

that not unfrequently the column of *The Times* is but the English echo of *Thucydides*, the setting forth of some social ideal of plain living and high thinking which is the English version of *Pericles'* words, slightly transposed: φιλοσοφούμεν μετ'εὐτελείας, or some ideal of high art which shall increase the beauty of our homes and lives yet never degenerate into unmanly æstheticism, "and green and yellow melancholy:" φιλοκαλοῦμεν ἀνεν μαλακίας is the version of *Pericles*; he forgets—this critic—that not unfrequently the column of *The Times* is but balancing once more with English illustrations and for English readers the same political antithesis of *Pericles'* of peace with dishonour or empire at the cost of war's privations, or weak indulgence to disloyalty or stern repression of it, of the union of hearts, or the other union hitherto found indispensable in this sublunary world between the component portions of our empire, the union which rests on foundations less poetic and emotional; maintained too for the general good at some sacrifice—if occasion arise, of local clannishness and humanitarian sentiment.

He forgets, too,—this critic—that not unfrequently the most eager reader of *The Times* and the most eager reader of *Thucydides* are one and the same person, that to the old Banker, for instance, George Grote, amid the dinginess and the noise of his London office, out of all that was real in life, two things were most real, the politics of England, which he found in his *Times*, the politics of Athens, which live again in *Thucydides*. From one to the other Grote turned, reading each in the light of the other, and recognizing the two as identical in spirit. And so from the success of Athenian democracy, as he read it, Grote went forth into English politics with a livelier faith in democratic government because ancient politics act upon our view of modern; just as conversely, since his days, now that the tide of Democracy has swept onwards in leaps and bounds and our thoughts of it draw their colour more from experience than from hope, the reverse process has taken place. The generation which was young when Grote wrote his history, which discovered after him the greatness of Athenian Democracy and prophesied after him of the greatness of English Democracy, has lived to suffer something of disillusionment and disappointment, and disillusionment and disappointment have cast their shadows back upon democratic Athens, and *Pericles'* ghost wears to-day a less Olympian majesty in the eyes of the Greek scholars of Oxford and of Cambridge, because modern politics have reacted upon ancient. Take a similar and a somewhat fantastic illustration more recent than the days of Grote of this action and reaction.

The Russian Emperor, we have recently been told, taking a very different view from Grote of the success of Athenian democracy, or more probably thinking rather of the failure of democracy in Rome, has gone out of his way to encourage the classics; that so peradventure his educated classes may imbibe even at school a distrust of democracy and cease to furnish converts to radicalism and nihilism. But, on the other hand, the French ultramontanes and monarchists, confining their attention to the republican character of ancient Rome and the popularity of the history of Republican Rome, with the first authors of the French revolution, the Girondists, have discovered in the classics a republican and a liberal tendency; they have accordingly, while agreeing with the Russian autocrat in their ends, agreed with Grote in their conceptions of the results of classical study and they have forbidden classics as emphatically as the historian and the Czar have for opposite reasons encouraged them.

It is only the young German Emperor, always original, who has ventured to deny altogether this action and reaction when he has found time, while solving a few other large problems, the education of his infants, the diet and dancing of his soldiers, the orthodoxy of his sailors, the abolition of physical and moral evil, of consumption, of drunkenness, and immorality in large cities, to determine, incidentally, the relations of classical and modern history. "They have no relation," he says. "I was bred on the classics, and what am I now? What do I know?" the strongest argument, it must be admitted, which the case allowed.

So much by way of introduction and caution that no one may suppose Athenian politics to be matters merely of ancient history; to quote one of Aristotle's regrettably rare vivacities "it is only (Kaisers) Emperors and other vulgar persons" who make this mistake.

The first figure of surpassing interest in the history of Athenian democracy is *Pericles*; the idealist and reformer. However opinions may shift, as they have recently shifted, in regard to the practicable character of his scheme of democracy, there will yet be little serious difference of opinion in regard either to the generous idealism out of which his majestic visions took shape, or to their very vital interest for our own age; if *Pericles* was rash and visionary, his rashness and visionariness are yet our own: he did but attempt in Athens under favourable conditions what democracy is attempting in the modern world under conditions, which even in America are not more favourable than his, though more favourable than elsewhere. He dreamed of a state in which the privileges and prejudices of caste should exist no more; in which there should be no aristocracy but the aristocracy of talent and of merit, and in which democracy should mean not froth and fury, ignorance and intolerance, but universal intelligence, universal moderation, universal interest in art and politics, law and poetry, ripening daily in the life of the law court and the temple, parliament and theatre, into perfect citizenship and perfect manhood. It was for this and not for personal reasons that *Pericles* introduced the juryman's pay, that he established a salary for the attendance at the ecclesia, corresponding to the modern payment of members; that he introduced the payment of the spectator in the theatre; it was in order that each citizen, however poor, might be able to acquire the training of the law court and the ecclesia, that each citizen, however poor, might carry home in his heart from the theatre to the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of poverty, some idea of the beauty of *Sophocles'* tragedies, some image of the perfection of *Phidias'* sculpture. We are familiar nowadays with what may be said against ideals so high: they conflict with the commonest facts of life—it is said: higher education is a blessing for the few: for the masses of mankind it is never a blessing, and rarely even a possibility: generally it is beyond their reach and where, under exceptional circumstances, it is placed for a few years' space within their reach by free schools and universities, yet even here it is a curse rather than a blessing to that majority of young men and women, who have not the capacity to succeed in the hot competition of professional life, but have been disenchanted by this higher education with the harder and tamer life of the tradesman and the farmer; ambitions have been roused only to be disappointed, tastes have been acquired which cannot be gratified; dislikes and disinclinations to humble life have been encouraged, which have now either to be crushed—perhaps an impossibility—or at least to be ignored and set aside, which is possible but only with bitterness and repining. "The greatness of a country," says the French critic, "depends on the right employment of its activities and forces. But when each year brings you its legion of artificial capacities, in other words of ambitions more or less vain, what will you do with them? And what sort of society are you preparing by this universal higher education and this chimera of equal instruction?"

But if *Pericles* overlooked the facts of life and overlooked also, not merely the unwillingness, but the actual inability of the majority of the Athenian people to realize his enthusiastic ideal, if he was building castles in the air, and systematizing a scheme of popular education which would never truly educate the populace, yet it must be remembered that the age was an age of boundless hope when nothing seemed impossible.

The Persian wars had brought to Athens the impulse of mighty thoughts and eager questionings, such as the Elizabethan age brought to England, and the French Revolution to Europe. New knowledge in surging floods streamed into Athens, hitherto a humdrum provincial city, sweeping into the compass of the city walls, philosophers, orators, architects, sculptors, moralists and musicians, all the knowledge and all the curiosity, and all the mental energy of every quarter of Greece. The result was the high ideal which *Pericles* set forth, but which the age generally shared.

Every man was to become, if not omniscient and omnipotent, yet deeply speculative and thoroughly practical, a competent student and a ready man of business; each man was to imitate, in some degree at least, *Pericles*, the statesman,