

down the street, and would look indignantly astonished if you shoved them aside. A man might indulge his personal eccentricities there as Pericles boasts in his speech in Thucydides without any fear of those black looks and shrugs of the shoulders which elsewhere are plentifully bestowed on dissentients from the reigning mode of thought and action. With ordinary prudence a man might even be heterodox in religion without serious consequences. In such a society we are not surprised to learn conversation flourished probably to an extent never before or since realized anywhere; so also did philosophy and speculation, both from the positive impulse given by the keen interest in man as an object of intellectual observation and analysis, and from the comparative absence of repressive influences, theological and social. A people so cultivated by free intercourse and talk on equal terms, by public assemblies, where both sides of the question were discussed by the sect orators (not merely one side, as in the case of our political newspapers), by acting as jurymen, by daily view of the most beautiful works which had been wrought by human hands, formed a unique audience for all varieties of literature, especially for the noble dramas which were annually produced before the whole city assembled in solemn festival. How significant a fact is this, that the preachers of Greece were Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides! Their dramas were their only sermons. Thus we see that in almost every department of secular affairs the Greeks were first. They were the inventors one may say, of conversation, rational amusement, politics, of almost every single form of literature. In science they did much and paved the way for more. They first manifested the scientific spirit, the impulse after system, the desire for unification, the

careful observation of facts, and the confident belief that the intelligent observation of the present will form a basis for the prediction of future phenomena. In philosophy they raised almost every question, and even answered some. The dialogues of Plato are still text-books in our colleges, and Aristotle is still our master in logic and in ethics. They supplied the language of the Bible and the terms of theological speculation. Our very religion, so far as it is human, though Jewish in matter is Greek in form. This is especially the crowning glory of Hellas—that her tongue was chosen to be the medium through which the gospel of peace and light has reached the West. Enough has been said, I think, to show that if you wish to trace our modern civilization to its source, you must go back to Greece. This is especially true of art and literature :

From Helicon's harmonious springs,
These thousand rills their mazy progress
take.

And in these things, to which how much of the charm of life is due, they were not only the first, but, on the whole, the best. Dignity, simplicity, harmony and clearness are remarkably constant qualities in all their literature which has come down to us. Doubtless the centuries and the Turks who fired the library at Alexandria have been kind to us in eliminating many cart loads of rubbish; but what remains is all gold. The writers, we know, somehow hit the mark, neither falling short nor overshooting the due measure. They have the right style for the subject in hand. Their prose is flexible, rhythmical, varied, sometimes sublime, sometimes gracefully familiar, but always dignified and always prose. Their poetry is always poetry, however simple and lightly adorned. The flight may be so noiseless and steady, in such mod-