was, as I have said, the sullen standing aloof of the greater cities. Of course the ever active foe was the power of Macedon, which could deal easily with local tyrants, or even single cities, but was balked by the strength of the combination.

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At last there arose a still more attractive alternative, which was rapidly destroying the Achæan League, when its leader, Aratus, called in the common enemy from Macedon, and enslaved his country in order to checkmate his rival. This rival was the royalty of Sparta, who offered to the cities of the Peloponnesus an Union on the old lines of a Confederation under the headship of Sparta, but of Sparta as Cleomenes had transformed it; for he had assassinated the ephors, abolished the second king, and proposed sweeping reforms in the direction of socialistic equality,—division of large properties, and protection of the poor against the oppression of aristocrats or capitalists. This kind of revolution, with the military genius of Cleomenes to give it strength and brilliancy, attracted men's minds far more than the constitutional, but somewhat torpid and plutocratic, League. Of course the fatal struggle led practically to the destruction of both schemes by the superior force and organization of Macedon.

**Radical monarchy of
Cleomenes.**

FOOTNOTES:

- [168:1] We may well apply to it the famous words of Tacitus at the opening of his *Histories*: 'Opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevum; principes ferro interempti, bella civilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta . . . pollutae caeremoniae; magna adulteria; plenum exiliis mare; infecti caedibus scopuli . . . corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus, per amicos oppressi.'
- [170:1] This judgment seems likely to be reversed by the wonderful accession of new materials upon the Ptolemaic age, the first instalment of which I have published in a monograph upon the Petrie Papyri (with autotype plates, Williams & Norgate, 1891). We shall presently know the conditions of life in one province at all events, the Fayoum, which was peopled with Greek veterans along with Jews and Egyptians. I have now under my hand their wills, their private letters, their accounts, their official correspondence in hundreds of shreds and fragments.
- [171:1] The best special work on the conflict of the Greek settlements with the Jewish population, and with the Asmonæan sovrans all along the coast of Palestine, is B. Stark's *Gaza und die Philistische Küste*.
- [172:1] Cf. Plutarch's *Life of Cleomenes*, cap. xi.
- [173:1] Cf. the cases quoted in my *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 394, 537, 541-543.
- [173:2] Above §§ 35 *seqq.*
- [173:3] *Florilegium* (ed. Teubner), ii. 247-284.
- [178:1] The momentary acquisition (in 190 B.C.) of two unimportant towns, Pleuron and Heraclea, in northern Greece, need hardly count as a correction of this general statement. The acquisition of the island Zacynthos was prevented by the Romans.
- [179:1] *Hist. des Grecs*, chap. xix.
- [180:1] I need not pause to remind the reader that each Greek city, or *pólis*, was in every constitutional sense a separate and independent State, just as much as the largest country is now. These cities severally made frequent treaties even with Rome, to which they stood in the same relations as a foreign king.
- [181:1] These points were suggested for the first time in my *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 7 *seqq.*
- [181:2] This voting by cities seems to me the nearest approach to representation that the Greeks ever made in politics, as distinct from religious councils, such as the Amphictyonies; for of course a city far from the place of assembly could agree with a small number of its citizens that they should attend and vote in a particular way. Every citizen, however, might go if he chose, so that this would be a mere private understanding.
- [182:1] The Greek *city-polity* (*πόλις*) was a perfectly clear and definite thing. A *nation*, on the contrary, may mean anything, for it may be determined by race, religion, language, locality, or tradition. Any one or all of these may be utilized to mark out the bounds of a nation according to the convenience of the case. I have often heard it asserted, and seen it printed, that in Ireland the Protestants of the North and East are quite a separate race. Such a statement, generally made to justify harsh measures against them from a Parliament of Roman Catholics, would also justify them in seceding from the rest of Ireland.
- [183:1] Duruy even quotes, in connection with the earlier Athenian Confederacy (chap. xix. § 2), the words of the actual treaties between several of the smaller towns (Erythræ, Chalcis), which have been found graven on stone; and argues that because they assert permanent union with Athens, and invoke curses on him that hereafter attempts to dissolve this union, Athens was legally as well as morally justified in coercing any seceders. It is strange so acute a thinker should not perceive that this assertion of eternal peace and

union was an almost universal and perfectly unmeaning formula. If such formulæ were really valid, we might find ourselves bound by our ancestors to very serious obligations. There is no case, except that of Adam, where the act of one generation bound all succeeding centuries.

[185:1] We now have recovered several inscriptions, which give us information on some of these points. Cf. *Mitth.* of the German Institute at Athens, xi. 262.

CHAPTER X.

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THE ROMANS IN GREECE.

§ 79. The interference of the Romans in Greek affairs reopened many of the constitutional questions upon which I have touched; for in their conflicts with Macedon they took care to win the Greeks to their side by open declarations in favour of independence, and by supporting the Leagues, which afforded the only organization that could supply them with useful auxiliaries. When the Romans had conquered came the famous declaration that all the cities which had been directly subject to Macedon should be independent, while the Achæan League could resume its political life freed from the domination of the Antigonids which Aratus had accepted for it. Now at last it might have seemed as if the peninsula would resume a peaceful and orderly development under the presidency and without the positive interference of Rome.

**Position of Rome
towards the Leagues.**

But new and fatal difficulties arose. The 'liberty of the Greeks' was still, as ever, a sort of sentimental aphorism which the Romans repeated, often from conviction, often again from policy. But the Romans were a practical people, and did not the least understand why they should free the Greeks from Macedon in order that they might join some other Hellenistic sovran against Rome. And even if this danger did not arise, the Romans felt that the liberation of Greece would have worse than no meaning if the stronger States were allowed to prey upon the weaker, if every little city were allowed to go to war with its neighbours,—if, in fact, the nominal liberty resulted in the tyranny of one section over another.

**Roman interpretation
of the 'liberty of the
Greeks.'**

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Both these difficulties soon arose. The Ætoliæ, who had not obtained from the Romans any extension of territory or other advantages adequate to their vigorous and useful co-operation against the king of Macedon, were bitterly disappointed, for they saw clearly that Rome would rather curtail than advance their power. The cities of northern Greece which had been liberated by the Romans from Philip V. could not be coerced into the Ætolian League without an appeal on their part to Rome, which could hardly fail to be successful. So then the Ætoliæ found that they had brought upon themselves a new and steady control, which would certainly prevent the marauding chiefs from acquiring wealth by keeping up local disturbances, raids, and exactions as the normal condition of the country. They therefore openly incited king Antiochus of Syria to invade Greece, and so brought on their own destruction.

**Opposition of the
Ætoliæ.**

It was a great pity, for this League of mountaineers had shown real military vigour, and had it been educated into orderly and constitutional ways, would have been a strong bulwark of Hellenic independence. Nor are we to forget that when we read of its turbulence and its reckless disregard of justice, we are taking the evidence of its most determined foe, the historian Polybius. He was one of the leaders of the rival League, and will hardly concede to the Ætoliæ any qualities save their vices. On the other hand, he has stated as favourably as possible the more interesting case of his own confederation.

**Probably not fairly
stated by Polybius.**

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§ 80. Here the second difficulty just stated was that which arose, not without the deliberate assistance of the Romans. On the one hand, the Achæans thought themselves justified in extending their Union so as far as possible to comprise all Greece; and though they usually succeeded by persuasion, there were not wanting cases where they aided with material force the minority in a wavering city, and coerced a new member which showed signs of falling away. More especially the constant attempts to incorporate Sparta and Messene, which had never been friendly to the League, proved its ultimate destruction. The bloody successes of Philopœmen, the first Greek who ever really captured Sparta, and who compelled it to join the League, led to complaints at Rome about violated liberties, and constant interferences of the Senate, not only to repress disorders, but to weaken any growing union in the country which Rome wished to see reduced to impotent peace; and so there came about, after half a century of mutual recrimination, of protest, of encroachment, the final conquest and reduction of Greece into a Roman province [190:1].

**Rome and the
Achæans.**

**Mistakes of
Philopœmen gave
Rome excuses for
interference.**

[190]

§ 81. The diplomatic conflict between the Achæans and the Romans is of the highest interest, and we have upon it the opposing judgments of great historians; for here Roman and Greek history run into the same channel, and the conflict may be treated from either point of view. Those who look at the debate

**Mommsen takes the
Roman side.**

from the Roman point of view, like Mommsen, and who are, moreover, not persuaded of the immeasurable superiority of republican institutions over a strong central power, controlling without hesitation or debate, are convinced that all the talk about Greek independence was mere folly. They point out that these Greeks, whenever they had their full liberty, wore each other out in petty conflicts; that liberty meant license, revolutions at home and encroachments upon neighbours; and that it was the historical mission and duty of the Romans to put an end to all this sentimental sham.

On the other hand Hertzberg, in the first volume of his excellent *History of the Greeks under Roman Domination*, and Professor Freeman, in his *Federal Government*, show with great clearness that far lower motives often actuated the conquering race, that they were distinctly jealous of any power in the hands of their Greek neighbours, and that they constantly encouraged appeals and revolts on the part of individual cities in the League. So the Senate in fact produced those unhappy disturbances which resulted in the destruction of Corinth and the conquest of Greece by a Roman army in formal war.

**Hertzberg and
Freeman on the
Achæan question.**

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It is of course easy to see that there were faults on both sides, and that individual Romans, using their high position without authority of the Senate, often promoted quarrels in the interests of that truculent financial policy which succeeded in playing all the commerce of the world into the hands of Roman capitalists. On the other hand, it is hard to avoid the conviction that the days of independent Greece were over, that the nation had grown old and worn out, that most of its intellect and enterprise had wandered to the East, to Egypt, or to Rome, and that had the Romans maintained an absolute policy of non-intervention, the result would have been hardly less disastrous, and certainly more disgraceful to the Greeks. For a long and contemptible decadence, like that of Spain in modern Europe, is surely more disgraceful than to be embodied by force in a neighbouring empire.

**Senility of The
Greeks.**

Greece in this and the succeeding centuries had arrived at that curious condition that her people who emigrated obtained fortune and distinction all over the world, while those who remained at home seemed unable even to till the land,—which was everywhere relapsing into waste pasture,—far less to prosecute successful trade, for want of both capital and sustained energy. One profession unfortunately flourished,—that of politics; and the amount of time and ability spent on this profession may perhaps account for the decadence of both agriculture and commerce.

**Decay of the mother-
country.**

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§ 82. Greek politicians were divided into three classes. There were first those who saw in Roman domination the only salvation from internal discord and insecurity. They either despaired of or despised the prospects of political independence, and saw in the iron Destiny which extended the Roman sway over the East, a definite solution of their difficulties, and possibly a means of increasing their material welfare. They therefore either acquiesced in or actively promoted every diplomatic encroachment on the part of Rome, and made haste to secure to themselves 'friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,' as their adversaries thought, that by and by they might be the local governors, and recipients of Roman favour.

**The advocates for
union with Rome.**

Over against them were the uncompromising Nationalists,—I apologize for using the right word,—who maintained absolutely the inalienable right of the Greeks to be independent and manage not only their internal affairs, but their external differences as they pleased. They insisted that the Romans had gained their power over Greece by a system of unconstitutional encroachments, and that no material advantages of enforced peace or oppressive protection could compensate for the paralysis which was creeping over Hellenic political life.

**The advocates of
complete
independence.**

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The tyrannous and cruel act of the Romans, who deported one thousand leading Achæans to Italy (on the charge of disloyalty to Rome in sentiments) and let most of them pine in their exile and die as mere *suspects*, without ever bringing them to trial, gave this party the strongest support by the misery which it inflicted and the wide-spread indignation it excited.

The third party was the party of moderate counsels and of compromise. Sympathizing deeply with the National party, they felt at the same time that any armed resistance to Rome was absurd and ruinous. They therefore desired to delay every encroachment by diplomatic protests, by appeals to the justice of the Romans, and thus protract, if they could not prevent, the absorption of all national liberties into the great dominion of Rome. This party, undoubtedly the most reasonable and the most honest, have left us their spokesman in the historian Polybius; but we may be sure that, like every intermediate party, they commanded little sympathy or support.

**The party of
moderate counsels.**

§ 83. Moreover, both the extreme parties had strong pecuniary interests to stimulate them. The party which promoted complete submission to Rome were the people of property, to whom a settled state of things without constitutional agitations or sudden war-contributions afforded the only chance of retaining what they possessed. Rome had never favoured the needy mob in her subject cities, but had always ruled them through the responsible and moneyed classes. Roman dominion therefore meant at least peace and safety for the rich.

**Money
considerations
acted upon both
extremes.**

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The grinding exactions of Roman prætor and Roman publican were as yet unknown to them. The Nationalist party, on the other hand, consisted of the needy and discontented, who expected, if allowed to exercise their political power, to break down the monopolies of the rich, and, in any case, to make reputation and money by the practice of politics; for, as I have shown above, and as is not strange to our own day, politics had become distinctly a lucrative profession. These people's hope of gain, as well as their local importance, would vanish with full subjection to Rome; and this was a strong motive, even though in many it may have only been auxiliary to the real patriotism which burned at the thought of the extinction of national independence.

The debate soon went beyond the stage of rational argument or the possibility of rational persuasion. To the Nationalist, the Romanizing aristocrat or moneyed man was a traitor, sacrificing his country's liberties for his mess of pottage, grovelling and touting for Roman favour, copying Roman manners, and sending his sons to be educated in Roman ways. To the advocate of union with Rome, the so-called Nationalist was a needy and dishonest adventurer, using the cry of patriotism and of nationality to cloak personal greed, socialistic schemes, and hatred of what was orderly and respectable. If he succeeded, his so-called liberty would be used in coercing and plundering the dissentients; and, after all, such stormy petrels in politics must be quite unfit to form any stable government. If any portion of the Peloponnesus asserted its right to several liberty, no politicians would have recourse to more violent coercion than these advocates of national independence. They protested against enforced union with Rome: they would be the first to promote enforced union with themselves, and carry it through in bloody earnest. This was actually what happened during the last despairing struggle. The coercion practised by the last presidents of the Leagues, the violent Nationalists who forced the nation into war, was tyrannous and cruel beyond description.

But of course the issue was certain; and with the reeking smoke of the ruins of Corinth closes the history of Greece, as most historians, even of wider views, have understood it.

§ 84. There is no period of the history which deserves modern study more than that which I have here expounded in its principles. The analogies which it presents to modern life, nay, to the very history of our times, are so striking that it is almost impossible to narrate it without falling into the phraseology of current politics. When I first published an account of these things^[196:1], I was at once attacked by several of my reviewers for daring to introduce modern analogies into ancient history. I had dragged the Muse of History into the heated atmosphere of party strife and the quarrels of our own day; I had spoiled a good book by allusions to burning questions which disturbed the reader and made him think of the next election, instead of calmly contemplating the lessons of Polybius. It would have been far more to the point had they shown that the analogies suggested were invalid, and the comparisons misleading. This not one of them has attempted to do; nor do I hesitate to say that the objections they raised were rather because my analogies were too just and striking than because they were far-fetched and irrelevant. If these critics had found that the facts I adduced favoured their own political views, no doubt they would have lavished their praise upon the very feature which incurred their censure.

I think, with Thucydides and Polybius, that the study of history is then most useful and serious when it leads us to estimate what is likely to happen by the light of what has already happened in similar cases. Mere remoteness of date or place has nothing to say to the matter. The history of Greece, as I have often said already, is intensely modern,—far more so than any mediæval or than most recent histories. We have to deal with a people fully developed, in its mature life; nay, even in its old age and decadence. To deny a historian the privilege and the profit of illumining his subject by the light of modern parallels, or the life of to-day by parallels from Greek history, is simply to condemn him to remain an unpractical pedant, and to abandon the strongest claim to a hearing from practical men.

Above all, let us seek the truth with open mind, and speak out our convictions; and if we are wrong, instead of blaming us for appealing to the deeper interests and stirring the warmer emotions of men, let our errors be refuted. Let us save ancient history from its dreary fate in the hands of the dry antiquarian, the narrow scholar; and while we utilize all his research and all his learning, let us make the acts and lives of older men speak across the chasm of centuries, and claim kindred with the men and the motives of to-day. For this, and this only, is to write history in the full and real sense,—this is to show that the great chain of centuries is forged of homogeneous metal, and joined with links that all bear the great Workman's unmistakeable design.

§ 85. We have come to the real close of political Greek history,—at a point upon which historians have been unanimous. And yet the Greeks would hardly have been worth all this study if the sum of what they could teach us was a political lesson. They showed indeed in politics a variety and an excellence not reached by any other ancient people. But their spiritual and intellectual wealth is not bounded by these limits; and they have left us, after the close of their

Exaggerated statements on both sides.

The Separatists would not tolerate separation from themselves.

Democratic tyranny.

[195]

Modern analogies forced upon us,

and not to be set aside.

[196]

The history of Greece is essentially modern;

therefore modern parallels are surely admissible, if justly drawn.

[197]

The spiritual history not closed with the Roman conquest.

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independence, more to think out and to understand than other nations have done in the heyday of their greatness.

On this spiritual history I shall not say more than a few words. The earlier part of it, extending to the moment when, under Trajan, Christianity came forth from its concealment, and became a social and political power, I have recently treated in a volume entitled *The Greek World under Roman Sway*. The reader who cares to unfold this complicated and various picture of manners, of ideas, of social habits and moral principles, will find the Greek subjects of the Roman Empire full of interest, and will even find, in the authors of that age, merits which have long been unduly ignored. The crowded thoroughfares of Antioch and Alexandria; the great religious foundations of Comana, Stratoniceia, and Pessinus, each ruled by a priest no less important than the prince-bishops of Salzburg or Würzburg in recent centuries; the old-world fashions of Borysthenes, of Naples, of Eubœa; the gradual rise of Syrian and of Jewish Hellenism, the fascinating rivalries of Herod and of Cleopatra for Roman favour, the Hellenism of Cicero, of Cæsar, of Claudius, and of Nero, the fluctuations of trade from Rhodes to Delos, from Delos to Puteoli and Corinth, the splendours and the dark spots in the society which Dion, Apuleius, and Plutarch saw and described—these and many other kindred topics make up a subject most fascinating, though from its complexity difficult to set in order, and impossible to handle without the occurrence of error. [199]

I am sure it is below the mark to say that more than half the Greek books now extant date from the period of the Roman domination. And if it be true that in style there is nothing to equal the great poets and prose-writers from Æschylus to Demosthenes, it is equally true that in matter the later writers far exceed their predecessors. All the exacter science got from the Greeks comes from that large body of Alexandrian writings which none but the specialist can understand. The history of Diodorus, embracing an immense field and telling us a vast number of facts otherwise lost; the great geographies of Strabo, of Ptolemy, and that curious collection which can be read in Carl Müller's laborious *Corpus*; the moral essays of Dion Chrysostom; the social encyclopædia of Plutarch; the vast majority of the extant inscriptions, come to us from Roman times.

The great bequests of the Roman period.

But most of these are special. Is there nothing of general interest? Assuredly there is. No Greek book can compare for one moment in general importance with that collection of history and letters called the New Testament, all written in Greek, and intended to reach the civilized world through the mediation of Greek.

I will not here enter upon Christian Greek literature, but point to Plutarch, who has certainly been more read and had more influence than any other Greek writer on the literature of modern Europe. Nay, in the lighter subjects, and where the writers must trust to style to commend them to the reader, not only is there a good deal of poetry once thought classical,—such as the Anacreontics and the Anthology—which is in great part the produce of later Greek genius, but the wit of Lucian and the seriousness of Julian found in the Greek language their appropriate vehicle. [200]

The Anthology, Lucian, Julian,

The deeper philosophy of these centuries, that attempt to fuse the metaphysics of heathendom and Christendom which is called Neo-Platonism,—this too was created and circulated by Greek writers and in Greek; so that though Hellas was laid asleep, and her independence a mere tradition, her legacy to the world was still bearing interest one hundredfold.

Plotinus.

The writers who have dealt with this great and various development of later Hellenism are either the historians of the Roman Empire—especially Duruy, who has kept up the thread of his Greek History in his popular *History of Rome*—or the theologians. The latter have a field so specially their own, and the literature of the subject is so enormous, that the mere historian of Greece and the Greeks must content himself with the pagan side. To touch even in a general way, as I have hitherto done, upon the many controversies that now arise concerning Greek life and thought would here be impossible. [201]

Theological Greek studies.

§ 86. But there is one important point at the very outset of the new departure into Christianity upon which I would gladly save the reader from a widely diffused error.

It has been long the fashion—since the writings of Ernest Renan it has been almost a commonplace, to say: that while modern Europe owes to the Greeks all manner of wisdom and of refinement, in politics, literature, philosophy, architecture, sculpture, one thing there is which they could not impart to us,—religion. This deeper side of man, his relation to one God, his duty and his responsibilities beyond this ordinary life, we owe not to the Greeks, but to the legacy of the Semitic race. To the Jews, we are told, are due all the highest, all the most serious, all the most elevating features in modern Christianity.

Have the Greeks no share in our religion?

Is this true? Is it the case that the Greeks were, after all, only brilliant children, playing with life, and never awaking to the real seriousness of the world's problems? There has seldom been a plausible statement circulated which is further from the truth. However capital the fact that the first great teacher and revealer of Christianity was a Jew, however carefully the dogmas of the Old Testament were worked up into the New, Christianity, as we have it historically, would have been impossible without Hellenism.

Or is it altogether Semitic?

In the first place, the documents of the New Testament were one and all composed in Greek, as the *lingua franca* of the East and West; and the very first author in the list, Saint Matthew, was a tax-gatherer, whose business required him to know it^[202:1]. If, therefore, the vehicle of Christianity from the first was the Greek language, this is not an unimportant factor to start with; and yet it is the smallest and most superficial contribution that Greek thought has given to Christianity. When my later studies on the history of Hellenism under the Roman Empire see the light, I trust that the evidence for the following grave facts, already admitted by most critical theologians, will be brought before the lay reader.

The language of the New Testament exclusively Greek.

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§ 87. When we pass by the first three, or Synoptical, Gospels, there remains a series of books by early Christian teachers, of whom Saint Paul and Saint John are by far the most prominent. To Saint Paul is due a peculiar development of the faith which brings into prominence that side of Christianity now known as Protestantism,—the doctrine of justification by faith; of the greater importance of dogma than of practice; of the predestination or election of those that will be saved. This whole way of thinking, this mode of looking at the world, so different from anything in the Jewish books, so developed beyond the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels, was quite familiar to the most serious school of Hellenism, to the Stoic theory of life popular all over the Hellenistic world, and especially at Tarsus, where Saint Paul received his education.

Saint Paul's teaching.

Stoic elements in Saint Paul.

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The Stoic wise man, who had adopted with faith that doctrine, forthwith rose to a condition differing *in kind* from the rest of the world, who were set down as moral fools, whose highest efforts at doing right were mere senseless blundering, mere filthy rags, without value or merit. The wise man, on the contrary, was justified in the sight of God, and could commit no sin; the commission of one fault would be a violation of his election, and would make him guilty of all, and as subject to punishment as the vilest criminal. For all faults were equally violations of the moral law, and therefore equally proofs that the true light was not there. Whether one of the elect could fall away, was a matter of dispute, but in general was thought impossible^[203:1]. Whether conversion was a gradual change of character, or a sudden inspiration, was an anxious topic of discussion. The wise man, and he alone, enjoyed absolute liberty, boundless wealth, supreme happiness; nothing could take from him the inestimable privileges he had attained.

The Stoic sage.

Can any one fail to recognize these remarkable doctrines, not only in the spirit, but in the very letter, of Saint Paul's teaching? Does he not use even the language of the Stoic paradoxes, 'as, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things'? Is not his so-called sermon at Athens a direct statement of Stoic views against the Epicureans, taking nothing away, but adding to their account of the moral world the revelation of Jesus Christ and of the Resurrection? Will any one venture to assert in the face of these facts that the most serious and religious of Greek systems was the offspring of children in morals, or that it failed to exert a powerful influence through the greatest teacher of Christianity upon all his followers? It is of course idle to weigh these things in a minute balance, and declare who did most, or what was the greatest advance made in our faith beyond the life and teaching of its Founder. But the more we compare Greek Stoicism with Pauline Christianity, the more distinctly their general connection will be felt and appreciated.

The Stoic Providence.

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§ 88. Let us now come to the more obvious and better acknowledged case of Saint John. It has been the stock argument of those who reject the early date and alleged authorship of the Fourth Gospel that the writer is imbued with Hellenistic philosophy; that he is intimate with that fusion of Jewish and Platonic thought which distinguished the schools of Alexandria; that in particular the doctrine of the *Word*, with which the book opens, is quite strange to Semite thought, doubly strange to Old Testament theology, not even hinted at in the early apocryphal books. In other words, the Greek elements in the Fourth Gospel are so strong that many critics think them impossible of attainment for a man of Saint John's birth and education!

Saint John's Gospel.

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For my purpose this is more than enough. I need not turn, to refute these sceptics, to show how the author of the book of Revelation, if he be the same, made great strides in Greek letters before he wrote the Gospel, thus showing the importance he attached not only to Greek thought, but to Greek expression. The Alexandrian tone of Saint John's Gospel, derived from the same sources as those which gave birth to Neo-Platonism, is as evident as the Stoical tone in Saint Paul, derived from the schools of Tarsus and Cilicia.

Neo-Platonic doctrine of the Logos.

Here is a chapter of deeper Greek history yet to be written from the Greek side, not as an appendage to Roman history, or as an interlude in theological controversy.

§ 89. So much for the influence of the highest and most serious forms of Greek thinking upon the religion of the Roman Empire. But even from the inferior developments of philosophy, its parodies of strength and its exaggerations of weakness, elements passed into this faith which is asserted to be wholly foreign to Hellenism. The Cynic ostentation of

The Cynic independence of all men;

the Epicurean

independence, of living apart from the world, free from all cares and responsibilities, found its echo in the Christian anchorite, who chose solitude and poverty from higher but kindred motives. The sentimental display of personal affection, by which the Epicurean endeavoured to substitute the love of friends for the love of principle or devotion to the State, had its echo in those personal ties among early Christians which replaced their civic attachments and consoled them when outlawed by the State. Indeed, there is much in Epicureanism which has passed into Christianity,—an unsuspected fact till it was brought out by very recent writers^[206:1].

dependence upon friends.

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What shall we say too of the culture of this age? Is not the eloquence of the early Christian Fathers, of John Chrysostom, of Basil, worthy of admiration; and was not all their culture derived from the old Greek schools and universities, which had lasted with unbroken though changing traditions from the earliest Hellenistic days? One must read Libanius, a writer of the fourth century after Christ, to understand how thoroughly Athens was still old Greek in temper, in tone, in type, and how it had become the university of the civilized world^[206:2]. The traditions of this Hellenistic university life and system passed silently, but not less certainly, into the oldest mediæval Italian universities, and thence to Paris and to England,—just as the Greek tones or scales passed into the chants of Saint Ambrose at Milan, and thence into the noble music of Palestrina and of Tallis, which our own degenerate age has laid aside for weaker and more sentimental measures.

The university of Athens.

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§ 90. It is indeed difficult to overrate the amount and the variety of the many hidden threads that unite our modern culture to that of ancient Greece, not to speak of the conscious return of our own century to the golden age of Hellenic life as the only human epoch in art, literature, and eloquence which ever approached perfection. As the Greek language has lasted in that wonderful country in spite of long domination by Romans, of huge invasion by Celts and Slavs, of feudal occupation by Frankish knights, of raid and rapine by Catalans and Venetians, ending with the cruel tyranny of the Turk, so the Greek spirit has lasted through all manner of metamorphose and modification, till the return wave has in our day made it the highest aspiration of our worldly perfection.

Greece indestructible.

§ 91. I said at the opening of this essay that I should endeavour to indicate the principal problems to be solved by future historians of Greece,—at least by those who have not the genius to recast the whole subject by the light of some great new idea; and in so doing, particular stress has been laid on the political side, not without deliberate intention. For, in the first place, this aspect of Greek affairs is the peculiar province of English historians. They, with their own experiences and traditions of constitutional struggles, cannot but feel the strongest attraction towards similar passages in the life of the Greeks, so that even the professional scholar in his study feels the excitement of the contested election, the glow of the public debate, when he finds them distracting Athens or Ægion. The practical insight of a Grote or a Freeman leads him to interpret facts which may be inexplicable or misleading to a foreign student. Even with Grote before him, Ernst Curtius or Duruy is sometimes unable to grasp the true political situation.

Greek political history almost the private property of the English writers,

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I say this in the higher and more delicate sense; for of course many recent histories give an adequate account of the large political changes to the general student. Perhaps, indeed, the remoteness of foreign writers from political conflicts such as ours gives them a calmness and fairness which is of advantage, while the English writer can hardly avoid a certain amount of partisanship, however carefully he may strive to be scrupulously impartial. For in all these things we are compelled unconsciously to reflect not only our century, but our nation, and colour the acts and the motives of other days with the hues our imagination has taken from surrounding circumstances.

who have themselves lived in practical politics.

§ 92. When we come to the literary and artistic side, the foreign historians have a decided advantage. The philosophical side of Greek literature has indeed been treated by Grote and other English writers with a fulness and clearness that leave little to be desired; but on the poetry and the artistic prose of the Greeks, foreign scholars write with a freshness and a knowledge to which few of us attain. Of course a Frenchman, with the systematic and careful training which he gets in composition, must have an inestimable advantage over people, like us, who merely write as they list, and have no rules to guide their taste or form their style. And the German, if as regards style he is even less happily circumstanced than the Englishman, whose language has at least been moulded by centuries of literature, has yet on the side of archæology and art enjoyed a training which is only just now becoming possible in England or America.

Not so in artistic or literary history,

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where the French and Germans are superior;

Hence it is that the earlier part of Curtius' history has such a charm,— **especially in art.**

though we must not detract from the individual genius of the man, which is manifest enough if we compare him with the solid but prosaic Duncker. However complete and well articulated the bones of fact may lie before us, it requires a rare imagination to clothe them with flesh and with

skin, nay, with bloom upon the skin, and expression in the features, if we are to have a living figure, and not a dry and repulsive skeleton.

§ 93. What I think it right, in conclusion, to insist upon is this: that a proper knowledge of Greek art, instead of being the mere amusement of the dilettante, is likely to have an important effect upon the general appearance of our public buildings and our homes, and to make them not only more beautiful, but also instructive to the rising generation. The day for new developments of architecture and of decorative art seems past, though the modern discovery of a new material for building—iron—ought to have brought with it something fresh and original. In earlier ages the quality of the material can always be shown to be a potent factor in style.

Importance of studying Greek art.

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If, however, we are not to have a style of our own, we must necessarily go back to the great builders and decorators of former ages, and make them the models of our artists. This has in fact been the history of the revivals since the universal reign of vulgarity in what we call the early Queen Victoria period in England. First there was a great Gothic revival, when we began to understand what the builders of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries meant, and to reproduce their ideas with intelligence. This has since given way to the Renaissance style, in which most recent buildings have been erected, and which has beauties which the Gothic revivalists used to regard with horror.

Modern revivals of ancient styles,—Gothic, Renaissance.

There is no probability that the last ideal will be more permanent than the last but one; it will presently be replaced by some other model. This, however, will have been gained,—that our ordinary lay public will have been trained to understand and appreciate not only the great Gothic works of the early, but the great Renaissance works of the late Middle Ages. We can now even tolerate those curious vampings, so common in Holland and Germany, where one style has been laid upon the other or added to it^[211:1].

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It is more than likely that the next revival will be a Hellenic revival. Renaissance architecture, as is well known, is the imitation of Roman or late Hellenistic art, with certain peculiarities and modifications forced upon the builders by their education and surroundings. But many of them thought they were reproducing pure Greek style, concerning which they were really in total darkness. The few earlier attempts in this century to imitate Greek buildings show a similar ignorance. Thus the builders of the Madeleine in Paris thought, I suppose, they were copying the Parthenon, whereas they knew nothing whatever about the art of Ictinus. How far this inability to understand the art of a distant century may go, is curiously exemplified in the drawings taken (in 1676) from the yet un-ruined Parthenon by Jacques Carrey, by the order of the Marquis of Nointel. These drawings are positively ludicrous travesties of the sculpture of Phidias in seventeenth-century style^[211:2].

Probability of Hellenic revival.

Not until a long series of great students, beginning with Winckelmann, had studied with real care the secrets of Greek art, till Mr. Penrose had disclosed the marvellous subtlety in the curves of the Parthenon, till Dr. Dörpfeld had analyzed the plan and materials and execution of the Olympian treasure-houses and temples, could we say that we were beginning to have a clear perception of the qualities which made Greek sculpture and architecture so superior to all imitations which have since been attempted.

Greek art only recently understood. Winckelmann, Penrose, Dörpfeld.

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§ 94. It is high time that all this profound research, this recondite learning, these laborious excavations, should be made known in their results, and brought home to the larger public. Then when the day comes that we undertake to carry out a Hellenic Renaissance, we shall know what we are about; we shall abandon the superstition of white marble worship, and adopt colours; we shall learn to combine chastity of design with richness of ornamentation; we shall revert to that harmony of all the arts which has been lost since the days of Michael Angelo.

Its effect upon modern art when properly appreciated,

If it be true that there is in heaven a secret treaty between the three sovran Ideas that ennoble human life,—the Good, the Beautiful, and the True—which enacts that none of them shall enrich us without the co-operation of the rest, then our study of this side of Greek perfection may even have its moral results. May not the ideas of measure, of fitness, of reserve, which are shown in all the best Greek work, radiate their influence into our ordinary life, and, making it fairer, prepare it for the abode of larger truth and more perfect goodness?

and upon every detail of our life.

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§ 95. Thus far I have sought to bring out the political lessons which are the peculiar teaching of history, and have only suggested what may yet result from the artistic lessons left us by this wonderful people. The reader may wonder that I have said little or nothing concerning another very prominent side of Greek perfection,—the wonders of the poetry which ranks with the best that has been produced by all the efforts of man before or since. My reason for this omission was, that here, if anywhere, the excellence of the extant Hellenic work is acknowledged, while the fact that all those ignorant of the language are excluded from enjoying it, makes any discussion of it unsuited to the general public. For whatever may be said of good translations of foreign prose, poetry is so essentially the artistic expression of the peculiar tongue in which it originates, that

Greek Literature hardly noticed in this Essay.

all transference into alien words must produce a fatal alteration. A great English poet may indeed transfer the ideas of a Greek to his page; but he gives us an English poem on Greek subjects, not the very poem of his model, however faithful his report may be.

If, therefore, we are to benefit by this side of Hellenic life, there is no short cut possible. We must sit down and study the language till we can read it fluently; and this requires so much labour, that the increasing demands of modern life upon our time tend to thrust aside the study of bygone languages for the sake of easier and more obvious gains.

Demands a good knowledge and study of the language.

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§ 96. Nevertheless, it seems well-nigh impossible that a Hellenic Renaissance, such as I have anticipated, can ever be thorough and lasting unless the English-speaking nations become really familiar with the literary side of Hellenic life. Revivals of the plays of Æschylus and Sophocles must not be confined to the learned stage and public of an English or American university, but must come to be heard and appreciated by a far larger public.

This can hardly be done until we make up our minds that the subjects of education must not be increased in number, and that moreover they may be alternated with far more freedom than is now the case. There is, for example, a superstition that everybody must learn Latin before learning Greek, and that French is a sort of necessary accomplishment for a lady, whereas it is perfectly certain that the cultivation to be attained through Greek is ten times as great as that we can gain through Latin; while in the second case it is no paradox to assert that any woman able to understand the *Antigone* of Sophocles or the *Thalysia* of Theocritus would derive from them more spiritual food than from all the volumes of French poetry she is ever likely to read. If we cannot compass all, the lesser should give way to the greater; and it is not till our own day that the supremacy of Greek has been acknowledged by all competent judges.

Other languages must be content to give way to this pursuit.

§ 97. What has promoted the reign of Latin, and has told against Greek in our schools, is partly, I believe, the bugbear of a strange alphabet; partly also—and this among more advanced people—the want of a clear knowledge how closely most Roman poetry was copied from Greek models. Were the Greek models now extant, the contrast would probably cause the Roman imitations to disappear, as indeed many such must have disappeared when the Roman readers themselves approached the great originals. Even now, if the lyrics of Sappho and Alcæus were recovered from some Egyptian tomb or from the charred rolls of Herculaneum, it might have a disastrous effect on the popularity of Horace.

The nature and quality of Roman imitations.

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But in most cases the Romans copied from inferior poets of the Alexandrian age; and before the reader and I part company, it is of importance to insist upon this,—that the best of Roman poetry was often a mere version of third-rate Greek. By far the greatest of the Roman poets is Virgil; and if he alone remained, Latin would be worth learning for his sake. But even Virgil copies from second-rate Alexandrian poets, Apollonius and Aratus—from the latter to an extent which would be thought shameful in any independent literature. It may be true that the translations are in this case not only equal, but far superior, to the originals. I will not dispute this, as my case does not require any doubtful supports. For even granting that he can exceed a second-rate Greek model, what shall we say when he attempts to imitate Theocritus in his *Bucolics*? Here he is taking a really good Greek poet for his model, and how poor is the great Roman in comparison! Even therefore in imitating an Alexandrian master, we can see that the first of Latin poets cannot bear the comparison.

The case of Virgil.

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§ 98. If I had not written fully on this subject in my recent *Greek Life and Thought*, and my *Greek World under Roman Sway*, I should fain conclude with some brief account of the after-glow of Hellenic genius, when the loss of freshness in the language and the life of the people had made pedantry and artificiality common features in the writing of the day. Yet these patent faults did not strike the Romans, whose poets, with only few exceptions, copied Callimachus and Parthenius as the finest models in the world.

Theocritus only a late flower in the Greek garden of poetry.

From my point of view, though I have cited these facts to show what a superstition the preference of Latin to Greek is, I can urge them as but another evidence of the supremacy of Greece and its right to a spiritual empire over cultivated men. Even debased and decaying Hellenism could produce poetry too good for the ablest disciples to rival, too subtle for any other tongue to express. Can we conclude with any greater tribute to the genius of the race, with any higher recommendation of their history than this, that it is the history of a people whose gifts have never ceased to illumine and to sustain the higher spirits in every society of civilized men?

FOOTNOTES:

[190:1] I am of course speaking generally, nor do I venture to decide without argument the difficult question of the exact status of Greece in the years after 146 B.C.

[196:1] *Greek Life and Thought, from Alexander to the Roman Conquest*. Macmillan, 1887.

- [202:1] The old belief in an original Hebrew Gospel, from which Saint Matthew's was translated, now turns out to have no better foundation than the existence of an old version into Hebrew (Aramaic) for the benefit of the common people who were too ignorant to read Greek. Cf. Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*.
- [203:1] Cf. further details in my *Greek Life and Thought*, pp. 140, 372.
- [206:1] Cf. Mr. W. Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*, which is built on this idea; also the excellent account in Mr. Bury's new *History of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. i. chap. i.
- [206:2] The reader who fears to attack Libanius directly, may find all the facts either in Sievers' (German) *Life of Libanius*, or in Mr. W. W. Capes's excellent book on *University Life at Athens* (London, 1877).
- [211:1] Of this confusion the hall of the Middle Temple in London is a very interesting specimen, seeing that the Renaissance screen, a splendid thing, is only two years later than the Gothic hall.
- [211:2] They are not, however, one whit worse than the ordinary attempts at Greek dress made by nineteenth-century ladies who go to Fancy Fairs.

APPENDIX.

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ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE OLYMPIAN REGISTER^[217:1].

There seems a sort of general agreement among modern historians of Greece to accept the 1st Olympiad (776 B.C.) as the trustworthy starting-point of solid Greek chronology. Even Grote, so sceptical about legends, and so slow to gather inferences from them, accepts this date. There is only one exception, I think, to be found in Sir George Cox, who evidently rejects the Olympian register, who will not set down in his chronology any figure higher than 670 B.C., and even that under the protest of a query.

When we come to inquire on what authority so early a date can be securely established, we find a sort of assumption, not supported by argument, that from 776 onward the Eleians kept a regular record of their great festival, and as a matter of fact the alleged list is still extant. It was generally acknowledged and cited by the late historians of Greece, who determined events according to it. Above all, the critical doubts of philologists are soothed by the supposed authority of Aristotle, who is reported to have made researches on the question, and to refer to the list as if authentic^[218:1]; at all events he mentioned a discus at Olympia with Lycurgus' name inscribed upon it, but in what work, and for what purpose, is unknown. Aristotle is considered an infallible authority by modern philologists, so much so that even the most sceptical of them seem almost to attribute verbal inspiration to this philosopher. One other Greek authority shares with him this pre-eminence—the historian Thucydides. And it so happens that in his Sicilian *Archæology* (book vi) Thucydides gives a number of dates, apparently without hesitation, which start from 735 B.C., and therefore persuades his commentators that accurate dates were attainable concerning a period close to the 1st Olympiad. These are apparently the reasons which have determined the general consent of modern historians.

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But neither Grote, nor E. Curtius, nor even Sir George Cox, has analysed the evidence for the authenticity of the older portion of this register. I cannot find in Clinton's *Fasti*, where it might well be expected, any such inquiry. In Mure's *History of Greek Literature* (iv. 77-90), a work far less esteemed than it deserves, and here only, do we find any statement of the evidence. The negative conclusions reached by Mure have made no impression on the learned world, and are now well-nigh forgotten. I will take up the question where he left it, and add some positive evidence to corroborate his argument—that the list of victors at Olympiads handed down to us by Eusebius is, at least in its earlier part, an artificially constructed list, resting on occasional and fragmentary monumental records, and therefore of no value as a scientific chronology. I will also endeavour to determine when the victors began to be regularly recorded, and when the extant list was manufactured. Such an inquiry must be of great importance in measuring the amount of credence to be given to the dates of events referred to the eighth and the first half of the seventh centuries B.C.—for example, Thucydides' dates for the western colonies of the Hellenes.

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Let us first sketch the tradition about the Register as we find it implied in Diodorus, Strabo, the fragments of Timæus, and other late historians. We find especially in Pausanias a considerable amount of detail, and an outline of the general history of the feast as then accepted. All admitted, and indeed asserted, a mythical origin for the games. The declarations of Pindar and other old poets were express, that Herakles had founded them, that Pelops and other mythical heroes had won victories at them—and victories of various kinds, including chariot races. Another account ascribed their foundation to Oxylus (Paus. v. 8, 5). But a long gap was admitted between these mythical glories and the revival of the games by his descendant Iphitus, king of Elis. 'This Iphitus,' says Pausanias (v. 4, 6), 'the epigram at Olympia declares to be the son of Hæmon, but most of the Greeks to be the son of Praxonides, and not of Hæmon; the old documents (ἀρχαῖα γράμματα) of the Eleians, however, referred^[219:1] Iphitus to a father of the same name.' Iphitus, in connection with the Spartan Lycurgus, re-established the games, but (as was asserted) only as a contest in the short race (στάδιον), and in this first historical Olympiad Coræbus won, as was stated in an epigram on his tomb, situated on the borders of Elis and Arcadia (Paus. viii. 26, 4). A

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quoit on which Lycurgus' name was engraved, was at Elis, says Plutarch, in the days of Aristotle. The 'discus of Iphitus,' says Pausanias (v. 20, 1), 'has the truce which the Eleians announce for the Olympiad, not inscribed in straight lines, but the letters run round the discus in a circular form' [220:1]. He alludes to the list again and again: *e.g.* (v. 8, 6) 'ever since there is a continuous record of the Olympiads (ἐξ οὗ το συνεχές ταῖς μνήμας ἐπὶ ταῖς Ὀλ. ἐστί); prizes for running were first established, and the Eleian Corœbus won.'

Pausanias proceeds in this passage to give an account of the successive additions of other competitions to the sprint race, 'according as they remembered them,' that is, according as they recollected or found out that they had been practised in mythical days. In the 14th Ol. the δίαυλος, or double course, was instituted, and Hypenus the Pisæan won, and next after him Acanthus. In the 18th they remembered the pentathlon and the wrestling match, in which Lampis and Eurybatus respectively won, both Lacedæmonians. In the 23rd came boxing, and Onomastus of Smyrna, which then already counted as Ionian, won. In the 25th the first chariot race was won by the Theban Pagondas. In the 33rd came the pancration, and the monument of the first victor, Lygdamis, was at Syracuse. . . . The boys' contests were based on no old tradition, but the Eleians established them of their own good pleasure. The boys' wrestling match was accordingly instituted in the 37th Ol. [221]

I need not here pursue the account further, but will return to this passage in connection with the other arrangements of the feast.

We find that other authorities, such as Polemo, quoted by the Scholiast on Pindar (Ol. v.), agree with Pausanias as to some of these details. Strabo quotes from Ephorus the double foundation, by Oxylyus and again by Iphitus. So does Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian, who wrote a work on the Olympian festival, and gave a list of victors, probably from the same source as Eusebius' list. Phlegon notes indeed the difficulty of making Lycurgus and Iphitus contemporary with Corœbus in 776 B.C., and fixes the date of Iphitus twenty-eight Olympiads earlier (at 887 B.C.). But he introduces an Iphitus again in the 6th registered Ol., inquiring about the crowning of victors, and states that Daicles of Messene was first crowned with wild olive at the 7th contest. The only other point of interest in Phlegon's fragments is the full catalogue of the 177th Ol. (frag. 12 in Müller's *Frag. Hist.* iv. 606), which gives the winners in seventeen events; some of them thrice successful in the competitions.

We may therefore take it for granted that the account of Pausanias, which now passes current in all the German and English works on Greek athletics, was, in the main, that established or adopted by Timæus or by Aristotle, the latter of whom is often alleged to have first given the Olympiads their prominent position as the basis of Greek chronology. But whether he adopted the list as genuine from the beginning or not, his isolated remark about the quoit with Lycurgus' name is not sufficient to inform us [222:1]. Indeed we have only negative evidence concerning his opinion and no direct information. [222]

It is of far more importance to examine what positive evidence there was for this theory of the gradual rise and progress of the festival, its regularity, and the prominence of the *stadion*, or short race, in giving the name of its victor as the index of the date. We have two kinds of authority to consult—the older literature; and the monuments, either at first hand, or as described for us by former observers. As regards the literature, our review need be but very brief.

(1) The twenty-third book of the *Iliad* seems composed without any reference to the earliest Olympian games as Pausanias describes them. The nature of this (perhaps special) competition is quite different. There are some events, such as the armed combat, which never made part of the historical games; there are others, such as the chariot race, which are expressly asserted to have been later innovations at Olympia. The giving of valuable prizes, and several of them in each competition, is quite against the practice at Olympia. The Phæacian games in the *Odyssey* (ἠ 120, sq.) contain *five* events, running, wrestling, leaping, discus, and boxing. Those who believe that the epics were composed before 776 B.C., or those who believe them to be the much later compilation of antiquarian poets, will find no difficulty in this. The one will assert that the poet could not know, and the other that he would not know, what was established at Olympia. The latter will also hold that the accounts of the mythical celebrations by Herakles, Pelops, &c., were invented in imitation of the Homeric account. But still if Lycurgus indeed promoted the knowledge of the Homeric poems, why did he and Iphitus found a contest without the least resemblance to the heroic models? And if, as I hold, the Homeric poems were growing into shape about the time of the alleged 1st Olympiad, and after it, the contrast of the *Iliad* in its games to the Olympian festival is so difficult to explain, that we must assume the old Eleian competition to have been no mere sprint race, but a contest similar in its events to that in the *Iliad*, or at least to that in the *Odyssey*. [223]

(2) This view is strongly supported by the statements of Pindar, who is the next important witness on the subject. In his Tenth Olympic Ode (vv. 43 sq.) he tells of the foundation by Herakles, and gives the names of *five* heroes who won the various events of the first contest. He gives us no hint that there was any break in the tradition, or that these five events had not remained in fashion ever since. In fact he does mention (*Isth.* i. 26 sq.) that the *pentathlon* and *pancratation* were later inventions, thus making it clear that the rest were in his mind the original components of the meeting. Nor does he anywhere give priority or special dignity to the *stadion*; only the last of his Olympian Odes is for this kind of victory, his Thirteenth for the *stadion* and *pentathlon* together. He never mentions, as we should certainly have expected, that these *stadion* victors

would have the special glory of handing down their names as eponymi of the whole feast. The other contests, the chariot race, the pancration, and the pentathlon, were evidently far grander and more highly esteemed, and we find this corroborated by the remark of Thucydides (v. 49), 'This was the Olympiad when Androstheneis won for the first time the pancration.' Thucydides therefore seems to have marked the Olympiad, not by the stadion, but by the pancration.

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(3) This historian indeed (as well as his immediate predecessors, Herodotus and Hellanicus) gives us but little information about the nature of the games, except the remark that 'it was not many years' since the habit of running naked had come into fashion at Olympia. Such a statement cannot be reconciled with Pausanias' account, who placed the innovation three centuries before Thucydides' time. But in one important negative feature all the fifth-century historians agree. None of them recognise any Olympian register, or date their events by reference to this festival. Thucydides, at the opening of his second book, fixes his main date by the year of the priestess of Hera at Argos, by the Spartan ephor, and by the Athenian archon. In his Sicilian *Archæology*, to which we will presently return, where it would have been very convenient to have given dates by Olympiads, he counts all his years from the foundation of Syracuse downward. Yet we know that Hellanicus, Antiochus and others had already made chronological researches at that time, and the former treated of the list of the Carneian victors. All these things taken together are conclusive against the existence, or at least the wide recognition, of the Olympian annals down to 400 B.C.

In the next century Ephorus wrote in his earlier books concerning the mythical founding of the festival, but we have nothing quoted from him at all like the history set down by Pausanias. It is nevertheless about this time that the newer and more precise account came into vogue, for Timæus, the younger contemporary of Ephorus, evidently knew and valued the register. Its origin in literature would have remained a mystery but for the solitary remark of Plutarch. At the opening of his *Life of Numa*, in commenting on the difficulty of fixing early dates, he says:

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τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους ἐξακριβῶσαι χαλεπὸν ἐστὶ καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ὀλυμπιονίκων ἀναγομένους, ὧν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν ὀψέ φασιν Ἰππίαν ἐκδοῦναι τὸν Ἡλεῖον, ἀπ' οὐδενὸς ὀρμώμενον ἀναγκαίου πρὸς πίστιν.

What does this mean? Does it mean that Hippias first *published* or edited in a literary form the register, or does it mean that he *both compiled and edited* it? The former is the implied opinion of the learned. 'Dieser Zeit,' says E. Curtius, *Hist.* i. 494 (*viz.* 'der Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts'), 'gehören ja auch die Listen derer an, welche in den Nationalspielen gesiegt'; and in the note on this at the end of the volume, he indicates, together with the ἀναγραφαί of the Argive priestesses, which Hellanicus published, two passages in Pausanias, and adds: 'wissenschaftlich bearbeitet zuerst von Hippias dem Eleer, dann von Philochorus in seinen Ὀλυμπιάδεις.' Now of the latter work we know nothing more than the name; of the former nothing but the passage just cited from Plutarch. Does it justify Ernst Curtius' *wissenschaftlich bearbeitet*? Or does our other knowledge of Hippias justify it? The pictures of him drawn in the Platonic dialogues called after his name, and in Philostratus, though perhaps exaggerated, make him a vain but clever polymath, able to practise all trades, and exhibit in all kinds of knowledge. We should not expect anything 'wissenschaftlich' from him. Indeed, in this case there was room for either a great deal of science, or for none. If there was really an authentic list at Olympia, Hippias need only have copied it. But is this consistent with Plutarch's statement? Far from it.

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Plutarch implies a task of difficulty, requiring research and combination. And this, no doubt, was what the Sophist wanted to exhibit. Being an Eleian, and desirous to make himself popular in the city, he not only chose Olympia for special displays of various kinds, but brought together for the people a history of their famous games. And in doing this he seems to have shown all the vanity, the contempt of ancient traditions, and the rash theorizing which we might expect from a man of his class. We have, fortunately, a single case quoted by Pausanias which shows us both that this estimate of the man is not far from the truth, and what licence the Eleians gave him when he was reconstructing the history of the festival. Pausanias (v. 25, 2 *sqq.*) tells a pathetic story about the loss of a choir of boys and their teacher on the way from Messana in Sicily to Olympia, where they were commemorated by statues. τὸ μὲν δὴ ἐπίγραμμα ἐδήλου τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀναθήματα εἶναι τῶν ἐῶν πορθμῶ Μεσσηνίων· χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον Ἰππίας λεγόμενος ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων γενέσθαι σοφὸς τὰ ἐλεγεία ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἐποίησεν. Here, then, we have some kind of falsification, and apparently one in favour of the Messenians of the Peloponnesus, if we may judge from the form of Pausanias' remark. In more than one case a later epigram appears to have been inscribed on a votive offering, and I think we can show in Hippias a decided leaning to the Messenians, whose restoration to independence he probably witnessed.

But were there really no registers, ἀναγραφαί, from which Hippias could have copied? If there was certainly no single complete list, of undoubted authority, may there not have been partial lists, affording him suitable materials? This we must endeavour to answer from the passages of Pausanias referred to by E. Curtius, as well as from others, which he has not thought it necessary to quote.

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The first is the opening passage of the sixth book, where the author says that as his work 'is not a catalogue of all the athletes who have gained victories at Olympia, but an account of votive offerings, and especially statues, he will omit many who have gained victories, either by some lucky chance, or without attaining the honour of a statue.' Though this passage may imply that there was such a catalogue—of course there was in Pausanias' day—it says not a word about an old and authentic register. It is indeed a capital fact in the present discussion, that neither does

Pausanias, in this elaborate account of Olympia, nor, as far as I know, does any other Greek author, distinctly mention ἀναγραφαί, or παραπήγματα, or any equivalent term for any official register at Olympia. Pausanias speaks of τὰ τῶν Ἡλείων γράμματα, and also says of certain *an-Olympiads*^[227:1]: ἐν τῷ τῶν Ὀλ. καταλόγῳ οὐ γράφουσιν—not that they noted in, or erased from any official register. In Pausanias the absence of such mention appears to me decisive.

Let us pass to the second passage indicated by E. Curtius, viz. vi. 6, 3. 'There stands there also the statue of Lastratidas, an Eleian boy, who won the crown for wrestling; he obtained also in Nemea among the boys, and among youths (ἐν τε παισὶ καὶ ἀγενείων) another victory.' Pausanias adds: that Paraballon, the father of Lastratidas, won in the δίαυλος, ὑπελείπετο δὲ καὶ ἐς τοὺς ἔπειτα φιλοτιμίαν, τῶν νικησάντων Ὀλυμπίᾳ τὰ ὀνόματα ἀναγράφας ἐν γυμνασίῳ τῷ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ. Here, at last, we have some definite evidence, and I will add at once another passage—the only other passage I can find where any register is alluded to—as it expounds the former. In vi. 8, 1, we find: Euanorides the Eleian gained the victory for wrestling both at Olympia and Nemea: γενόμενος δὲ Ἑλλανοδίκης ἔγραψε καὶ οὗτος τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ τῶν νενικηκότων. It appears then that if an Eleian had distinguished himself at the games, he was likely to be afterwards chosen as one of the judges—a reasonable custom, even now prevailing amongst us. It also appears that such ἑλλανοδίκαι obtained the right of celebrating their year of office by inscribing the names of the victors, and doubtless their own, in the gymnasium.

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But fortunately, the date of these inscriptions is determined by two facts. In the first place both came after the establishing of boys' contests, which Pausanias expressly calls an invention of the Eleians, and fixes at the 37th Olympiad. Again the son of Paraballon, and Euanorides himself, won prizes at Nemea—a contest not established, according to E. Curtius, till about 570 B.C., but probably a little earlier, and nearer to 600 B.C. I do not for a moment deny the existence of some kind of register from this time onward; in fact there are some probable reasons to be presently adduced in favour of it. Indeed the very form of the note about Paraballon *seems to imply some novelty*, an exceptional distinction in his inscription; and what we are here seeking is evidence for an *early* register, in fact a register of the contests previous to 600 B.C.

What evidence does Pausanias afford of this? As I have said, there is not a word about a register or catalogue, but there are several notes of old offerings and inscriptions, which show us what sort of materials existed, at least in Pausanias' day. And there is no reason whatever to believe that many ancient monuments or inscriptions had been injured, unless Hippias carried out his work of falsifying them on a large scale. There were indeed several monuments antedated by mere vulgar mistakes. Such was the *stèle* of Chionis (vi. 13, 2), who was reported to have won in four successive contests (Ols. 28-31), but the reference in the inscription to *armed races as not yet introduced*, proved even to Pausanias that the writer of it must have lived long after Chionis' alleged period. There was again the monument of Pheidolas' children, whose epigram Pausanias notes as conflicting (vi. 13, 10) with τὰ Ἡλείων ἐς τοὺς Ὀλυμπιονίκας γράμματα. ὀγδόη γὰρ Ὀλ. καὶ ἐξηκοστῇ καὶ οὐ πρὸ ταύτης ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς Ἡλ. γράμμασι ἡ νίκη τῶν Φ. παίδων. These γράμματα—a word apparently distinct from ἀναγραφαί—are probably nothing but the treatise of Hippias, preserved and copied at Elis. Had these γράμματα indeed been an authentic register, inscribed at the time of each victory, is it possible that any epigrams of later date would have been allowed to conflict with it? Surely not. But if the register came to be concocted at a late period, such discrepancies might be hard to avoid.

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But as regards genuine early monuments, Pausanias tells us that Corœbus had no statue at Olympia, and implies that *there was no record of his victory save the epigram on his tomb* at the border of Elis and Arcadia. Then comes the case of the Spartan Eutelidas (vi. 15, 8), who conquered as a boy in the 38th Ol., the only contest ever held for a pentathlon of boys. ἔστι δὲ ἡ τε εἰκὼν ἀρχαία τοῦ Εὐτ., καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῷ βάθρῳ γράμματα ἀμυδρὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου. But this statue cannot have been so old even as the 38th Ol. For in vi. 18, 7, Pausanias tells us that the first athlete's statues set up at Olympia were those of Praxidamas the Æginetan, who won in boxing at the 59th Ol., and that of the Opuntian Rexibios the pancratiast, at the 61st. 'These portrait statues are not far from the pillar of CEnomaos, and are made of wood, Rexibios' of fig-tree, but the Æginetan's of cypress, and less decayed than the other.' Just below this we have a mention of a treasure-house, dedicated by the Sicyonian tyrant Myron in the 33rd Ol. In this treasure-house was an inscribed shield, 'an offering to Zeus from the Myones.' τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀσπίδι γράμματα παρῆκται μὲν ἐπὶ βραχύ, πέπονθε δὲ αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ ἀναθήματος τὸ ἀρχαῖον (vi. 19, 5).

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These exhaust the oldest dated monuments found by Pausanias. He mentions indeed an ancient treasury of the Megarians, built in a time before either yearly archons at Athens or Olympiads (vi. 19, 13)^[230:1]. Thus the antiquarian traveller, who revelled in the venerable in history and the archaic in Greek art, could find no dated votive offerings older than the 33rd Ol., and these he specially notes as of extraordinary antiquity, decayed and illegible with age. We may feel quite certain that he omitted no really important extant relic of old times in his survey.

Such then were the materials from which Hippias proceeded, not before the year 400 B.C., and probably a generation later, to compile the full register of the Olympiads. There may have been some old inscriptions which Pausanias failed to see, or which had become illegible, or had disappeared under the soil with time. Doubtless there were many old traditions at Elis, which the Eleian sophist would gather and utilise. There were also throughout Greece, in the various cities he visited, traditions and inscriptions relating to victors who had been natives of these cities. But that these formed an unbroken chain from Corœbus down to Hippias' day is quite incredible.

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His work is so completely lost that we can only conjecture his method of proceeding from the

general character of his age, and from the critical spirit we can fairly attribute to it. He had before him the history of the Pythian festival, which began in historical times (Ol. 48), if we omit the old contest in composing a hymn to the gods. The various innovations and additions were well known, and it is certain that at Olympia too the range of contests had been enlarged by the pentathlon, the pancration, the hoplite race, &c. But it is likely that Hippias carried out this analogy too far. He found no traditions for the other events as old as Corœbus, and he assumed that the games had begun with a simple short race. *According to the order of the first record of each competition*, he set down its first origin. He was thus led to make the *στάδιον* the 'eponymous competition,' if I may coin the expression, though it is more than probable that the early festivals were noted by the victor in the greatest feats and—if there was a real register—by the Hellanodicæ who had presided. For it is certain from Pausanias that the umpire did inscribe his own name with those of the victors.

Hippias' work, the *γράμματα* of the Eleians in after days, was thus a work based upon a problematical reconstruction of history. It rested for its earlier portions on scanty and broken evidence; as it proceeded, and monuments became more numerous, its authenticity increased. After Ol. 60, when the fashion came in of setting up athlete statues, we may assume it in the main to have been correct; though even here there were not wanting discrepancies with other evidence, and possibly some *mala fides* on the part of the compiler^[232:1].

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There remain, therefore, three points of interest connected with the theory thus proposed. Have we any evidence of the date at which the Hellanodicæ first made it a matter of ambition to inscribe their own names, and those of victors in the gymnasium, at Olympia? Are there traces of deliberate theorizing in the extant list of victors previous to this date? Why and for what reasons did Hippias fix on the year 776 B.C. as the commencement of his list?

(1) There are several probable reasons for fixing the origin of registering the victories at about the 50th Ol. It was about this time that the Eleians finally conquered the Pisatans, and secured the complete management of the games. From the spoils of Pisa they built the magnificent Doric temple lately excavated, and no doubt increased the splendour of Olympia in other ways. For in addition to their increase of power they were stimulated by a new and dangerous competition—that of the Pythian games, established in the third year of the 48th Ol., and this may have been one of the reasons why they determined finally to crush and spoil the Pisatans. It is likely that the Nemean and Isthmian games were instituted about the same time, and these rival games were perhaps connected with some complaints as to the management of the Olympian festival, for no Eleian seems to have competed at the Isthmian games (Paus. v. 2, 2). The Eleians were accordingly put upon their mettle, both to keep their contest unequalled in splendour, and beyond suspicion in fairness. To obtain the first, they lavished the spoils of Pisa, as already mentioned. As to the second, we have a remarkable story told us by Herodotus (ii. 160), and again by Diodorus (i. 95), that they sent an embassy as far as Egypt to consult the Pharaoh as to the best possible conduct of the games. This king told them *that no Eleian should be allowed to compete*. Herodotus calls him Psammis (Psammetichus II), who reigned 594-587 B.C.; and he is a higher authority than Diodorus, who calls him Amasis, and so brings down the date by twenty-five years. Herodotus' story has never been much noticed, or brought into relation with the other facts here adduced, but it surely helps to throw light on the question. And there is yet one more important datum. Pausanias tells us that in Ol. 50 a second umpire was appointed. If the practice of official registering now commenced at Olympia, as it certainly did at Delphi in the Pythian games, we can understand Pausanias' remarks about Paraballon and others having esteemed it a special glory to leave their names associated with the victors'. For it was a new honour. From this time onward, therefore, I have nothing to say against the register which we find in Eusebius.

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(2) But as regards the first fifty Olympiads, is there any appearance of deliberate invention or arrangement about the list of names? Can we show that Hippias worked on theory, and not from distinct evidence? It is very hard to do this, especially when we admit that he had a good many isolated victories recorded or remembered, and that he was an antiquarian, who no doubt worked out a probable list. Thus the list begins with victors from the neighbourhood, and gradually admits a wider range of competitors. This is natural enough, but I confess my suspicion at the occurrence of eight Messenians out of the first twelve victors, followed by their total disappearance till after the restoration by Epaminondas. For the sacred truce gave ample occasion for exiled Messenians to compete at the games^[234:1]. I also feel grave suspicions at the curious absence of Eleian victors. Excepting the first two, there is not a single Eleian in the list. How is this consistent with Psammis' remark to the Eleians? For how could they have avoided answering him that their fairness was proved by the occurrence of no Eleian as victor eponymous for 170 years? Many Eleian victors are indeed noticed by Pausanias in the other events. It is hardly possible that they could not have conquered in the *stadion*, so that I suspect in Hippias a deliberate intention to put forward non-Eleians as victors. I have suspicions about Cebotas, placed in the 6th Ol. by Hippias, but about the 75th by the common tradition of the Greeks. It is curious, too, that Athenian victors should always occur in juxtaposition with Laconian. But all these are only suspicions.

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(3) I come to the last and most important point; indeed it was this which suggested the whole inquiry. On what principles, or by what evidence, did Hippias fix on the year 776 B.C. as his starting-point? We need not plunge into the arid and abstruse computations of years and cycles which make early chronology so difficult to follow and to appreciate. For one general consideration is here sufficient. Even had we not shown from Plutarch's words, and from the silence of all our authorities, that Hippias *could* not have determined it by counting *upwards* the

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exact number of duly recorded victories, it is perfectly certain that he *would* not have followed this now accepted method. All the Greek chronologists down to Hippias' day (and long after) made it their chief object to derive historical families and states from mythical ancestors, and they did this by reasoning *downwards* by generations. They assumed a fixed starting-point, either the siege of Troy, or the return of the Herakleids. From this the number of generations gave the number of years. Thus we may assume that Hippias sought to determine the date of the 1st Olympiad by King Iphitus, who had been assigned to the generation 100 Olympiads—a neat round-number—before himself. Hippias thus fixed the date of both Iphitus and Lycurgus. The Spartan chronologers would not accept such a date for Lycurgus. His place in the generations of Herakleids put him fully three generations earlier. Other chronologers therefore sought means to accommodate the matter, and counted twenty-eight nameless Olympiads from Lycurgus to Corœbus (and Iphitus). Others imagined two Iphiti, one of Lycurgus' and one of Corœbus' date. But all such schemes are to us idle; for we may feel certain that the number of Olympiads was accommodated to the date of Iphitus, and not the date of Iphitus to the number of Olympiads.

Unfortunately the genealogy of Iphitus is not extant; in Pausanias' day he already had three different fathers assigned to him (v. 4, 6.); and we cannot, therefore, follow out the *a priori* scheme of Hippias in this instance; but I will illustrate it by another, which still plays a prominent figure in our histories of Greece—I mean the chronology of the Sicilian and Italian colonies, as given by Thucydides in his sixth book. He speaks with considerable precision of events in the latter half of the eighth century B.C.; he even speaks of an event which happened 300 years before the arrival of the Greeks in Sicily. As Thucydides was not inspired, he must have drawn these things from some authority; as he mentions no state documents it has been conjectured that his source was here the work of Antiochus of Syracuse. This man was evidently an antiquarian no wiser or more scientific than his fellows; Thucydides betrays their method by dating all the foundations *downwards* from that of Syracuse. Antiochus was obliged to admit the priority of Naxos, but grants it only one year; then he starts from his fixed era. But how was the date of the foundation of Syracuse determined? Not, so far as we know, from city registers and careful computations of years backward from the fifth century. Such an assumption is to my mind chimerical, and the source of many illusions. The foundation of Syracuse was determined as to date by its founder, Archias, *being the tenth from Temenos*. The return of the Herakleidæ was placed before the middle of the eleventh century B.C.; hence Archias would fall below the middle of the eighth century. The usual date of Pheidon of Argos, 747 B.C., was fixed in the same way by his being the tenth Temenid, and hence the 8th Ol. was set down as the *an-Olympiad* celebrated by him. He should probably, as I have before argued, be brought down nearly a century (to 670 B.C.) in date. [236]

I will now sum up the results of this long discussion. When we emerge into the light of Greek history, we find the venerable Olympian games long established, and most of their details referred to mythical antiquity. We find no list of victors recognised by the early historians, and we have the strongest negative evidence that no such list existed in the days of Thucydides. Nevertheless about 580 B.C. the feast was more strictly regulated, and the victors' names recorded, perhaps regularly, in inscriptions; from 540 B.C. onward the practice of dedicating athlete statues with inscriptions was introduced, though not for every victor. About 500 B.C. there were many inscriptions (that of Hiero is still extant), and there was evidence from which to write the history of the festival; but this was never done till the time of the archæologist and rhetorician Hippias, who was a native of Elis, with influence and popularity there, and who even placed new inscriptions on old votive offerings. This man (probably in 376 B.C.) constructed the whole history of the feast, partly from the evidence before him, partly from the analogy of other feasts. He fixed the commencement of his list, after the manner of the chronologers of his day, by the date of the mythical founder. Hence neither the names nor the dates found in Eusebius' copy of the register for the first fifty Olympiads are to be accepted as genuine, unless they are corroborated by other evidence. [237]

We have not even, as yet, the corroborative evidence of any other Greek inscriptions of the seventh or eighth centuries B.C. Till some such records, or fragments of such records, are found, we are not entitled to assume that the Greeks began to use writing upon stone for any records at such a date as 776 B.C. That great storehouse of old civilization, the Acropolis of Athens, has yielded us nothing of the kind; and even if we admit that the annual archons were noted down since 683 B.C. (which is far from certain), is not the further step to nearly a century earlier completely unwarrantable? [238]

I have reserved till now a passage in Aristotle's fragments (594) on the Olympian festival, which may help the still unconvinced reader to estimate the value of his opinion, on the authenticity of the Register. Aristotle is commonly spoken of as having made critical researches upon this question: here is *the only specimen* left to us:—

'The order of the festivals, as Aristotle makes out the list, is: first, the *Eleusinia* in honour of the fruit of Demeter; second, the *Panathenæa* to commemorate the slaying of the giant Aster by Athene; third, that which Danaos established at Argos at the marriage of his daughters; fourth, that of Lykaon in Arcadia, and called *Lykæa*; fifth, that in Iolkos ordained by Akastos for his father Pelias; sixth, that ordained by Sisyphos (*Isthmian*?) in honour of Melikertes: seventh, the *Olympian*, ordained by Herakles in honour of Pelops; eighth, that at Nemea, which the Seven against Thebes established in honour of Archemorus; ninth, that at Troy, which Achilles celebrated for Patroklos; tenth, the *Pythian*, which the Amphiktyons

established to commemorate the death of the Python. This is the order which Aristotle, who composed the treatise called Πέπλοι, set out of the ancient festivals and games.'

This quotation is from a scholiast to Aristides, who is not the only grammarian who refers to the Πέπλοι: there seems no reason to question the authenticity of the reference to this book as the work of Aristotle. It seems to be on the strength of these *Peploi*, with its only extract now cited, that modern historians have claimed the authority of the great critic for the Olympian Register! Was there ever so strange an inference? Is this indeed the *wissenschaftliche Bearbeitung* which was begun by Hippias of Elis? Any calm critic free of prejudice will rather conclude from it that on questions of early chronology and mythical history Aristotle was a firm believer in legend, and that he understood his duty to be that of a classifier and arranger of these stories rather than that of a destructive critic. It is but another case of acquiescence in a sceptic, such as I have described in the text above. This being Aristotle's attitude as regards the foundation of the feast, his authority as to the beginning of the Register would be probably worthless. But as a matter of fact we know nothing about it.

[239]

These considerations are, however, of great importance in dealing with an objection or reservation made to my argument by Mr. Bury, who, while he accepts my conclusions as regards the Olympiads, thinks that the early dates for the Sicilian settlements rest on better evidence, seeing that they are sanctioned by the much older and greater authority of Thucydides, who was certainly critical about many of his dates, and cautious in expressing a positive opinion.

I think the case of Thucydides to be closely analogous to that of Aristotle. On all historical matters within the reach of proper inquiry, I hold him to have been thoroughly critical. But when we go back to the legends such as the Siege of Troy, or the story of Tereus and Procne, I think he laid aside all this caution, and contented himself with a very modest rationalism in interpreting the myths. He is most particular about the *Pentekontaetia*, and Hellanicus' mistakes, but tells us calmly of events sixty years after the Trojan War, or 300 years before the Greeks went to Sicily. These matters stood with him on a different footing from that of his researches, just as our Bible history is honestly accepted by many scientific men of very sceptical turn in their special studies. They acquiesce in Scriptural evidence as a matter of general consent.

[240]

Neither critic ever seems to suspect fabrication of legends and lists; and yet fabrication there certainly was. In discussing the lists of the Argive priestesses, the kings of Sparta, and others, Max Duncker comes to the deliberate conclusion (vol. i. pp. 130-1 Eng. ed.) that the early part of these lists is fabricated. He classes all the names before 800 B.C. as imaginary; applying critical principles more consistently, and accepting nothing upon the evidence of one unconfirmed witness, I have now shown reasons why we may suspect many of them down to 650 B.C.

FOOTNOTES:

- [217:1] I gladly acknowledge some valuable hints and corrections from Dr. Hirschfeld of Königsberg, and Dr. Th. Kock of Weimar; both of whom expressed agreement with my main results.
- [218:1] Cf. below, [p. 238](#), for the remaining fragment.
- [219:1] ἀνῆγε, as if they were no longer extant; but see below, [p. 229](#).
- [220:1] I can find no evidence that these discuses were identical, as is universally assumed. Pausanias would surely have mentioned Lycurgus' name, had he seen it.
- [222:1] Cf. Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, § 1, to whom we owe the information. In the extant works of Aristotle there is no allusion whatever to the Register as a chronological standard. Cf. below, [p. 238](#).
- [227:1] By the Eleians the 8th, the 34th, and the 104th were called by this name, probably used in Hippias' work, because these feasts were celebrated by invaders, who had no legal right to do so.
- [230:1] The recent excavations have refuted this very early date for the treasure-house.
- [232:1] Cf. the case of Cēbotas, supposed to have won the 6th Ol., but also asserted to have fought in Plataea in Ol. 75. His statue and epigram, be it observed, dated from about Ol. 80.—Paus. vi. 3, 8; vii. 17, 13.
- [234:1] Hippias' false epigram on the Sicilian Messenians (above mentioned) implies that the Messenians exiled from Messene were eligible.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

The following corrections have been made to the text:

Page 46 sidenote: not corroborated by recent discoveries.
[period missing in original]

Page 74: the middle of the seventh century B.C.[period missing
in original]

Page 110: POLITICAL THEORIES AND EXPERIMENTS IN THE FOURTH
CENTURY B.C.[period after "B" missing in original]

Page 121: newly discovered *Polity of the Athenians*[121:2]
[anchor added by transcriber]

Page 131: CHAPTER VII.[original has VIII.]

Page 141 sidenote: Greek democratic patriotism.[period
missing in original]

Page 163 sidenote: Compare[original has Compar] with
Napoleon

Page 181 sidenote: Statement of the new difficulty[original
has extraneous period]

[62:1] older authorities[original has authorites], just as
competent

[96:2] under the master's direction. Cf. § 53.[period missing in
original]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PROBLEMS IN GREEK HISTORY ***

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